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“MY BODY SHALL PAY RECOMPENSE”: THE EMBODIMENT OF
MARGARET IN SELECTED STAGED AND TELEVISED CYCLES OF THE
FIRST TETRALOGY

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Abstract

This is a critical study of the body of Queen Margaret in performance in selected cycles of the first tetralogy (the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*). Focussing on four major British cycles (two by the Royal Shakespeare Company and two by the British Broadcasting Corporation), the study places each cycle within its cultural and theatrical or televisual context and analyses how these selected productions present Margaret and her theatrical mirrors, and how they embody (or refuse to embody) contemporaneous concepts of female transgression. The introduction provides an overview of the aims and objectives of the work and an introduction to the methodological approaches used. The first chapter analyses the presentation of Margaret's hair in production photographs from two Royal Shakespeare Company cycles either side of the sexual revolution (1963 and 1977), and creates a theorised performance history that explores how the cycles interacted with prevalent cultural ideas of female sexuality, as well as representing a change in Royal Shakespeare Company management. The second chapter examines Jane Howell's 1983 BBC cycle — part of the BBC/Time-Life complete works project — and how Howell used televisual and theatrical techniques to create a cycle that both literally and figuratively centred Margaret and her theatrical mirrors. The third and final chapter analyses Dominic Cooke's 2016 BBC cycle *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, and how the creative direction of the cycle, its star actors, and its existence in a time of large scale cinematically realistic and bombastic television, made for a cycle that both allowed characters to marginalise and use female bodies, and did so itself. The conclusion of the study draws together these analytical threads, and outlines how each of the approaches contribute to a larger critical study of the body of Margaret in performance.

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Introduction

This thesis is a critical study of the body of Margaret in performance, and it examines in detail the complex ways in which a number of different external influential factors have impacted and shaped the body of Margaret in performance in four selected cycles of the first tetralogy produced between 1963 and 2016. The three key factors that this study aims to interrogate are: the way in which the body of Margaret is shaped by the cultural moment in which a cycle was produced; how the mode of production (including whether a cycle was full text or an adaptation, or stage or screen) impacted the interpretation of the character; and the influence of theatrical or televisual fashions on the presentation of the body of Margaret in performance. This study aims to consider the ways in which these significant external factors came together in the four selected cycles of the first tetralogy to create four distinct Margarets, each of which can be analysed to understand the cultural, theatrical, and/or televisual context in which she was performed.

Through the three key factors that this study analyses in detail (cultural moment; mode of production; theatrical fashions), it aims to explore and examine how Margaret – the only character in the works of Shakespeare to appear in four plays – has been performed in four major British cycles, and what that can contribute to an understanding of the impact of cultural, theatrical, and televisual moment on Shakespeare’s female characters in performance. A focus on the body enables a reading of what is present in a cycle instead of what is absent, reading the body of the character onstage or onscreen rather than comparing them to a (fabled) foundation text. An emphasis on presence over absence is especially useful when considering adaptations of the first tetralogy, as it means Margaret (and her theatrical mirrors) can be analysed within the context of a cycle and its cultural and theatrical or televisual moment.

The way in which this study reads the body in performance is grounded in Performance Studies and a larger consideration of performance in the later part of the twentieth century. The approach of Performance Studies to use theatrical analysis as, for example, a site for anthropological research (Schechner, 1985) has been brought into Shakespearean performance studies. More specifically, this thesis forms part of the field of feminist Shakespearean performance studies, and utilises the work of gender theorists and corporeal feminist theorists post 1980. Theorised Shakespearean performance criticism uses Performance Studies and feminist criticism, drawing them together, and provides the theoretical framework that this study uses to explore its three analytical strands of cultural moment; mode of production; and theatrical fashions.

A focus on the body of female characters onstage has proved an effective form of analysis in the field of feminist Shakespearean performance studies. For example, Carol Chillington Rutter's Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage (2001) uses case studies from performance to analyse the way in which women's bodies have been presented in Shakespearean performance both in the early modern period and in the twentieth century. This thesis builds on the work of Rutter, and other scholars such as Pascale Aebischer, analysing Margaret's body in performances of cycles, and examining the different roles Margaret embodies, from virginal ingenue to embittered crone. This examination also draws on the work of corporeal feminists, such as Susan Bordo and her work on the body as a site for the reproduction of femininity, gender theorists, for example Judith Butler and the concept of gender performativity, and sociologists, such as Anthony Synnott and his work on the body as a site for sociological research. This enables a focussed study of the body of Margaret in performance within the context of Shakespearean performance studies that also has understandings of the wider theoretical concept of the body in performance.

The way in which this study developed to think about Margaret's narrative arc and the four Jungian archetypes of femininity she embodies (Liebler & Shea, 2009), led to an analysis of Margaret only in cycles of the first tetralogy and her journey from the virgin in 1 Henry VI, the wife in 2 Henry VI, the mother in 3 Henry VI, and finally the crone in Richard III. The development of this approach meant there needed to be a consideration of what Barbara Hodgdon calls "tetralogy thinking" (Hodgdon, 2021, p. 71), and its risks. However, in the same way that the approach of analysing the body in performance is a focus on what is present, the reading of Margaret as a single character is an examination of what each of the four selected cycles presented, which includes the idea of a single character across a tetralogy. Nicholas Grene, in Shakespeare's Serial History Plays, examines this idea of Margaret in performance, and suggests that "even if we accept G. K. Hunter's proposition of the discontinuity of the character of the Queen [...] the effect of one actor playing those Margarets is likely to supply an illusion of continuity, of change and development." (Grene, 2008, p. 117) As Grene suggests, a single actor playing Margaret across a cycle implies a continuity to character that, although potentially not represented in the texts of the plays, is present in performance. This focus on a single character across a cycle, and how this was embodied by a single actor, led to the selection of the four cycles and an analysis of how each reshaped Margaret and used the text of the first tetralogy to speak to the cultural moment. This study examines the way the body of Margaret, as a single character, was performed in

each of the four cycles, and analyses how she was impacted by, and is reflective of, the cultural context, the theatrical or televisual context and fashions, and the mode of production.

Each of the three chapters of this study explores each of the three analytical threads that run throughout the thesis, but with differing levels of emphasis. The first chapter prioritises the impact of cultural and social fashions on the body of Margaret by analysing two stage cycles either side of the sexual revolution. The second chapter focusses on the mode of production – full text, and theatre as television – and explores the centring of Margaret’s body (literally and figuratively) through this. The third chapter foregrounds the fashion for bombastic heightened realism (and non-theatrical) television and how that shaped a marginalised and silenced Margaret. Each chapter of this study also analyses the body of Margaret in performance from a different perspective. Hair provides a focus for cultural and theatrical analysis in the first chapter, the centring of Margaret and the relationship of her body to the camera is explored in the second chapter, and the relationship of the body of Margaret and the adaptation itself is considered in the third chapter. Together the three chapters of this study contribute to the exploration of how the body of Margaret (and the bodies of her theatrical mirrors) is directly impacted by the cultural context, the theatrical or televisual context, and the mode of the production of the cycle in which she exists.

The four cycles that this study analyses are considered in pairs across three chapters. In the first chapter of this study, the two staged RSC cycles – Barton & Hall (1963) and Terry Hands (1977) – are taken together in a chapter with a novel approach to analysing performance: reading hair in performance photographs found in the archive. The cycles were produced either side of a large political and social shift, specifically the sexual revolution in the United Kingdom. Not only did the cultural context of the cycles change, between 1963 and 1977 there was also a shift in RSC management, Peter Hall having left the company in 1968 and Trevor Nunn becoming artistic director. These cultural and theatrical changes, combined with the excellent archiving of the RSC, including high quality production photographs, means that these cycles are a particularly useful place to begin the study of the body of Margaret in performance.

The second pair of cycles that are examined in detail were televised by the BBC – directed by Jane Howell in 1983, and Dominic Cooke in 2016 – and again each provide excellent opportunities to study the body of Margaret in performance. They are analysed in two separate chapters, as the recorded nature of the television cycles enables

a detailed close reading of moments in performance, both of Margaret and of her theatrical mirrors. The two BBC cycles were produced either side of a digital revolution (terrestrial television and online streaming), and this is considered within the wider projects that both cycles were a part of. The BBC/Time-Life BBC Television Shakespeare was aired between 1978 and 1985, and the second series of The Hollow Crown was part of the BBC celebrations for the quartercentenary of Shakespeare's death, with the first series, in 2012, being part of the Olympic year celebrations.

The three chapters of this thesis come together to offer a detailed critical study of the body of Margaret in performance between 1963 and 2016, and each chapter builds to create a detailed analysis of the impact that the cultural moment, the theatrical or televisual fashions, and the mode of production has had on the body of Margaret in performance.

In a display that embodies two of her seemingly conflicting roles, Queen Margaret enters the court carrying the decapitated head of her lover, the Duke of Suffolk. Those around her (with the exception of her husband, the King) seem to notice or care little, and as the lords of the court attempt to urge Henry to flee London, Margaret clutches the head of her lover to her breast. Whilst the court plan their escape, Margaret speaks asides (which in performance are often given directly to the audience) about her love, her grief, and her desire for revenge. This moment, which sits near the centre of *2 Henry VI* (4.4), is one that many actors who have played Margaret highlight as key to the character, and especially to her development throughout the four plays of the first tetralogy. Dame Peggy Ashcroft, who played Margaret in the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) 1963 cycle *The Wars of the Roses*, found the crux of the character was solving "the problem of presenting with credibility a woman who could carry her lover's severed head on to the stage and play a scene holding it in her arms" (Ashcroft, 1973, p. 7). It is a moment that brings to the fore Margaret's body, in which she localises her grief, whilst mourning the loss of her lover's body, asking "Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast; / But where's the body that I should embrace?" (4.4.5-6) The image on stage or screen also shows Margaret performing her multiple roles at once. Through the

cradling of her lover's decapitated head publicly at the court, she performs the role of wife, mother, lover, and avenging grieving widow simultaneously.

The development of Margaret as a character across the first tetralogy, and the fascinating nature of the other women in the plays, has been highlighted in studies of the history plays in the last thirty years. This critical study of the embodiment of Margaret in performance seeks to apply some of these insights made about the early modern playtexts to the performance of Margaret in selected British cycles of the first tetralogy. Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin explain, in *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories*, that

it might seem strange that feminist critics have valued plays that represent women in demonic terms, but although the early plays tend to demonize female characters, they also record women's power as orators, as warriors, as custodians of dynastic legitimacy.

(1997, p. 26)

Women in the first tetralogy have power, and though this power often leads to their destruction (for example Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI* and Eleanor Cobham in *2 Henry VI*), there still exists in the plays of the first tetralogy the ability to embody this female power on stage or screen.

Robert Shaughnessy, in *Representing Shakespeare: England, History and the RSC*, argues that "the concept of the cycle, combining a sense of the sequential progression of moral and political causes and effects with that of an eternal recurrence which eradicates difference and change, generates its own meanings" (1994, p. 38). There is both a progressive and repetitive nature to cycles in performance, and the study of Margaret, as the only character who appears in all four plays of the first tetralogy, affords a unique opportunity to analyse both the "sequential progression" and the "eternal recurrence" of productions. When performed in a cycle, the embodied development of Margaret from youth to old age, and how this has been interpreted in performance, can be used as a lens through which to analyse a cycle and how it reflects the cultural context in which it has been produced. The three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III* chronicle Margaret's life, from her entrance in *1 Henry VI* as the bright eyed ingenue, to her exit in *Richard III* as the embittered old

crone. However, as Howard and Rackin write, “no major critical studies have based their analysis of the plays’ progression on her development.” (p. 218) Since Howard and Rackin’s 1997 statement there have indeed been a number of critical studies and essays on Margaret’s character and development, especially from a feminist perspective. Thomas A. Pendleton, in the introduction to his edited *Henry VI: Critical Essays*, argues that “in many ways, these plays are made for a feminist approach” (2009, p. 20), and the book contains chapters that focus both explicitly on feminist criticism, such as ‘Shakespeare’s Medieval Devils and Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI*: Semiotics, Iconography, and Feminist Criticism’ by James J. Paxson (p. 127), and on Margaret’s narrative development, such as Naomi C. Liebler and Lisa Scancellia Shea’s ‘Shakespeare’s Queen Margaret: Unruly or Unruled?’ (p. 79). Liebler and Shea’s chapter focusses on Margaret’s development in the text, and they argue that she moves through each of the four Jungian archetypes of femininity (virgin, wife, mother, crone), and that in each of the roles she has a mirror, or parallel. Liebler and Shea’s analysis has been of particular use in this study when examining how Margaret fulfils each of these roles, and how the selected cycles have highlighted or marginalised her theatrical mirrors.

Like many considerations of Margaret since Howard and Rackin’s 1997 observation that no critical studies have used Margaret’s development as a lens of examination, Liebler and Shea’s analysis is of the early modern playtexts, and not of Margaret in performance. This critical study, however, analyses the embodied performance of Margaret’s development, and how selected cycles have presented her and her theatrical mirrors. The three chapters of this study analyse how the presentation of Margaret reflects prevailing ideas of femininity and womanhood of the time in which the cycles were produced, and explore how staged and televised productions either centre Margaret and her development in the cycle, or how they at times marginalise her in the tetralogy’s narrative.

The detailed and focussed study of the embodiment of Margaret in performance enables a further exploration of which forms of female power are considered transgressive and cause women to be demonised throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. As Liebler and Shea argue, Margaret is particularly emblematic of the transgressive nature of female power as she “sustains a feminine autonomy by resisting patriarchal definition of femininity;

she will not be subjugated or silenced, or defined by those around her, despite their persistent attempts to do so.” (2009, p. 79) The form of Margaret’s resistance becomes reflective of the socio-political and theatrical or televisual climate in which a cycle occurs. Carol Chillington Rutter, in ‘Of tygers’ hearts and players’ hides’, examines the staging of key moments for Margaret and Joan in selected RSC cycles of the first tetralogy. Rutter analyses how Margaret’s character and development creates the potential to examine twentieth and twenty-first century female stereotypes, and proposes that

if the Margaret whom Shakespeare scripted anticipated female stereotyping (and even provided a language to conduct it), she likewise interrogated it and gave contemporary women a language for interrogating the cultural valuation of women they themselves were negotiating, if not violently subverting, in their own lives.

(2006, p. 189)

Rutter identifies that Margaret does not fit simply into a particular role or stereotype, and even as she is potentially being placed into such a category in performance, she simultaneously is challenging and even dismantling it.

Anna Kamaralli, in ‘Daunted at a Woman’s Sight?: The Use and Abuse of Female Presence in Performances of the Histories as Cycles’, uses Australian productions to highlight the issue of attempting to place Margaret into a stereotyped category without challenging or interrogating it.

Whatever else the Margaret of the text may be, she is unquestionably articulate, but denying her voice in preference for a visually signalled caricature of femininity (drag queen, scarlet woman, dominatrix, porn siren) is by now looking like a habitual feature of staging her.

(2010, p. 182)

Though it may possible in performance to attempt to confine Margaret to a singular role, stereotype, or caricature, Margaret herself defies such easy categorisation. Not only does she develop from the young maid of *1 Henry VI* to the grieving mother and widow of *Richard III*, but, as Rutter highlights, she herself provides the language to interrogate such a categorisation. Penny Gay,

when discussing the impact female actors have on parts written for boy players, argues that “women can choose, to a certain extent, how far their performance will embody — or perhaps more accurately, refuse to embody — their culture’s idea of femininity” (1996, p. 3). This study examines the female body of Margaret in performance as a site of representation and embodiment of female transgression, and how the cycles, when placed in their own historical and theatrical or televisual context, embody (or refuse to embody) the prevalent conceptions of female transgression.

The study is building on the work of Shakespeare performance studies scholars who read Shakespearean performance — and specifically the performance of female characters — through a critical framework of the body. Rutter, in her highly influential text *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare’s Stage*, argues that the playtext “tells only part of the story: that, until the text he didn’t write down — the performance text — is recuperated, re-imagined, put back into play and accounted for by spectators, we’re reading only half Shakespeare’s play.” (2001, p. xv) Pascale Aebischer, in *Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance*, articulates how this shift to read the body outside of the playtext foregrounds the analysis of those often disempowered, and how

bodies that are marginalised in playtexts and literary criticism may come centrestage in performance and performance studies. There, these silenced, stigmatised, mutilated, erased bodies fill the empty spaces of our stages and screens, their textual absence compensated for by their physical presence.

(2004, p. 5)

This study locates its analysis of the performance of Margaret in the body. Susan Bordo, in theorising about the body as a site of reproduction in the context of representations of femininity, explores how the body “is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body” (2003, p. 165). This “powerful symbolic form” is particularly resonant in performance, where the body is both a performance object and a performative object, and representation can be

analysed within the context of both cultural and theatrical constructions of the body.

The body has been theorised by sociologist Anthony Synnott as a “sponge” (1993, p. 1) that absorbs cultural meaning, and by cultural theorist and performance artist Sandy Stone as “screens” (1997, p. 350) on which political or medical ideas have been projected. However, both of these metaphors see the female body as determined or “disciplined” (Foucault, 1991) by society. Sandra Lee Bartky highlights that Foucault’s examples of the disciplined body (such as the schoolboy and the soldier) are male, and that Foucault does not discuss explicitly the disciplined female body (1997, p. 132). Bartky does however, and furthers Foucault’s ideas by writing that “the disciplinary power that inscribes femininity in the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular” (1997, p. 142). Bartky’s description of the omnipresent political disciplinary power is reminiscent of Butler’s performative theory of the body as “a set of boundaries, individual and social, politically signified and maintained” (2007, p. 46). Bartky’s and Butler’s disciplined and boundaried body, Synnott’s “sponge”, and Stone’s “screens”, all lead back to the female body as a site of political and cultural discourse. This underlying cultural discourse can then be read when looking at the female body in performance, enabling performance history to also be a feminist history.

This study reads the body of Margaret in the performance of cycles in great detail, using her performed body, and the performed bodies of her theatrical mirrors, as a lens through which to analyse theatrical and cultural attitudes to femininity and female sexuality, to examine the way in which both theatre and television can present and represent female figures, and to study the impact of adaptation on female characters in the first tetralogy. In order to read the body in the level of detail required for such analysis, the study has focussed on stable images in which to ground the reading, which are either performance photographs from the archive, or films made for television. This theoretical framework has led to the study being selective in which cycles are analysed in detail.

The focussed critical study of these cycles provides a unique opportunity to explore in depth the presentation and representation of Margaret as a character and her development in the context of other key female characters in

the cycle and in a particular theatrical, televisual, and socio-political moment. The four cycles are also selected from two major British institutions, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and the study interrogates how approaches and attitudes to the performance of Shakespeare at these institutions is reflected in the cycles. The performative nature of Margaret's body onstage (and the embodied performance of her theatrical mirrors) provides a lens through which to analyse her character and development, from the representative body in photographs, through the body being centred (both literally and metaphorically), to the body being marginalised. The examining of Margaret's character development in performance through the lens of the body highlights parallels and connections across the (over) fifty year period of time in which the chosen cycles were produced, and creates an approach that is both specific and flexible in how it can be applied to the study of Margaret as a character and the nature of her development across cycles.

The four cycles this study examines were chosen for the unique opportunities they provide to study Margaret and the female body on stage and screen. The two staged RSC cycles studied are *The Wars of the Roses* (1963), adapted by John Barton, directed by Peter Hall, and featuring Dame Peggy Ashcroft as Margaret; and the three parts of *Henry VI* (1977) directed by Terry Hands. Though Hands' production stopped short of Margaret's final development of her character by not including *Richard III*, it still was an unadapted version of the early plays of the tetralogy, meaning much of Margaret remained intact compared to other cycles. It was also the next version of the early plays of the tetralogy produced by the RSC, and was after the sexual revolution in the United Kingdom, and starred Helen Mirren as Margaret. Where Peggy Ashcroft inhabited the role of Margaret as a renowned Shakespearean, it was Mirren's body and sexuality that became the focus of critics and the media. The two chosen RSC cycles were produced either side of the sexual revolution, and the performance of Margaret can be read to both understand contemporary cultural constructions of femininity and female sexuality, and also a change in the RSC's approach and management. The two selected screen cycles — both made for television (rather than televised staged productions, such as the BBC's 1965 broadcast of Barton and Hall's *The Wars of the Roses*) — each again provide opportunities to read the body of Margaret in

performance and her development across a cycle, as the recorded medium enables multiple viewings of specific moments in a way, that though initially seeming wholly different to the reconstruction of a staged performance from archive material, still provides a stable image from which to read the body in detail. Jane Howell's 1983 cycle demonstrates a theatrical televisual approach where the director centres Margaret both literally and metaphorically; and Dominic Cooke's 2016 *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, shows a contemporary filmic televisual approach where the director prioritises Richard and marginalises the female body of Margaret and her mirrors.

The selected cycles also provide the opportunity to examine them within the context of two national institutions (the RSC and the BBC), and the pairs of cycles were produced consecutively within each company (albeit with a thirty-three year gap between Howell's and Cooke's productions). *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) was the RSC's first major cycle of the tetralogy, which Peggy Ashcroft described as a "living representation of what such a company could achieve" (Pearson, 1990, p. ix), and the cycle "established the reputation and identity of the fledgling RSC" (Shaughnessy, 1994, p 19). By 1977, the management of the RSC had changed, with Peter Hall now Artistic Director of the National Theatre Company, Trevor Nunn had been running the RSC since 1968. In 1978, the year after *Hands'* cycle, Hands would become Co-Artistic Director with Nunn, eventually running the company by himself from 1986 to 1991. This critical study locates its analysis of the RSC cycles both within the cultural shift of the early 1960s to late 1970s, and the shift in management between the two cycles.

The two BBC cycles in the study were both part of larger BBC projects. Jane Howell's 1983 cycle formed part of the BBC/Time-Life complete works project, which aimed to film the entire Shakespearean canon, with relatively uncut text. Dominic Cooke's 2016 *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* was the second series of the *The Hollow Crown*, a project to film the two tetralogies. The first series consisted of four episodes (one for each of the plays of the second tetralogy), and was broadcast in 2012, the same year as the London Olympics and swells of British patriotism. Cooke's cycle also formed part of the Shakespeare Festival produced by the BBC as a way of celebrating the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's death. Unlike Howell's earlier theatrically styled production, it was Shakespeare "for the *Game of Thrones* generation"

(Hanks, 2016, p. 100). Andrew Scott, in an interview with Stephen Colbert, argued for not cutting plays of Shakespeare (such as the nearly four hour long *Hamlet*, directed by Robert Icke in 2017, in which Scott starred), stating that “we binge watch T.V. We watch five hours of television if it’s exciting, so the idea is don’t cut it down, just make it four hours of really exciting plays” (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2019). Cooke’s cycle combined both, adapting the four plays from approximately twelve hours of theatre to six hours of television, and though each of the three episodes was broadcast over a three week period, all the episodes were available on BBC iPlayer to be ‘binge watched’ as desired, as if they were the latest release of a hit Netflix show.

The close reading and analysis of the two RSC and two BBC cycles in this study is done within the context of the other major cycles that were produced in the U.K. between 1963 and 2016. Soon after Howell’s 1983 BBC cycle, the newly formed English Shakespeare Company (ESC) toured their own adaptation. *The Wars of the Roses* (1987) was representative of the ESC’s iconoclastic approach to Shakespeare and the idea of a Shakespearean theatre company. Directed by company co-founder Michael Bogdanov and starring company co-founder Michael Pennington (both veterans of the RSC), the cycle used a combination of contemporary costuming, ranging from a punk Jack Cade to a Mafia boss Richard III. Fascinatingly, the cycle adapted Joan (Francesca Ryan) to become purely saint, cutting the language of conjuring and witchcraft entirely, and Margaret was figured as the most important Margaret in Britain at the time: Margaret Thatcher. With rigid costuming, coiffed hair, and, when leading the armies of Lancaster, dressed in a skirted version of an English army officer’s uniform, June Watson’s Margaret embodied both the transgressive French queen and the Iron Lady. Whilst the ESC were touring their *The Wars of the Roses*, Adrian Noble directed a new adaptation of the tetralogy entitled *The Plantagenets* (1988) for the RSC. Amid the pomp and circumstance of the high budget cycle, Noble foregrounded the gendered power struggle that sits at the centre of the plays. After her execution, the corpse of Joan was turned into an English flag of victory, and after the murder of Prince Edward, Noble used the repeated sound of women’s chattering voices to heighten Margaret’s grief and highlight that grief itself now belonged to women moving into *Richard III*.

The RSC did not produce the early plays of the tetralogy again until 1994, when Katie Mitchell’s *Henry VI: The Battle for the Throne* (a one play

adaptation which consisted mostly of 3 *Henry VI*, with small additions from 2 *Henry VI* and *Richard III*) drew explicit parallels to the contemporaneous conflict of the Bosnian War. Mitchell used the brutal civil war of the play as an allegory for contemporary conflict, and reviews in the press were particularly struck by her emphasis on the son who killed his father and the father who killed his son. Margaret in Mitchell's production was, as Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Carol Chillington Rutter highlight, like Brueghal's *Dulle Griet* come to life (2009, p. 177). Speaking in heavily French accented English, with her son following her through the play like her shadow, Ruthie Mitchell's Margaret was driven to lead the armies of Lancaster dressed in full black armour and gold mask, due to her strong belief in her son's, and her husband's, birthright. An actor in Mitchell's cycle, Nick Bagnall (who played Gabriel Thorpe, a character constructed for the adaptation), in 2013 directed the three parts of *Henry VI* as a touring production for Shakespeare's Globe. The cycle used a cast of fourteen, and Beatriz Romilly literally embodied the theatrical mirrors of Mary Doherty's Margaret that represent the Jungian archetypes of virgin, wife, and mother, by playing Joan, Eleanor, and Elizabeth.

Prior to the announcement of the RSC's upcoming adaptation *The Wars of the Roses* (2022), the most recent production of the plays of the first tetralogy for the RSC had been as part of Michael Boyd's *The Histories* cycle (2007). Boyd had directed the three parts of *Henry VI* for the RSC in 2000, but his 2007 *The Histories* cycle placed them within the context of performing the two tetralogies together, running from *Richard II* to *Richard III*. With a cast of 34 (only five of whom were women), Boyd not only mirrored Joan and Margaret, but made the parallel between the two women physically realised by casting Katy Stephens in the 2007 revival (and Fiona Bell in 2000) as both Joan and Margaret, transforming from one maid of France to the next.

In 2015, Trevor Nunn staged a revival of Barton and Hall's adaptation of *The Wars of the Roses* at the Rose Theatre Kingston. The cycle received mixed reviews, but interestingly seemed to be consistently reviewed as a cycle, rather than three individual plays. Joely Richardson as Margaret, like Dame Peggy Ashcroft who played Margaret in Barton and Hall's original cycle (1963), affected a thick French accent to emphasise her status as the outsider queen. However, unlike Ashcroft, who was praised for her distinctive voice, Dominic Maxwell in *The Times* accused Richardson's French accent of "hijacking her

performance" (Maxwell, 2015). It was Barton and Hall's male dominated adaptation and the casting of only white actors, that caused reviewers, such as Susanna Clapp, to view it as a "tribute pageant" (2015) to the RSC of the 1960s, rather than a fresh new interpretation of the plays.

Since Dominic Cooke's 2016 cycle, there have been two single play adaptations of the early plays of the first tetralogy. In response to what Jeanie O'Hare calls the many "boys-own edit of the War of the Roses" (2018, p. 5) that have been produced, including Barton and Hall's adaptation, O'Hare wrote *Queen Margaret*, a new play that follows Margaret's development throughout the first tetralogy. O'Hare foregrounded key moments of Margaret's character development, and placed them within the context of her torn sense of French and English identity. As Henry prayed, Margaret would speak with the avenging spirit of Joan, who influenced Margaret to enact revenge on the patriarchal English lords who had destroyed both her and France. Though a single play, O'Hare foregrounded Margaret's development across the three parts of *Henry VI* until her voyage back to France after the murder of Prince Edward. The issue of male centred adaptation and the Wars of the Roses narrative that O'Hare highlighted in her work is one that this study explores in detail in the third chapter whilst examining the impact of adaptation on Margaret and her mirrors.

Another single play adaptation of the early plays of the first tetralogy was produced by Shakespeare's Globe in 2019. The play condensed the second two parts of *Henry VI* into one (omitting the first part entirely), and played alongside *Richard III* in the intimate Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. This was only the second time Shakespeare's Globe had produced the early plays of the first tetralogy since their touring production of the three parts of *Henry VI* in 2013. However, they have produced a number of stand alone *Richard III*s, including the all male production directed by Tim Carroll and starring Mark Rylance, from which Margaret was completely excised. As is the practice under Michelle Terry's artistic directorship, the 2019 *Henry VI* company decided on parts sometime into the rehearsal period. The production had a cross-cast Margaret (played by Steffan Donnelly) whose embodiment of the character included gendered performance markers in the costuming, as Margaret wore an orange taffeta skirt and delicate tiara even in battle.

Analysing Howell's (relatively) uncut teleplays and Dominic Cooke's three episode series, raises questions of adaptation, and the (often detrimental) effect on Margaret and the other women of the first tetralogy. Questions as to what *is* adaptation abound in Shakespeare studies, and Margaret Jane Kidnie, in her work on *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, rather than seeing adaptation as a static concept, views it as constantly developing, arguing that "adaptation [is] an evolving category [that] is closely tied to how the work modifies over time and from one reception space to another" (2009, p. 5). In establishing her own definition of adaptation as a reciprocal developing process, Kidnie references Ruby Cohn's theory of adaptation, which is particularly useful when thinking about adaptations of the first tetralogy within the context of this study. Kidnie summarises Cohn as arguing that "an 'adaptation' involves the addition of new material alongside substantial cutting and rearrangement" (2009, p. 3). By this definition, Barton's three part *Wars of the Roses* (1963) and Cooke's three part *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* (2016) are both adaptations, whereas Hands' three part 1977 *Henry VI*s and Howell's four part complete cycle (1983) are not.

In order to gain an insight into the production of the cycles that form this study, critical performance histories, academic theatre histories, and artistic and production perspectives have been used. Hampton-Reeves' and Rutter's excellent *Shakespeare in Performance: The Henry VI Plays* (2009) is the most complete study and survey of major British performances of the first three plays of the tetralogy from the early modern period to the early 2000s. David Addenbrooke's *The Royal Shakespeare Company: The Peter Hall Years* (1974) provides a critical insight into the early years of the RSC and production of *The Wars of the Roses* (1963). Shaughnessy's *Representing Shakespeare: England, History and the RSC* (1994) has helped in understanding the development of the plays of the first tetralogy as performance cycles, as well providing detail of the social and theatrical context of the two RSC cycles studied. From an artistic and production perspective, Richard Pearson's *A Band of Arrogant and United Heroes: The Story of the Royal Shakespeare Company Production of The Wars of the Roses* (1990) was written from his perspective as an actor in the *Wars* company, and utilised his ability to interview the cast members and creatives from the cycle. Colin Chambers' *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company: Creativity and the Institution* (2004) places both *The Wars of the Roses* and Hands' 1977 *Henry VI*

cycle within the context of the company's management style and artistic direction. For Jane Howell's BBC cycle (1983) the study utilises Susan Willis' *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (1991), her account of the entire BBC/Time-life project from her vantage point on set and inside rehearsal studios. Both the RSC's *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) and Howell's BBC/Time-life cycle had editions of the text they worked with published alongside the BBC television broadcast. These editions contain not just the working playtext, but interviews with the cast and creatives, and from these the intentions of the directors can begin to be understood, as well as decisions about cutting and adaptation.

Pascale Aebischer, in her work on analysing the body in the performance of Shakespearean tragedies, proposes the need to recognise different "authors" of performances and playtexts as a way to navigate the difficulties of writing about specific productions, and the distinction between performances and plays.

Writing about performance and considering performances alongside the printed playtexts they are based on [...] is fraught with difficulties of a theoretical nature, as performances and playtexts have distinct 'authors' (crudely: playwright versus performers) and represent two fundamentally different modes of textuality that stand in a complex relationship to one another.

(2004, p. 13)

Whilst not defining all performance as adaptation (which, as Kidnie (2009, p. 5) highlights, has the potential to create a false equivalence between all forms of production and adaptation, making the word adaptation redundant), Aebischer highlights the distinction between playtext and performance text. This distinction is particularly important to understand in the context of Shakespearean performance and 'Shakespeare's' playtext where questions of authority and the authorial voice abound.

The question of authorship and authority in relation to the plays of the first tetralogy became headline news in 2016, when Oxford University Press announced that, due to research carried out by "a team of 23 academics from five countries" (Alberge, 2016), it would be crediting Christopher Marlowe as

co-author of the three parts of *Henry VI* in *The New Oxford Shakespeare*, and the plays are described as “revised by Shakespeare” (Taylor *et al*, 2016a, p.vii). Though not headline news, the edition also co-credits Thomas Nashe as the author of *Henry VI Part 1*, with the text being “adapted by Shakespeare” (p.vii), and all three play are also attributed to Anonymous. Though the authorship question surrounding the plays of Shakespeare, and especially the first tetralogy, is current and important as it has prompted new ideas and research about early modern theatrical collaboration, all the cycles this study examines utilise the name ‘Shakespeare’ and the cultural capital afforded to that name.

W.B. Worthen, in *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*, argues “that directors, far from liberating an authentic Shakespeare, consistently work to authorize their own efforts by locating them under the sign of ‘Shakespeare.’” (1997, p. 39) The two institutions that produced the cycles this study focusses on — the RSC and the BBC — use the name and idea of Shakespeare as cultural currency. The Royal Shakespeare Company, self-evidently, has used the name of Shakespeare as part of their branding and identity. The two BBC cycles examined in this study were part of bigger projects through which the BBC presented themselves as the arbiters of televised Shakespeare: the BBC/Time-Life *BBC Television Shakespeare* which produced the complete works and broadcast them between 1978 and 1985; and the second series of *The Hollow Crown*, which ran as part of the BBC’s 2016 *Shakespeare Festival* which celebrated the quatercentenary of Shakespeare’s death. Like they had for the broadcast of Barton and Hall’s *The Wars of the Roses* in 1965, the RSC and the BBC worked together to broadcast *Shakespeare Live! From the RSC* as part of the festival. The authority of Shakespeare as both an author and a cultural touchstone means that even the cycles that are, by Cohn’s definition, adaptations retain the name of ‘Shakespeare’. This is particularly interesting when looking at the first tetralogy which dramatises one of the most famous periods in English history (the Wars of the Roses), where the name of ‘Shakespeare’ and the cultural capital that it affords is combined with medieval kings and queens and the iconic red and white roses, making productions of these plays not just one that draws on the touchstone of Shakespeare, but the founding of the Tudor dynasty and of English national identity.

Kidnie argues that “it is sometimes assumed, perhaps for the lack of a better alternative, that the printed text of Shakespeare’s plays provides the fixed

point against which theatrical production can be monitored.” (2009, p. 2) This argument is compelling, especially when considering Kidnie’s wider theory of adaptation and “the work” (2009, p. 5) developing and influencing each other through time. Though this study uses a control text from which to cite, this is not considered as the ‘true’ or ‘real’ fixed form of the play. All references to the plays, unless otherwise stated — or when cited directly from recorded media— are to the Arden Shakespeare Third Series editions. Though each of the plays has a different editor, there is a consistency to using one series, and of the major scholarly Shakespeare play editions (Oxford, New Cambridge, Arden Shakespeare), it is the Arden that has the most recent publication date (*Richard III* edited by James R. Siemon was first published in 2009).

It is interesting to consider, in the context of Kidnie’s theory about the continuous interaction between the work and adaptation, that the plays of the first tetralogy were themselves adapted from chronicle history (specifically the chronicles of Edward Hall and Raphael Holinshed), and that the *Oxford New Shakespeare* cites *1 Henry VI* as an adaptation of a play by Marlowe and Nashe. To twentieth and twenty-first century audiences, much of the plays’ refiguring and rewriting of history is not apparent, and the understanding of who these figures were in history is not general public knowledge. There are, however, a few instances where the plays’ rewriting of history becomes of importance to the understanding of Margaret’s position and development in the cycles. One is that she is present in the play of *Richard III*. Richard III became king in 1483 and died in 1485, and historically Margaret left England for France and died there in 1482. She “returns unhistorically in *Richard III* like a voice from the dead to recall the crimes of the past and pour out curses on her old enemies.” (Howard & Rackin, 1997, p. 109) Another change from the chronicle history that impacts Margaret is *2 Henry VI*’s bringing together of Margaret and the Duchess of Gloucester, Eleanor Cobham. Eleanor had been imprisoned in 1441, and Margaret of Anjou did not come to England and marry King Henry VI until 1445. Liebler and Shea propose that this anachronism was purposeful in order to draw a parallel between the two women, arguing that “by extending Eleanor’s ‘life’ Shakespeare underscores Margaret’s and Eleanor’s comparable roles as wives.” (2009, p. 85) The altering of history in general in the plays is not the subject of this study, but these particular instances aid the understanding of

Margaret and her development across the cycle in the context of both history, and the other women of the first tetralogy.

The parallel between Margaret and Eleanor as wives in *2 Henry VI* is one of the ways in which Liebler and Shea (2009) argue that Margaret fulfils Jungian archetypes of femininity as she moves through the tetralogy. They describe that in each play, Margaret shares a specific archetypal role with a parallel female representation: Joan la Pucelle, the maiden warrior in *1 Henry VI*; Gloucester's ambitious wife, Eleanor Cobham, in *2 Henry VI*; Lady Grey, later Queen Elizabeth and the mother of the heir to the throne, in *3 Henry VI*; and the Duchess of York, the bereaved mother and cursing crone in *Richard III*. The second and third chapter of this study furthers the analysis of the body of Margaret to include these female characters that Liebler and Shea identify as Margaret's mirrors, and how the cycles foreground and centre them, or marginalise them as both a reflection and extension of Margaret.

Each of the following chapters has a different focus, both in terms of the cycles examined and the theoretical framework used, though all are a study of the body of Margaret and her theatrical mirrors in performance. The four selected cycles are explored in chronological order, allowing for some consideration of theatrical and televisual development, both in terms of style and cultural influences. The first chapter, "My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses": Hair as Representation of Gender and Culture in Peggy Ashcroft's and Helen Mirren's Performances of Queen Margaret', uses photographs from two Royal Shakespeare Company productions to focus on the body of Margaret through an in-depth study of hair. Production photographs of Dame Peggy Ashcroft in the 1963 adaptation *The Wars of the Roses* are considered alongside photographs of Helen Mirren in Terry Hands' 1977 productions of the three parts of *Henry VI*. By analysing the photographs through the presentation of hair — which sociologist Anthony Synnott describes as "an ideological symbol" (1993, p. 115) — a performance history can be written that not only examines the progression of Margaret throughout the plays of the tetralogy, but the differing social attitudes to the aspects of womanhood and femininity that Margaret represents both before and after the sexual revolution in the United Kingdom (the contraceptive pill having been made available to unmarried women on the NHS from 1967). Through the use of photographs, the chapter is

an exploration of Margaret's body onstage, and how hair can communicate a wealth of social and political meaning.

The second chapter, "'Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!': The Centring of Margaret in Jane Howell's BBC cycle (1983)', is an in-depth study of the first tetralogy for the BBC/Time-life series *The BBC Television Shakespeare*. Howell's cycle, being part of a complete works project with relatively uncut texts, allowed for an exploration of key moments in Margaret's narrative, and created the fullest performance realisation of Margaret's development, as well as other female characters of the plays who are often excised completely or have their parts radically altered. It is Margaret who is the driving narrative force from her first entrance at the end of *1 Henry VI*, until Howell's final closing shot of her cycle, where Margaret sits atop a pile of corpses (comprising of actors from throughout the cycle) maniacally laughing as she clutches the corpse of Richard to her (*Richard III*, 1983, 03:46:32). At key moments, Howell almost affixes the camera to Margaret, centring her within its lens. Howell utilises the opportunities afforded by the medium of television — the focus of the camera to define spaces and highlight certain characters — whilst still retaining a sense of theatricality and meta-theatricality. The cycle had a stage-like "single, permanent set" (Hampton-Reeves & Rutter, 2009, p. 117) which changed and aged as the narrative progressed. Howell used the theatricality of the set — characters entering and exiting the space as if it were a stage — to centre Margaret within the pseudo-stage space, affording her traditionally powerful stage positions, whilst simultaneously using the camera to centre Margaret within its frame. In her cycle, Howell centred Margaret, and the second chapter explores what happens when the body of Margaret ends up, literally, on top.

Whilst Howell utilised the (relatively) full text of the tetralogy afforded to her by the BBC/Time-Life project to create a Margaret centred cycle, Dominic Cooke's 2016 BBC cycle was adapted into three parts with a star studded cast and a *Game of Thrones* style aesthetic. The third chapter of the study, "'Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret": Adapting and Marginalising Margaret in Dominic Cooke's BBC Cycle (2016)', examines *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, and how women in it are used, both by characters in the adaptation and by the adaptation itself, and then contained and engulfed or destroyed. Margaret — unlike the other women in Cooke's cycle — asserts some control over her body,

and therefore is not easily used by the men around her, or by the adaptation itself. However, the adaptation is centred around the star turn of Benedict Cumberbatch as Richard, and as it shifts its attention further towards Richard and his inner turmoil (as evidenced by the introduction of soliloquies to camera which are notably absent from earlier episodes of the cycle), Margaret's body becomes a representation and embodiment of Richard's psyche. This final chapter analyses how a focus on the Wars of the Roses narrative in an adaptation of the first tetralogy can cause the marginalisation of female characters who become tools and devices for both other characters and the adaptation, and how it is through their female body that these women — including Margaret — are contained and then engulfed.

This critical study combines feminist examinations of the plays of the first tetralogy, critical studies which focus on Margaret's narrative development, and an analysis of the female body in performance. It analyses how Margaret and her theatrical mirrors are performed in a cycle through the close examination of key moments in Margaret's narrative development, from virginal young girl, to bereaved old woman. The four selected cycles of the first tetralogy that this study examines provide a unique opportunity for the analysis of Margaret and her theatrical mirrors in performance. From representations of femininity and female sexuality either side of the sexual revolution in the United Kingdom, through the centring of Margaret in a meta-theatrical televised cycle, to the issues of adaptation and the impact on Margaret and her mirrors, each chapter analyses the body of Margaret as a site of cultural and theatrical or televisual representation.

“My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses”: Hair as Representation of
Gender and Culture in Peggy Ashcroft’s and Helen Mirren’s Performances of
Queen Margaret

The first chapter contributes to the central aim of this study – which is to analyse how the body of Margaret has been impacted by the cultural and social context in which she was performed, the theatrical context of the cycle in which she appeared, and the mode of production of that cycle – by analysing two theatrical Margarets performed either side of the sexual revolution (Peggy Ashcroft in 1963, and Helen Mirren in 1977). This large cultural shift had a particular impact on British society’s attitude towards women’s bodies and female sexuality, and this chapter explores if it is possible to see this change reflected in the two different Margarets, and simultaneously aims to use the two Margarets as an example through which to understand the wider cultural changes. Specifically, this chapter examines two Royal Shakespeare Company Margarets – Peggy Ashcroft (1963) and Helen Mirren (1977) – through a study of their hair, and examines what hair as a site of theatrical analysis can reveal about conceptions of gender in performance. The chapter closely reads eight performance photographs and the hair in these photographs is the focal point through which the chapter analyses the impact changes in social attitudes, specifically the sexual revolution and women’s liberation, had on the representation of Margaret’s body in performance. In addition to this chapter’s primary focus on the impact of the cultural moment on the body of Margaret in performance, it also utilises the presentation of hair in the photographs to consider how a change in theatrical management at the Royal Shakespeare Company altered the approach to both the design of the two cycles studied, and to the performance of Margaret in each cycle.

When looking at the powerful women of the first tetralogy, the female body, with all of its inherent political discourse, can act as a magnifying glass through which to understand the theatrical and socio-political environment of the productions of the plays. The first tetralogy contains some of Shakespeare’s most formidable women: Joan la Pucelle, Margaret of Anjou, Eleanor Cobham, Lady Elizabeth Grey, the Duchess of York. However, in comparison to the mass of lords who bicker, and fight, and tussle for supremacy, they *say* relatively

little. Shakespearean performance is often considered as primarily the performance of language, and of voice. The sheer number of specialist Shakespeare vocal texts — such as Cicely Berry’s *The Voice and the Actor* (1991), Kristin Linklater’s *Freeing Shakespeare’s Voice: The Actor’s Guide to Talking the Text* (1992), and Patsy Rodenburg’s *Speaking Shakespeare* (2005) to name just a few — are testament to the idea of the performance of Shakespeare being linked intrinsically to the voice. Though Berry, Linklater, and Rodenburg all put the body at the forefront of their work on the voice, arguing for a symbiosis of the two, they do not focus on the body when it is not speaking. Yet, when a female actor is playing one of these powerful women onstage, she will often be physically present, but not speaking. Russ McDonald, in reflecting on Peggy Ashcroft’s performance of Margaret of Anjou in RSC’s 1963 adaptation *The Wars of the Roses*, posits that “it is commonplace that great acting differs from good that the supreme performer is as committed when silent as when speaking” (2014, p. 268). McDonald’s distinction here, between the good and the great actor, is focussed on the body, and that the silent body rather than the voiced one is the marker of the “supreme performer” — even in Shakespeare. Carol Chillington Rutter, moving beyond mere silence and into the realm of the corpse by looking at the dead bodies of Ophelia in the grave and Cordelia in Lear’s arms, argues that “in the theatre, the body bears the brunt of performance; it is the material Shakespeare’s text works on, works through” (2001, p. xii). Like McDonald, Rutter places the body in the foreground of the actor’s performance, highlighting that without the body, the text itself would go unspoken. In performed cycles of the first tetralogy, the bodies of these strong female characters remain onstage, despite not speaking. However, the body onstage even when it is not speaking, is *not* silent, it is still there to be viewed, and read, by the audience.

As discussed in the Introduction, the body is a site of representation that is able to be read in performance, even when it is not speaking. Anna Kamaralli — applying the theory of the body as a site of representation to the performance of scolding female characters in the plays of Shakespeare — writes that “our society provides a plethora of visual markers designed to allow the observer to read the female body” (2012, p. 56). Utilising the theories of Bartky, Butler, Synnott, and Stone, in — or on — the body onstage, there exists information about character, society, culture, and theatre. The first two cycles of the first

tetralogy for the RSC featured Peggy Ashcroft as Margaret in the adaptation *The Wars of the Roses* (1963), and Helen Mirren as Margaret in Terry Hands' relatively full text versions of the three parts of *Henry VI* (1977). As Rutter summarises "if you want to know what any culture thinks of women, read its representations. Read the theatre. [...] Read the body" (2001, p. 26). These two cycles of the first tetralogy examined in this chapter keenly illustrate different social attitudes to women and to femininity in the periods they were produced.

This chapter analyses the presentation of hair in archive performance photographs of Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren. It begins with an analysis of why hair itself enables a particularly detailed reading of the body, and what it signifies in contemporary Western Culture, and what it signified in the early modern period. It continues to argue why performance photographs are a particularly useful piece of evidence for analysing hair, before giving detailed critical analysis of performance photographs from the two cycles. Firstly, Peggy Ashcroft throughout *The Wars of the Roses* (1963), from the ingenue, through her relationship with Suffolk (both alive and dead), to her turn as warrior mother. The chapter then looks to Helen Mirren's later performance (1977), and her relationships with her lover Suffolk, her husband Henry, and her nemesis York. Through the detailed study of hair in photographs of these two cycles, it is possible to understand the change in the approach and politics of the RSC, and the changes in wider cultural understandings of female sexuality, and how this was embodied in the performance of Margaret.

Hair — whether a wig, or an actor's own hair — struggles to sit naturally within either the study of costume or cosmetics. The ambiguity of how to categorise hair stems from the very nature of hair itself, that it is both public and private. Anthony Synnott has studied hair as an extension of the body and as a site for sociological research. He describes that hair has a "peculiar, perhaps unique, richness and power as a public and physical symbol of the self" (1987, p. 383). It is public as it is viewable and accessible (as it were) to the public. It is personal in that it grows directly from the body, and is left naked to be seen. Hair — as an extension of the theoretical body — can be read in performance to gain understanding of the body, character, and culture.

Hair is a marker of cultural and political identity and throughout the twentieth century hair was a site of cultural reaction. Where social movements that reacted against each other represented this in their hair, the different social

movements were reflected in theatre of the time, and hair itself is theatrical shorthand for citing a certain period. The hippies of the 1960s reacted to the clean cut and highly coiffured hairstyles of the 1950s by both genders allowing their hair to grow long. Peggy Ashcroft's young Margaret in *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) sported a carefully constructed clean cut look which was representative of the late 1950s, especially when compared to Helen Mirren's free flowing locks in Terry Hands' 1977 production of the three parts of *Henry VI*. The skinheads then reacted to the long untamed hair of the hippies by removing all of theirs. Similarly, the punks cut and dyed their hair into previously unconventional shapes and unnatural colours to differentiate themselves from the skinheads. Michael Pennington as Jack Cade donned a Union Jack shirt and wore a shock of red in his hair for the English Shakespeare Company's *The Wars of the Roses* in 1987, drawing on the cultural reference of the previous decade's rebellious hairstyles, looking as much like Johnny Rotten as a fifteenth century rebel. Whereas June Watson, as Margaret in the same production, wore a hairstyle both reminiscent of 1950s coiffure and control, and referencing another contemporary powerful Margaret: Margaret Thatcher. Synnott, crucially, goes as far to say that "hair is perhaps our most powerful symbol of individual and group identity – powerful first because it is physical and therefore extremely personal, and second because, although personal, it is also public rather than private" (1987, p. 381). This power of hair as a representation of both the personal and the public is why it creates an opportunity to study the representation of gender and culture in and of the body in the context of a theatrical production.

Hair is not just a powerful social marker, but an important gender marker as well. Simply, hairstyles for women change far more frequently than for men. At the start of every new year magazines and websites publish articles such as 'The Best Haircuts for Women of 2021, According to Salons Around the Country' (Cacciatore, 2021), and 'Haircuts you'll be asking for in 2020' (Brolley, 2019). The perpetual change in women's hair fashions is evidence of a woman's hair as a site of political and cultural significance. Synnott defines this as the meeting of the "physical" and the "social" body.

With respect to the sociology of the body first, the sociology of hair calls attention to the close relation between the physical body and the social

body in the two aspects of gender and ideology. Gender and ideology are 'made flesh' in the hair as people conform to, or deviate from, the norms, and even deviate from deviant norms; they thereby symbolize their identities with respect to a wide range of phenomena: religious, political, sexual, social, occupational and other.

(1987, p. 405)

Changing hair fashions and whether they are conformed to (such as the seemingly endless stream of women's fashion magazines), or deviated from (such as the hippie and punk movements) are demonstrative of ideology being "made flesh" in the presentation of hair. Synnott's combining and contrasting of the physical and the ideological creates a signifier / signified dualism representative of the performative power of the body onstage, representing physically the performativity of gender and ideology.

Religious doctrine has also played a key role in Western understandings of hair, as in all major Abrahamic religions hair is of religious and cultural importance. Though statistics are difficult to gather about how many women wear Islamic hair coverings (Chalabi, 2013), these are often the ones most discussed in British media (for example, Gayle, 2020; Southern, 2017). However, in Orthodox Judaism, married women traditionally either shave their hair or cover it with a sheitel (wig) or tichel (scarf). Christianity, the official religion of the United Kingdom — despite only 59.5% of the British population identifying themselves as Christian in the last UK census in 2011 (Office of National Statistics, 2011) — also has strong doctrines about hair, and in some branches of Christianity, such as Orthodox Catholicism, women still have to cover their hair in certain situations. For example, whether Catholic or not, women have to cover their hair when meeting the Pope (Kirchgaessner, 2017). Inherent in Christianity is the institutionalisation of religion, and the patriarchal power that is intrinsic to that. In Corinthians 11: 5-10, hair is used to denote strong gender differences at the same time as implementing those differences within the religious doctrine:

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

In both twentieth and twenty-first century Britain, the ideology outlined in Corinthians is most evident in the wedding ceremony, where gender issues are played out publicly on a large scale. Women wear hats and fascinators, and all major department stores have sections for women's wedding headwear. The bride traditionally wears a veil to cover her hair for the "glory of God" and the "glory of the man", and this originally religious item has become such a cultural marker, that even secular brides wear veils. This head covering is a social and religious convention that uses hair — or the covering of hair — as a representation of a woman's subordination to her husband. In the theatre, the decision to cover a character's hair onstage provides as much of an opportunity to read that hair covering as a marker of society and culture as when the hair is uncovered, as the covering of hair has deeply rooted gendered implications.

There is an established historical and cultural precedent for reading or theorising about hair as a marker of social ideology, or a deviation from society itself. In early modern English medical practice, hair was understood as an extension of the humours, and therefore a representation of the nature of the body. Edith Snook, in looking at hair and its cultural and medical significance in early modern England, describes how "the literary and medical discourses that create knowledge about the hair of the head confer on hair the power to document social privilege and permit it to function as a repository for social values" (2015, p. 24). Snook's statement that the early modern view of hair was

as a “repository for social values” is reflective of Synnott’s notion that, in Western culture, hair is a locus of ideology “symbolized in the body” (Synnott, 1987, p. 394). It is not just early modern medical texts that help inform understandings of early modern perceptions of hair. As Snook’s work explores, literary texts, such as Philip Sydney’s *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1580) and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), also use hair as a representation of character, with characters’ traits (both positive and negative) being embodied in their hair. Similarly, as will be discussed, in the early modern theatre, hair appeared in stage directions as a physical indicator used by the actor, and witnessed by the audience, in characterisation.

Snook found that “literary characters who deviate from patriarchal gender norms often have less than ideal hair, which casts into relief the gender politics of hair’s normative, naturalized ideal” (2015, p. 36). Both sociology and early modern literary and cultural studies discuss and explore how hair is highly gendered in its representation. Once a gendered norm or fashion is established, deviation from the norm or fashion implies a deviation from society itself. This is evident in the twentieth century with the visual representation of political reaction in the hair of the hippies, skinheads, and punks.

Snook, in writing about hair and its societal meanings in early modern England, proposes that “departure from normative ideals of beauty denotes alienation from conventional feminine virtue” (2015, p. 37). Margaret is a figure who, through the course of the first tetralogy, becomes increasingly distanced from the “conventional feminine virtue” that Snook describes. In production photographs of Peggy Ashcroft (1963) and Helen Mirren (1977) as Margaret, the way in which they enact this “departure”, and how both Margarets are a threat to the patriarchal order through rejection of, or “alienation from”, feminine virtue, can be read in their hair. However, the way in which each Margaret subverts the patriarchal order of the cycle in which they exist is different, and these distinct forms of subversion are evident in the presentation of their hair across the two cycles.

In the first tetralogy Queen Margaret deviates from the patriarchal gender norms by leading the Lancastrian army and fighting for her son’s succession in the place of her husband Henry VI. There is no reference to Margaret’s hair within the text of the plays, yet in contemporary cycles, the

presentation of Margaret's hair reflects her deviation from the patriarchal gender norms of the production. To read hair in performance is to look at the representation of women and culture in productions, and the socio-political climate in which the cycles were produced. Through the study of hair in production photographs of two Margarets — Peggy Ashcroft (1963) and Helen Mirren (1977) — it is possible to see the change in the performance and politics of the Royal Shakespeare Company across this period, as well as changes in ideas of gender and sexuality in the wider political landscape, and how this was reflected in the performance of Margaret and her development across a cycle.

Using Photographs: Interrogating the Suspended Moment

In writing about exploring the theatrical archive to reconstruct performance, Matthew Reason argues, “disappearance and documentation seem to go hand in hand” (2003, p. 83). For something to have been recorded and documented, there is an implication that it no longer exists in and of itself. Barbara Hodgdon likens the performance scholar writing about theatre, to the archaeologist, arguing that

just as archaeology is ‘about writing around what is obstinately not there,’ writing about performance and performance-in-process depends on a semiotics of absence, and results in constructing a performance-about-performance – a second-order performance, one which stages a reintegration of surviving fragments.

(2016, p. 2)

This “semiotics of absence” creates a reliance on what is left after performance, the fragments from which it is possible to recreate that which only existed in an instant.

Just as an archaeologist may reconstruct the sense or idea of a living breathing Bronze Age settlement from the pieces of everyday life found buried in the ground, a performance scholar attempts to reconstruct a performance from those pieces left behind — the theatrical archive acting as the dig site. These fragments can vary — costumes; props; promptbooks; memos; show reports; archive film footage; call lists; photographs — and all have their uses

for reconstructing both a performance and the process by which it was made. For the specific study of hair in performance, however, it is production photographs that prove particularly important. In a photograph it is possible to see with clarity details of the hair or wig that would not be visible on the grainy broadcast or archive film (especially when considering the era of the two productions that are at the centre of this study), and a photograph is (of course) still, meaning not having to pause a VHS or DVD in order to try to interact with a particular moment.

However, performance photographs are not representations of objective truth or fact, and have their own complexities. Different photographers have different styles and, like all things, fashions change when it comes to performance photography. For example, many earlier performance photographers chose to pose their subjects in shots out of context of the performance (such as Angus McBean's famous images of Vivian Leigh as Lavinia), whereas later the fashion became to capture actual shots of performance in action. The question Rodrigues Villeneuve raises (and aims to answer) when considering whether theatrical photography (as his title proposes) 'Will Always Fail', is key to the analytical use of performance photographs. Villeneuve asks

what exactly do we expect from the photography of theatre? I would say, naïvely, the saving of the performance, which disappears as fast as it is produced. In general, spectators easily resign themselves to this fact. They may even derive much of their pleasure from the singular nature of the event. But the same is not true for journalists, scholars, or historians, who must speak about the performance. They will want to retain something of it. Something material, some tangible trace. Photographs seem a natural choice: isn't the photograph a physico-chemical trace of what happened at one moment on the stage? Are we not in the presence of an imprint of the theatrical real?

(1990, p. 32)

As Villeneuve identifies, performance photographs tend to fall into the domain of those who desire some more tangible trace of performance, who want to look back on a production not just as a personal memory, but to interact with it and

interrogate it. In the case of this critical study, to closely analyse hair in performance.

Conversely, this trace left by a photograph is potentially anti-theatrical. Rutter argues that

the photograph delivers up performance to a later generation of spectators who see things differently. It is essentially distorting: it freezes single moments as if they were frames edited out of film footage, uncannily (for its conceit is suspended animation) capturing theatre's moving images and holding them in stasis. On the one hand, this allows us to pore over them, scrutinizing intensely; on the other, privileging those shots and what they select coerces, even over-determines, over looking.

(2001, pp. 57-58)

Rather than an absolute and accurate representation of a performance, photographs make it possible to look in close detail, but also create the potential to allow the photographs selected from collections to determine the course of the argument. As Barbara Hodgdon writes, "mining the photographic archive, one searches for the image that will validate one's own thesis" (1996, p. 187). Certain photographs are overlooked, and others are closely scrutinised.

It is important to consider the circumstances in which the photographs were taken (for example in rehearsal, in a photo call, or in performance), and why it is those particular photographs that were picked from the contact sheet to be made into full images, and who by. It is also important for the person choosing the photographs out of the archive to understand their own subjective position. Evelyn Gajowski — arguing for a presentist perspective in Shakespeare studies — emphasises that this natural bias when choosing texts (or photographs) should not be hidden behind a façade of academic neutrality, but rather understood as a necessary (and inescapable) part of the academic process. Gajowski states "that facts and texts are not transparent, neutral artefacts that speak for themselves, presentism instead asks us to own up to our subjectivity — the crucial role that we play in choosing literary texts and constructing meanings in those texts" (2009, p. 12). The photographs studied in this chapter were all chosen specifically because they aid in the analysis of the

hair of Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren as a representation of culture and gender in their performances of Margaret. Margaret is always the subject of the photograph (whether on her own, or with others), the photograph is always well lit, and (most importantly) the hair can clearly be seen. There were hundreds of photographs to choose from across the two cycles, yet only eight appear in this study.

Rutter argues that production photographs suspend time, “distorting” (2001, p. 57) a single moment. Villeneuve does not see this freezing of time as a distortion, but rather as a window that affords the viewer privileged insight. To Villeneuve, the performance photograph

does not only make us see a trace of the body of the performance — which is no small thing — it makes us see it *better*. What allows us to see it better is clearly the suspension of time, the stopping of the movement of the performance.

(1990, p. 35)

Just as presentism pushes to the fore the necessity of subjectivity, it is important to understand that a performance photograph is a suspended moment (chosen by the photographer and reliant on the photographic conditions) that cannot possibly be an objective summary of a performance. Rather it is a representation of that performance, one that exists as its trace, and one that is chosen subjectively to form the basis of a particular study or thesis. In this case, the performance photographs have been chosen as representations of the hair worn by Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren in their performances as Margaret. The suspended nature of the performance photograph also enables a study of the chosen moments both in the context of the performance, but also out of their own time in isolation as fragments extracted from the archive.

Michael Billington wrote in his biography of Peggy Ashcroft that “all criticism is a form of autobiography and tells us as much about the writer as the subject” (1988, p. 36). A candid confession for a critic, it is applicable to those studying and writing about performance history to be aware of the autobiography of presentism in themselves and others. Roger Warren, who in his review of the 1977 RSC cycle was explicit about his preference for *The Wars of the Roses* over Hands’ productions, directly compared Mirren and Ashcroft at

the same time as acknowledging that it is an unfair (and unhelpful) statement. Warren wrote that

the main drawback of the production was that Helen Mirren lacked the poise, irony, rage, passion, and sheer emotional variety which Margaret demands, and which Peggy Ashcroft had supplied in such abundance. (An unfair comparison? But those were the standards which the RSC used to attain in such parts.)

(1978, p. 149)

Aside from criticism of Mirren's performance (which Warren identified as his main critique of all three plays in Hands' cycle), Warren's bigger statement was to use Mirren's performance as a way to criticise the RSC under Nunn and Hands' artistic directorship. It appears that Warren wears *Wars of the Roses* tinted glasses, remembering a better time of the first tetralogy and of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Looking at the criticism contemporaneous to the productions (and much of the subsequent criticism), Helen Mirren is entwined with Peggy Ashcroft, with Mirren's Margaret only appearing to exist when compared to a memory of Ashcroft's performance.

Studying production photographs of Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren, and reading the presentation of their hair (and through that, the presentation of the body), enables a study of these two actors that allows them to exist together in a shared performance history, but also, by taking the suspended moments, separately as individual performances. Ashcroft and Mirren each performed a distinct Margaret, a Margaret that subverted the patriarchal order of the cycle in which she appeared in different ways, reacting to the political and theatrical time in which the cycle was produced — and this subversion is present and represented in their hair.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

1 *Henry VI* (1964) Margaret of Anjou (Peggy Ashcroft); photograph by
Unknown.

Designing and Constraining the Body

In her first entrance as Margaret of Anjou in *Henry VI* (Figure 1), Peggy Ashcroft appeared the epitome of the beautiful young ingenue, though she was, at this point, 56 years old. Margaret as a character is uniquely placed to enable an actor to develop across a number of plays (four or three depending if full text or adaptation), and to explore many facets of the character as she ages from a teenager to an old woman. When reflecting on her experience of playing Margaret, Ashcroft described how Margaret

is portrayed in the epic nature of the four plays as an amorous princess [...] an adulterous wife, a scheming politician, a cruel and dauntless soldier and a crazed, possessed and dispossessed old woman — the embodiment of the Curse which is one of the themes of the four plays.

(1973, p. 7)

An incredible opportunity for an actor, having such a profound transformation set over a number of years, it also raises questions as to how this transformation and ageing is represented, especially when the plays are performed as a continuous cycle, possibly (as with both *Wars* and *Hands'* relatively full text productions) on the same day. Russ McDonald, discussing Ashcroft's performance as Margaret, highlights the use of hair in *The Wars of the Roses*, describing how

the transitions were aided by the costumer and wig-maker. As the young princess, she wears long hair streaming down her back from a gold circlet on the head; as Henry's young queen her hair is plaited into side circles, like Princess Leia in *Star Wars*; on the battlefield her head is hidden under chain mail; and in *Richard III* the coiffure is a gray fright wig, teased and out of control.

(2014, p. 266)

McDonald's comparison of Ashcroft with Princess Leia highlights McDonald's own perspective, using a cultural touchstone (Leia's hair) from a film that was not released until 1977 (coincidentally the year of *Hands'* cycle). The different hairstyles McDonald describes assisted in differentiating the individual

moments in Margaret's character development and narrative, as well as helping age Ashcroft across the three plays of Barton's adaptation. The decisions made about these hairstyles, and the moments in the plays in which they appear, are themselves a way of reading Ashcroft's performance and the production in 1963, and a way to understand the internal workings of the, at the time, fledgling Royal Shakespeare Company.

The presentation of Margaret in Ashcroft's first entrance reveals the prevailing ideas about production design at the RSC in the 1960s (and beyond). Ashcroft's hair is flowing down her back and a delicate gold crown sits on her head. The theatre hair and makeup artist and historian Richard Corson writes that in the fifteenth century, "normally women covered their hair after marriage and wore it long and flowing before" (1965, p. 139), and this image is of Ashcroft's Margaret before her marriage. As soon as she travels to England to marry Henry, her hair becomes contained, covered as Corson describes, in a visual marker of the shift from virgin to wife which was typical for medieval women. Using the imagery of the fifteenth century in this way, the production was able to hint towards a known history. But that is not to say the image, and what it represents, was meant to be historically accurate. Discussing the costumes for *Wars* with actor and unofficial *Wars* historian Richard Pearson, the costume designer Ann Curtis remembers that

Peter Hall said, 'too rigid adherence to historical accuracy tends to create stuffed dummies [...]. Costumes should be clothes, not costumes; worn enough to suggest the necessary period connotations; contemporary enough to free bodies of the actors and the minds of the audience.

(1990, p. 40)

Curtis was commissioned to make these "clothes" for *Wars*, working with "an overall historical shape with lots of modern materials and textures. [...] We made our own rules" (1990, p. 40). It is this combination of some key historical markers and contemporary (or at least anachronistic) pieces or creation techniques that defined the RSC's approach to *Wars* and to other "historical" productions.

Guy Woolfenden, the composer for *Wars*, was given similar instructions by Hall. Colin Chambers, who was the Literary Manager of the RSC from 1981

to 1997, describes how Woolfenden was told to “find a musical interpretation of the dangerous world of the plays [and] as with the design, it should be neither historically accurate nor totally modern” (2004, p. 37). The RSC were seeking to strike a balance between historical accuracy and something fresh and contemporary, and Hall’s approach continued long after he left the company in 1968. Terry Hands, in conversation with the theatre critic Michael Billington and other RSC directors in 1990, said “I think what we tend to do at the RSC is to take a costume roughly near a period but to alter its aesthetic” (Billington, 1990, p. 29). Hands continued to call this costuming “socially right” (p. 29). The concept of socially right design allows a director and designer to create a set of social rules and boundaries within a production, and as long as something remains consistent within this fictionalised world, then it does not matter if it is not strictly historically accurate. In the case of *The Wars of the Roses*, the design demonstrated some key aspects of the early modern interpretation of the medieval world it represented, but in a way that allowed for the RSC to also make their mark as a new, young company, and — to borrow from Jan Kott, from whom Peter Hall took a lot of inspiration in the early years of the RSC — make *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1967).

The “socially right” (Hands in Billington, 1990, p. 29) hair of Margaret of Anjou reveals that hair, like costume, gives embodied semiotic meaning to performance. Bridget Escolme, in exploring the importance of costume to world building, writes that “costume can [...] highlight the socially and theatrically constructed nature of that world, the class, gender and racial relations within it” (2012, p. 130). Ashcroft’s hair in this image of her first entrance (Figure 1), and its fifteenth century styling, just as Escolme writes about costume, highlights social and theatrical constructions of gender and theatrical order in the 1963 cycle, especially when considered in the context of the costume issues that plagued the production. Pearson describes how, in the rehearsal period for *Wars*,

the question of costumes was raised by Dame Peggy Ashcroft. [...] As [the plays] were to be presented in one day on several occasions, she was concerned that the costumes would not be heavy. Peter’s reply, later forgotten but ironic in view of the subsequent heavyweight robes, dresses, tunics, belts and swords, was an assurance that they would certainly not be.

Pearson's comment on the irony of Hall's response was due to the sheer weight of the costumes. They were made by "all the ladies in the Company, secretaries and friends [who] were allocated their ball of string and two thick needles" (1990, p. 42), including Ashcroft. Set designer John Bury and costume designer Ann Curtis had discovered a way of making realistic looking chainmail. It involved 'gunking' knitted costumes, making them incredibly heavy, to the point where actors were in physical pain — ironically, also including Ashcroft.

Rutter, in writing about the way in which theatre designers translate the idea of Shakespeare into physical and material language, describes how "actors who are less inquiring or less powerfully placed to challenge their director's design concept will be victimised by costume" (2001, p. 141). Costume has the potential to be political, not just in what it presents to and represents for an audience, but how it is imposed on the actor and contains and controls their body. In *The Wars of the Roses* actors became literally oppressed by their costumes. Pearson describes how

Susan Engels' costume as Queen Elizabeth allowed little freedom of movement. The weight of Nicholas Selby's gave him 'the Winchester Walk', and Cherry Morris describes how her costume as the Duchess of Gloucester 'on that raked stage almost carried me straight out to the audience'.

(Pearson, 1990, p. 41)

Through the heavy unwieldy costumes, the bodies of the actors in *The Wars of the Roses* were literally disciplined in order to present the desired effect of the costuming.

Margaret the Ingenue: Ashcroft's Crowned Entrance

Taken as a moment of suspension and the stopping of time, this photograph (Figure 1) is a representation of Ashcroft's first entrance as Margaret of Anjou through which it is possible to read and re-interpret Ashcroft's characterisation of Margaret at this early moment in her narrative development. Her hair suggests youthful beauty and burgeoning sexuality. It is long and has a light healthy sheen, and is down about her neck and shoulders in a youthful fashion. Below her temples it is pinned back, revealing her ears, and this creates a sense of youthful vulnerability. However, the pinning is intentional and precise, and is fashioned into a sculpted frame about her face, emphasising her bright, hopeful, yet focussed, eyes. Her hair, then, may be down about her shoulders, but it is not entirely loose and carefree. The hair here reveals a conflict in Ashcroft's Margaret between youthful princess (long flowing locks) and precise practicality (structured pinning), all hinting towards the Margaret to come: a strong mother, warrior, and leader.

Noticeably, Ashcroft's Margaret is wearing a crown in this image, despite only being the Duke of Anjou's daughter and not yet queen. Both literal and metaphorical crowns are a key theme of the first tetralogy. Rutter, analysing heads in the Shakespearean canon, highlights that the first tetralogy is particularly obsessed with heads, and routinely "puns 'crown' — diadem — with 'crown' — head" (2012, p. 109). For Margaret, this is a particularly pertinent observation, as her obsession with crowns and heads leads to the climax of her antagonistic relationship with York, where she places the paper crown on York's head and, after the ritual humiliation has finished, declares "Off with the crown, and with the crown, his head," (3HVI 1.4.107), and ultimately sets his head (sans real crown) above York gates.

Ashcroft's Margaret always wears some kind of crown until she returns in *Richard III*, wearing what McDonald refers to as the "grey fright wig" (2014, p. 266). In their comprehensive performance history of the three plays of *Henry VI* in the United Kingdom, Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Carol Chillington Rutter note that Henry VI in this production, David Warner, never wore his crown after the coronation, but his wife and son "wore theirs like extensions of their flesh" (2009, p. 72). The implication moves ambiguously between Margaret (and Edward) as being born for greatness, the crowns sitting naturally as if

grown from their own bodies, and Margaret's obsession with power that has caused her body to fuse with the metal of the diadem. In either interpretation, the beginnings of that relationship between Margaret and the crown are evident in this photograph in which she wears a crown before even being betrothed to Henry or ceremoniously crowned Queen of England. The crown Ashcroft wears, a delicate coronet decorated with large pearls is, like her hair, also suggestive of the character development within her innocent femininity. It sits lightly on her head, again the high and forward lighting making it gleam with her pale skin. The glow appears almost halo-like, making her seem ethereal. But it is the first clue that Margaret and monarchical power are entwined, and will not be separated until her reappearance in *Richard III*, where her obsession with this power has contributed to her madness.

The Company Spirit: Ashcroft's Company Hope

Ashcroft's Margaret in this photograph (Figure 1) is gazing up and out into the light, a slight smile playing on her lips. The interplay of her long flowing hair, the practical and structured pinning, and the crown on top of her head — along with her positioning and the lighting on her face — show that she is looking forward to the next part of Margaret's development, and that she is hopeful for the future. For those at the RSC this was a hopeful time, and especially for Ashcroft, as since hearing about the Moscow Arts Theatre and reading Stanislavki's *My Life in Art* in the 1920s, she had wanted to join a theatre 'company' in its fullest sense. Peter Hall asked Ashcroft to be the first actor to join the newly formed Royal Shakespeare Company. Hall recounted to Michael Billington how he asked Ashcroft to join the fledgling company, telling her

'If you will be the first, that will make it work. Will you do it?' She didn't blink an eyelid. She said 'Yes, I'll do it.' The fact that we had one of the undisputed leaders of the profession endorsing the whole scheme meant that other actors, other directors followed. The creation of the RSC owes a great deal to her presence.

(1988, p. 183)

Hall cites Ashcroft's joining the RSC — and her belief in the idea of the kind of company he wanted to create — as a reason for its success. He told David Addenbrooke in 1974 that “without her, I think one can almost say that the Royal Shakespeare Company might not have been created” (1974, p. 228), and so Ashcroft's influence on *The Wars of the Roses* was not just her performance of Margaret, but her position as a foundational member of the RSC.

Once a part of the RSC, Ashcroft's hopeful support for the idea of company did not waiver. During the rehearsal period for *The Wars of the Roses*, she still led by what Hall described as “moral example.” (Billington, 1988, p. 183) Mark Jenkins, an ensemble player in the *Wars* cycle, told Richard Pearson that

she nurtured a sense of Company spirit, and transformed the actors into a team, working towards a common goal. She sensed when fatigue had set in and when we needed some kind of relaxation. Rehearsing with her [was] constantly revealing, simply because she possessed the knack of making you feel important — your contribution mattered. People were playing in a diversity of styles of acting, and Dame Peggy gradually drew everyone round to create the epic, canvas style.

(1990, p. 33)

Ashcroft — arguably Margaret like — led the company from the front lines, and not only produced her own performance and helped found the company, but enabled those around her to advance and grow as performers. It is common, in Pearson's history and in others, to see Ashcroft's colleagues refer to her as Dame Peggy. Rather than call her Dame Edith (her legal first name), or even Dame Margaret (her full middle name), they affectionately use the diminutive by which she was known (Peggy), whilst also showing her the reverence they feel she deserves through the inclusion of her formal title.

Ashcroft's impact on the RSC and *The Wars of the Roses* company was also foregrounded by reviewers. R.B. Marriott wrote in 1963 that the RSC “is a young Company, not depending on stars. It happens that Peggy Ashcroft is playing Queen Margaret, but like the serious, unshowy artist that she is, she works for and with the Company as a whole” (Pearson, 1990, p. 47). The term star has been used in conjunction with Shakespearean actors since the

eighteenth century, as Barbara Hodgdon describes, “the language of stardom [first was used] with reference to David Garrick (1717-79).” (2008, p. 50)

Ashcroft did not allow her star status to overwhelm or overpower the idea of company, in which she revelled, and in the theatrical home she found in the new RSC. Through studying the combination of the hair, body, and staging of Ashcroft’s Margaret in this photograph of her first entrance into the *Wars* cycle, it is possible to read the history of both the embodiment of Margaret in the production, and of Ashcroft’s role in the company.

Ashcroft’s presence in the company was as a vital pillar of support (theatrically and personally), as a leader, and also as an innovator. It was Ashcroft’s idea to perform all three plays on one day “like the Oberammergau passion play” (Ashcroft, 1973, p. 8). As Billington states, this was the start of “the RSC’s habit of staging orgiastic theatrical marathons which continued with Terry Hands’s production of the *Henry VI* plays in 1977, *The Greeks* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. We have Peggy to thank for setting the marathon business in motion” (1988, p. 204). Despite Ashcroft’s desire to be part of a company that did not rely on star power, her prominent status within the RSC was reflected in the way in which critics centred her in their discussions of the cycle. Robert Potter wrote, considering the performance of Margaret in different cycles in 1988, that *The Wars of the Roses* “was perhaps the most memorable for the performance by Peggy Ashcroft as Queen Margaret — Shakespeare’s ‘first heroine’ — whose presence first illuminated and then painted the production” (1988, p. 105). The photograph of Ashcroft as the young and hopeful Margaret, with her long, flowing (yet pinned) hair, ornate crown, and optimistic expression, can be read as a representation of both her performance of Margaret and her own role within the RSC at the time .

Much like *The Wars of the Roses* was seen, as Janet Suzman described, as “a watershed in Theatre” (Pearson, 1990, p. 1), the performance of Margaret was seen as one of Ashcroft’s great achievements. One of the defining aspects of Ashcroft’s performance as Margaret was her accent. She converted the English ‘r’ sound into a version of a French ‘r’, pronouncing it as a ‘w’, in order to emphasise Margaret’s position as a French outsider (an attack and insult used by her enemies throughout the cycle), even when she takes up residence in the English court — though over time her accent became softer and less

pronounced. The accent was at first a rehearsal technique, though McDonald describes how

at the dress rehearsal, Peter Hall advised her that while the accent had allowed her to imagine the character at first, she no longer needed it, but she retained it anyway, and it became one of the hallmarks of her performance.

(2014, p. 267)

Just as with the suggestion of the marathon performance day, it was Ashcroft's particular position in the company as both member and leader, and her forward thinking in terms of retaining the singular accent that caused her Margaret to become a defining part of *The Wars of the Roses* cycle, and her career.

The photograph (Figure 1) captures one suspended moment of Ashcroft as the young, innocent Margaret, and through a reading of her hair in the image can be gained an understanding of Peggy Ashcroft's performance, as well as ideas about representation, culture, and design at the RSC at the time the cycle was produced. Photographs from further into Margaret's development across the cycle demonstrate how these ideas developed across the three plays of Barton's adaptation, Margaret's own character development in performance, and also how gendered understandings of hair and hair covering can inform character.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

2 (1964) *Edward IV* Queen Margaret (Peggy Ashcroft) comforts Suffolk (William Squire); photograph by T.F. Holte.

The Queen's Lover: Ashcroft's Subverted Veil

This photograph (Figure 2), shows Ashcroft as Margaret and William Squire as the Duke of Suffolk in the scene in which the lovers part (*2HVI*, 4.4), and is the last time they are together until Margaret is reunited with Suffolk's decapitated head. Just as Ashcroft's hair in her first entrance is representative of an appropriate hairstyle for an unmarried woman in the Middle Ages, in this scene with her lover it enacts the other part of Corson's description of hair in the period, and now Margaret is married, it is covered (1965, p. 139). The particular styling of this hair covering, however, is a style fitting of the early modern period in England, for as Corson describes "the back hair was usually in a flat bun covered with a net or caul" (1965, p. 225). Reading the rigid structure of the caul in this photograph allows an interrogation of Margaret's character development at this point in the cycle, and the anachronistic nature of the hairstyle places *The Wars of the Roses* even more firmly within an approximation of an early modern interpretation of fifteenth century setting.

The caul is cage-like, containing and controlling her hair, but at the same time it is ornate and delicate. Through the netting of the hairpiece, the hair is both seen and unseen. Margaret is still wearing a crown — which here has morphed into a thick gold ring — as a physical indicator of her marriage to another man, the crown being a larger ring than the wedding band (which is not visible in this image). All this can be seen whilst she is comforting her lover. This double life of wife and lover to two separate men is represented in the double nature of her hair through the net. It is covered and seen at the same time, contained but peeking through. Her physical positioning in the photograph also mirrors this, as she is both dominant and submissive. Suffolk is facing forward with his legs spread and shoulders square, taking up a large amount of the frame space. Margaret is facing him, the camera capturing her profile, her back turned slightly toward the camera, leaning her body into him, looking longingly at his face. But her face is at the same level as his ear, and from here she can whisper. Margaret is looking at Suffolk's face, fully aware of him, whereas he is not facing her. Her arm is clasped around his waist, holding him strongly, whereas his hand is resting only gently on her arm. Though he appears to be physically more commanding in his stature, it is Margaret's grasp on him which ultimately weakens his position and strengthens hers. The

balance of dominance and submission in the photograph is also present in Margaret's hair — appearing submissively contained within the cage-like headdress, yet still visible. It shows that at this point in Margaret's development, she is struggling with the balance of her sexuality, sensuality and physical needs — all represented by long, flowing, unconfined hair — with her wifely duties. By caging her hair, she is attempting to cage these urges.

The hair in this image might suggest that Ashcroft's Margaret is never wholly sexually free with her lover Suffolk, especially when compared with Helen Mirren's sexually liberated Margaret (Figure 5). Perhaps this is why she becomes so particularly distraught the next time she sees him — when she enters carrying his decapitated head, and preoccupied with his absent body (Figure 3).

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

3 *Edward IV* (1965) Queen Margaret (Peggy Ashcroft) cradles Suffolk's head.

In 1965, the BBC filmed *The Wars of the Roses* for nationwide broadcast. The presentation of Margaret's hair in the recorded version of the cycle is not entirely consistent with the hair in the archive photographs. Of course the reasons for these changes could be myriad and there are other changes between the archive photographs and the BBC recording. For example, in the scene of Suffolk's departure Margaret retains her long and flowing hair from earlier in the play instead of the cage like caul of the performance photograph (Figure 2). Yet there is one hairstyle in the recorded version of the cycle that is not to be found at all in photographs in the RSC archive at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. In the scene where Margaret cradles Suffolk's decapitated head, Ashcroft enters the space with her hair covered by a piece of white fabric in a subversion of the bridal veil. Ashcroft identified this moment as one of particular importance, and highlighted "the problem of presenting with credibility a woman who could carry her lover's severed head on to the stage and play a scene holding it in her arms" (1973, p. 7). She found that once she had made sense of this act — positioned in Barton's adaptation to occur at the close of the first play — the rest of her performance in the cycle fell into place. One of the keys to Ashcroft understanding how to perform the cradling of Suffolk's head was a certain level of madness. Nina daVinci Nichols argues "mad she must be, else the scene loses half of its theatrical point as a macabre spectacle of deranged queen on one side of the stage and pious king on the other, each engaged in acts symbolizing their difference" (2009, p. 103). However, there is an interplay between madness and grief which is not as clearly defined as daVinci Nichols suggests. Though Ashcroft's Margaret appears initially to be consumed with grief, weeping and wailing, she reaches a moment of clarity and stillness on "Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind / And makes it fearful and degenerate" (2*HVI*, 4.4.1-2), her statement conveying a self-awareness of the risks of grief rather than a declaration of madness. As Ashcroft's Margaret moves forward in the play, the potential of grief to drive her mad bubbles away under the surface of her character, but that is not to say she is (or "must be") mad in this moment, rather she is flirting with the idea of madness as a catalyst for action.

The potential for Margaret's grief driven madness during the cradling of Suffolk's head is aligned with conceptions of hair in performance in the early modern theatre. In the stage directions of early modern theatre texts, almost all

references to hair are about female characters (whose bodies in performance were originally represented by boy players). In Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thompson's *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580-1642*, the entry on 'hair' (with the directly quoted stage directions in italics) tells that it was

widely cited, most commonly when a female figure *enters with her hair loose, disheveled, or about her ears* to convey that she is distraught with *madness, shame, rage, extreme grief, or the effects of recent violence*; in the latter category, *disheveled hair* is one way of signalling *enter ravished*.
(1999, p. 107)

Similarly, the actions associated with hair are usually things that happen to women. They are "*drawn, pulled, dragged, led, and trailed by their hair*" (1999, p. 107). Hair was a representation in early modern theatre practice of some deviation from the norm or from the patriarchal order of the theatrical world — whether that be an emotional deviation, or physical one. Femininity and the female body is visually represented on the body of the boy player via the use of a wig, which in turn represents either conforming to or deviating from the socially accepted norm or discipline of femininity. Madness and grief, such as that expressed by Margaret in the clutching of her lover's head, are tied intricately together with hair in the early modern theatre.

In *The Wars* cycle in 1963, the use of hair — and partial hair covering — conveyed even more about the development of Margaret's character across the cycle and her state of mind in this moment of intense grief. For the moment where she grieves Suffolk, Ashcroft's Margaret descends a staircase wearing a white veil over head (Figure 3). Her hair is long and down underneath it, and the veil is tucked into the back of her circlet crown. The shape, texture, and style in which she is wearing it make it unmistakably reminiscent of the bridal veil. The bridal veil was as recognisable in the early modern period as it was in 1963, and as it is now. William Gouge, an Anglican clergyman, wrote about the importance of the bridal veil during the wedding ceremony in *Of Domestic Duties* (1622), a conduct book giving advice on family life that Gouge drew from The Bible. He wrote that

in her husband's presence, beseemeth a wife, was of old implied of the veil which the woman used to put on when she was brought unto her husband....This reverence conversation consisteth in a wife-like sobriety, mildness, courtesy, and modesty.

(Aughterson, 1995, p. 90)

Gouge implies that the veil is a symbol of a woman's subservience to her husband (who, as a man, is subservient only to God), and that it denotes the positive feminine attributes he outlines. Yet Ashcroft's Margaret is wearing this veil for her dead lover, and she is also wearing it in front of her pious husband. Ashcroft's Margaret is subverting the bridal veil from a symbol of wifely subservience, to one of infidelity. This, combined with Barton's rewriting and restructuring of the moment, creates a scene where Ashcroft's Margaret embodies deviation from and subversion of both patriarchal gender roles and accepted forms of femininity, through the presentation of her hair and hair covering.

In the entry on 'veiling' in *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, Alison Findlay states that "the veil was a social marker of modesty in the case of maids; of memory or withdrawal, as worn by those in mourning [and] was also an accessory associated with eroticism, as worn by Venetian courtezans." (2014, p. 409) The veil in Findlay's definition also means a veil covering the face, and yet combined with early modern cultural understandings of hair as identity, the covering of hair has a similar impact. The contradictions in this entry – that the veil symbolises modesty, memory, and eroticism – are also all present in Ashcroft's Margaret in the moment of cradling Suffolk's head, and throughout her development in the rest of the cycle. The white veil Ashcroft wears in this context can be read as a presentation of the pretence of playing the good queen (false modesty), the mourning of her dead lover (memory), and her sexual liaisons and subversively masculine role (eroticism). The veil also, to a contemporary RSC/BBC audience, is a subversion of the understood cultural meaning of a white bridal veil. Shortly after this moment Margaret's hair undergoes another form of veiling and head covering as it disappears completely from view, hidden beneath her heavy chainmail hood as she enters battle.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

4 *Edward IV* (1964) Queen Margaret (Peggy Ashcroft) points to the molehill;
photograph by T.F. Holte.

Monstrous Humors: Hiding Ashcroft's Identity

Cultural and literary studies of the early modern period have explored hair as an extension of the humors. Will Fisher describes how “the hairs of the head were thought to be bred of moisture arising from the body, and especially from the brain” (2006, p. 132), and continues to explain that this is one of the reasons why women’s hair was believed to grow naturally longer than men’s if both were left uncut. The biological aspect of hair, that it is “bred” from the body, forges and reinforces a connection between the physical and the ideological. Edith Snook, examining the discourse of hair in early modern medical texts, furthers this connection by outlining that it was believed that hair “rebalances the humors in its physiological function as an excrement extruded from the head and this reveals the complexion of the body beneath, hair acts as a witness to identity” (2015, p. 32). In early modern conceptions of hair, then, it is “bred of moisture from the body”, and a “witness to identity”. Covering the hair, therefore, covers that witness, that “repository for social values” (Snook, 2015, p. 24). Covering the hair of Ashcroft’s Margaret is tantamount to hiding her identity from both other characters in the cycle with her, and the audience that reads her body onstage.

In this image (Figure 4), Ashcroft’s Margaret has her hair covered by a heavy chainmail hood which matches the thick cloak, chainmail armour, and the dress-like tunic that she wears. Centred in the frame is the hilt of Margaret’s sword held in her right hand, the tip of that sword points downwards, as if it is giving in to its heaviness and succumbing to the gravity of the stage. The fact she is holding it suggests a readiness to spring into action, but it is too heavy for her to keep up and she is yielding its weight to the stage. The only thing resisting this heaviness is her left hand. It points upwards and upstage, making her arm cross her body. She is indicating something behind her, and in the 1965 BBC recording, she makes this same gesture when pointing to “this molehill here” (3HVI 1.4.67), the tormenting of York and her enacting her revenge lifting her out of her heavy state.

The femininity of Ashcroft’s Margaret was dampened by all of the heaviness of her costuming, and as her one point of lightness in the image is referencing an act of violence, she is rendered almost masculine. The question of Margaret’s masculinity — along with the other women in the first tetralogy —

is addressed by Linda Bamber, as she argues that “the women in the early history plays do not participate in history as women. [...] The women characters in these plays who are involved in the events of history either betray their own femininity or mimic the men” (1992, p. 66). Ashcroft’s performance as Margaret is consistent with Bamber’s idea of moving outside of femininity. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter describe that “where men committing violence” in Hall’s cycle “became somehow more themselves, more manly, violence serving to authenticate masculinity [...], Margaret’s violence denatured her and made her monstrous” (2009, p. 77). The more acts of violence she committed, the more “monstrous” Ashcroft’s Margaret became, pushing her further towards the mimicry of men, resulting here in this weighty and shapeless costume by the time she reaches the battlefield. The gendered marker of her hair, a key feature of her feminine identity, is removed from view as she points toward the molehill where she will commit the “monstrous” act of tormenting a father with the death of his son.

Howard and Rackin propose how “sexual difference constituted the necessary ground of patriarchal order. For a woman to perform manly deeds and so to transgress gender categories could render her and her deeds demonic (witchlike) or literally unspeakable” (1997, p. 45). The unspeakable nature of Ashcroft’s Margaret is embodied by the literal hiding of her identity through the act of covering her hair. Ashcroft’s Margaret transgressed the patriarchal norm, and alienated herself from “conventional feminine virtue” (Snook, 2015, p. 37), by committing acts of violence that — through their violence and, in particular, their proximity to child killing — made her not only masculine, but monstrous. The covering of her hair, disguising her true nature, feeds into the image of masculinity and monstrosity. Not only does it remove hair as a marker of her femininity, but if understood as a social marker of her identity, disguising it from view makes it an act of purposeful deception and dissemblance.

The performance of Margaret by Ashcroft as masculine and monstrous was an example of the way she challenged patriarchal authority. She became something other than woman, disturbing the sexual difference needed for patriarchal order as discussed by Howard and Rackin. Susan Bassnett claims that Margaret is an “unnatural woman” in the plays of the first tetralogy, returning to “womanhood” only through the death of her son. Bassnett argues

Margaret is not only an unnatural woman in that she fights like a man; she is unnatural because she lacks those feelings which women should have. [...] Only at the end of *3 Henry VI*, when her own son is murdered, does Margaret behave “like a woman”, showing the strength of her maternal feelings in terms very close to those of York in 1.4.

(1988, p. 189)

Bassnett, however, in identifying the moment of Prince Edward’s murder as that which makes Margaret behave “like a woman” again, emphasises how the performance of grief aligns Margaret with a grieving father (York) rather than a mother. Margaret performs both the role of mother and father after Henry disinherits his son, defending her son’s birthright and leading an army in her husband’s stead. Howard and Rackin argue that Henry’s renouncing of his son’s birthright makes Margaret “the family’s patriarch in the sense that she not only assumes authority in the family and in the state, but also takes upon herself the burden of guaranteeing Prince Edward’s succession to the English throne” (1997, p. 84). Peggy Ashcroft, though agreeing with the reading of Margaret as masculine, also emphasised that much of her strength comes from a fierce maternity, and that she is a combination of mother and father, arguing that the play “gives her a martial indomitability that is only to be found in his male characters allied to the savage grief of a mother. Perhaps there is a touch of Volumnia but infinitely harsher” (1973, p. 8). To Ashcroft, the strength of Margaret lies in these masculine traits combined with her maternity — that is what makes her so powerful.

Linda Bamber, continuing her argument about women in the first tetralogy taking on masculine traits in order to join history, argues that “if women neither seriously challenge the values of the history world nor participate as women in the crucial activities of this world, then they are supernumeraries in a world of men” (1992, p. 67). Yet a great deal of Margaret’s strength lies in her position as mother, as woman, and the way in which she uses her female body to embody both masculine and feminine traits. Arguing that female characters have to interact with the world they exist in as women and behave in a certain, defined feminine way in order to be seen and understood as women implies that there is a certain Platonic form of womanhood that they need to conform to to be considered a woman. For, as

Monique Wittig states when arguing that the categories of 'man' and 'woman' are economic and political, "to refuse to be a woman, however, does not mean that one has to become a man" (1997, p. 311). Ashcroft herself believed that Margaret's strength lay in the "savage grief of a mother" (1973, p. 8), yet her costume deemphasised her femininity through the covering of the gendered marker of her hair, making her more "monstrous" than "mother".

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

5 *Henry VI, Part ii* (1977) Queen Margaret (Helen Mirren) sits on Suffolk's (Peter McEnery) lap; photograph by Joe Cocks Studio.

Margaret's Sexual Liberation: Mirren's Crowning Glory

Time spent in the Royal Shakespeare Company archive attempting to reconstruct Terry Hands' 1977 cycle from the fragments left behind revealed something: there are no photographs of Helen Mirren's performance as Margaret in which she appears alone. The moments may have happened — just as in the photographs of Ashcroft where she appears alone there may be someone out of shot — but there is no evidence for this within the photographs held at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. As this chapter is reading production photographs as the primary mode of performance reconstruction, the lack of photographs of Mirren alone means that she can only ever be defined in the context of her relationships with other characters and, more specifically, men. Rutter describes that "where 'bookish' Henry is a part that explores political anxieties via the problem of the weak king, Margaret is a part saturated with male anxieties about the domestic." (2006, p. 185) Hands' cycle focussed on these domestic anxieties, and Hampton-Reeves and Rutter, in comparing Hands' cycle to Barton and Hall's earlier *The Wars of the Roses*, discuss how for Hands, the plays' "central issue was a disastrous love affair, a failed marriage" (2009, p. 81). By focussing on the marriage between Margaret and Henry as the central issue of the cycle, Margaret's threat to the patriarchal order of the plays became her sexuality and infidelity. Ultimately, this pointed to the question of Prince Edward's paternity which though present in the play — Richard insults Prince Edward by saying "Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands," (3HVI, 2.2.133) — in Hands' adaptation was emphasised though Margaret's sexuality, embodied by Helen Mirren. The sexuality of Mirren's Margaret is evident in her long and flowing hair as captured in the production photographs, and reveals the attitudes towards female sexuality in the cycle, and the socio-political ideas about female sexuality at the time in which Hands' cycle was produced.

Through the analysis of hair in production photographs of Margaret in Hands' cycle, it is evident that Mirren never being photographed alone and the reading of Mirren's Margaret as an embodiment of the character post-sexual revolution are intrinsically linked. Margaret in Hands' cycle was defined through her relationships with men. Photographs of three of those relationships (with her lover Suffolk, her husband Henry, and her enemy York) are

reproduced here, and the hair of Mirren's Margaret is utilised as a site of analysis for how the sexuality of Margaret was presented in the cycle.

The first photograph (Figure 5), of Margaret (Mirren) and Suffolk (Peter McEnery) encapsulates the flirtatious and physical nature of their relationship, and Margaret's long, flowing locks hint to the sexual freedom the two share. An important relationship in the early plays of the tetralogy, it is Margaret's affair with Suffolk that causes doubt to be cast over Prince Edward's paternity (despite, in the plays, Suffolk dying in *2 Henry VI* and Prince Edward only entering as a child in *3 Henry VI*). Rutter describes the sexual tension between the two in their first meeting in *Hands' 1 Henry VI*, detailing how "Mirren's body language — a whole alphabet of desire shuddering through the curves of her breasts, hips and thighs — showed her entertaining fantasies of capture by this suave Englishman." (2006, pp. 186-187) The sexual attraction between Margaret and Suffolk was carried into the next play, and in this image, Suffolk is perched on the edge of the throne and Margaret sits on his lap. In the monochrome photograph, the light wood of the throne mirrors Margaret's dress, and Suffolk's black clad figure separates her from the throne. It is as if his body, and her sexual impropriety with him, is what prevents her from being able to fully inhabit the seat of power. Her dress is figure hugging, and his black gloved hand on her waist blends in with the shadow making her waist look impossibly small, further emphasising her curves. Margaret's hair in this photograph is long and free, but is contained by the thick gold band that encircles her head, a sign of her marriage to another man. The physical nature of Margaret's relationship with Suffolk was foregrounded in *Hands'* cycle, both in their moments of joy, and in their times of strife.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

6 *Henry VI, Part ii* (1977) Queen Margaret (Helen Mirren) comforts Suffolk
(Peter McEnery); photograph by Unknown.

The photograph (Figure 6) of Margaret and Suffolk parting after Henry has pronounced Suffolk's banishment captures a different suspended moment in their relationship, one in which the joyful playfulness has been overtaken by a form of loss and grief. In the image Margaret is sitting up, with Suffolk's head resting in her lap, literally enacting his lines about her maternal body, and his physical reliance on it:

If I depart from thee I cannot live,
And in thy sight to die, what were it else
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?
Here could I breathe my soul into the air,
As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe
Dying with mother's dug between its lips;

(2HVI 3.2.388-393)

It is a maternal image, Mirren as the comforting mother, McEnery the cradle-babe. Her dug is not between his lips, but his leather gloved hand does lie possessively on her knee, shifting the image from one of mother and child to something more intimate, more sexual even. McEnery's hand provides a point of contrast between her pale dress, and his black glove. The photograph is a balance of the maternal and the sexual, and yet it also calls to mind a *pietà* — pertinent perhaps as Suffolk will die shortly after this scene and Margaret cradles his decapitated head in grief. Mirren's Margaret and McEnery's Suffolk are a couple who are physically comfortable and intimate with each other. They both emotionally comfort and sexually gratify each other, and there is a natural balance between them as seen in the black and white of his glove and her dress.

In this photograph, Mirren's hair is particularly prominent. The ends of it dangle onto McEnery's face, as if it is reaching for him as much as her arm does. She wears a thick gold band around her head which (like Ashcroft before her) signifies her marriage and commitment to Henry, whilst at the same time, her hair is performing her love and sexual attraction to Suffolk as it reaches for him from underneath the diadem. Hair was a defining aspect of the sexual revolution, as long flowing locks were emblematic of the Hippy and Free Love movements. Will Fisher, discussing cultural understandings of hair in the early

modern period, emphasised the importance of hair for these twentieth century movements, writing that

in the 1960s, for example, the hair of the head became an important source of generational conflict and gender identity. [...] It is therefore hardly surprising to find that one of the defining cultural productions of the era was the musical *Hair*.

(2006, p. 3)

Female sexuality became something to be explored, discussed, and the subject of a political movement in its own right, and Helen Mirren as Margaret embodied this discussion — as represented in her hair.

Hands' 1977 production (which opened ten years after the premiere of *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*) reflected many of the political and social changes that had occurred since Barton and Hall's *Wars* in the early 1960s. Robert Shaughnessy discusses how Hands' productions spoke to the very particular political moment, as

for the audiences of 1977 and 1978, with the mass media making the most of IRA terrorism, of picket-line violence in industrial disputes, and of confrontation between neo-Nazis and the anti-racist movement, and with a mood of nihilism and anger spreading among the country's youth, the prospect of anarchy and social collapse was an alarming one; and *Henry VI* exploited and extrapolated these fears as lurid fantasy.

(1994, p. 70)

Shaughnessy identifies the relevance of Hands' cycle to the United Kingdom in 1977, and how — like Barton and Hall's earlier *Wars* cycle — it continued the RSC's mission to make *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (Kott, 1967). In addition to Shaughnessy's analysis of how Hands' cycle drew on the uneasy political climate of 1977, Hands' production spoke to changes in attitudes to female sexuality, changes which particularly impacted the embodiment of Margaret in performance.

The sexual revolution had begun in the 1960s, and by 1967 the contraceptive pill was available to all women (including unmarried women) on

the NHS (though some historians of sexuality, such as Hera Cook (2005), have questioned whether the pill can be cited as the prominent influential factor on sexual liberation it has been historically). As feminist theorist Breanne Fahs writes, “the sexual revolution, improved with birth control, and the emphasis on pleasure rather than traditional kinship allowed women’s orgasms to emerge as both a pleasurable personal experience and as a political occurrence” (2015, pp. 390-391). The focus on pleasure shifted attitudes towards female sexuality, and meant that particular plays and characters — including those in the plays of Shakespeare — were re-read and re-performed with this new lens in order to better reflect contemporary ideals and attitudes towards a freer female sexuality. For example, Rutter describes how the press reaction to Janet Suzman playing Cleopatra in 1972 differed to when Ashcroft played the part in 1953, writing how “the constitutional ‘sluttishness’ reviewers read in the role in 1953 they re-read, twenty years later, a ‘liberated’ femininity” (2001, p. 79). In the case of Margaret in Hands’ 1977 production, the re-reading of the character post sexual revolution was not an acceptance of her sexuality, but rather that the sexual liberation of Margaret, as seen in her relationship with Suffolk, became the way in which she subverted the patriarchal order, and the threat she was able to pose through the question of Prince Edward’s paternity.

The question that arises — especially when considering Hands’ cycle from the perspective of the second decade of the twenty-first century — is whether Mirren’s Margaret was sexually liberated, or sexually objectified. In the cycle itself, her sexuality gave her power, yet it also made her vulnerable. The duality of Margaret’s sexuality was apparent when York cursed her on the molehill, and there was a shift in power as York transformed the moment into one of sexual aggression. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter describe how “almost contemptuous as he handed back to her the paper crown, York suddenly made the giving a taking, a final clutching at life, grabbing Margaret, forcing her down under him, her legs apart. His climax was a curse” (2009, p. 104). Emrys James’ York, not content with launching the verbal vitriolic attack on Margaret, turned her own sexual power back onto her through his attempt at conquering her body in his final moments of life. However, as Rutter describes, Mirren reasserted her sexual dominance as she “almost parodying phallic superiority, reached for a weapon, pushed it slowly into York and, as he fell into her lap, arched her body in orgasmic ecstasy before rolling out from under him,

disgusted, exhausted" (2006, p. 188). Even as York attempted to assert his male power over Margaret's sexuality, she refused to let herself be controlled by it.

Mirren's body was also vulnerable to reviewers focusing in on her sexuality. In 1975 Mirren was famously interviewed by journalist Michael Parkinson on his eponymous television show. Parkinson opened his questioning by asking her "you are in quotes 'a serious actress' [...] Do you find in fact that this, what could be best described as your equipment, in fact hinders you perhaps in that pursuit?" (*Parkinson*, 1975, 01:32). When pushed by Mirren to answer what he meant by "equipment", the closest he could get to naming her anatomy was to glance down at her chest whilst discussing her "physical attributes" (01:58). Mirren questioned him back — "'cause serious actresses can't have big bosoms, is that what you mean?" (02:27) — and ultimately responded that she hoped "the performance and the play and the living relationship between all the people onstage and all the people in the audience" would stop people like Parkinson asking "such boring questions really" (02:46). Two years after the Parkinson interview, Margaret provided Mirren with an opportunity to explore several complex relationships. She told Homer D. Swander that she relished the opportunity to play a "woman who in a long three-part play keeps developing in fascinating ways" (1978, p. 153), making an argument for Margaret as a "marvellous" (p. 152) part to play due to her not having to be masculine (like Cleopatra), not having to dress up as a man (like Viola or Rosalind), or actually being quite a small part (like Lady Macbeth) (pp. 152-153).

However, many first night reviews focussed their critique of Mirren's performance as Margaret on her body and her sexuality. Martin Shulman wrote in the *Evening Standard* that "Helen Mirren, as Margaret, looks as if she is going to make a formidable, sexy Queen of England" (1977), and Norah Lewis, in the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, reported "Helen Mirren's Margaret is marvellously sexy, a passionate woman, doomed to be bitterly disappointed, as she later admits" (1977). Even Hampton-Reeves and Rutter's descriptions of Mirren had sexual connotations. Using the language of blossoming to describe the dress she wore in her first entrance, they write "she was like a luscious soft fruit. In a rich velvet gown, half yellow, half green, Margaret looked like spring ripening into summer" (2009, p. 95). The powerful ideological symbol present in Mirren's

hair of unrestrained sexuality, also brought with it sexual objectification. Mary Ann Doane, in discussing Freud and the female spectator in film, argues

the very fact of that we can speak of a woman “using” her sex or “using” her body for particular gains is highly significant — it is not that a man cannot use his body in this way but that he doesn’t have to.

(1997, p. 185)

The preoccupation of reviewers with Mirren’s body and her sexuality encapsulates Doane’s argument, and it is — as she says — “highly significant” for understanding Mirren’s Margaret as both sexually liberated and sexually objectified.

The objectification of Mirren, and the emphasis on her using her body was also evident in the cut of the *Henry VI* plays produced. Hands’ was the first relatively full text version of the three parts of *Henry VI* produced by the RSC, and the first unadapted version of the plays in the United Kingdom since 1906. However, despite Hands telling Swander in an interview, “in this production we did a little cutting but really very little, incredibly little” (1978, p. 150), there was one character who was substantially cut: Margaret. Anna Kamaralli writes that Hands’ production “cut 34 per cent of Margaret’s lines, though it cut only 6 per cent of the plays’ lines overall” (2012, p. 56). For an actor, having 34 per cent of your lines cut is not “incredibly little”. Even in this full text version of the three parts of *Henry VI*, emphasis was shifted onto Mirren’s body by removing her voice, and her body in these production photographs is always defined in relation to the man she is pictured with.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

7 *Henry VI, Part ii* (1977) Henry VI (Alan Howard) and Queen Margaret (Helen Mirren) mourn the death of Gloucester (Graham Crowden); photograph by Nobby Clark.

Queen Margaret's Embodied Crown

In this photograph of Helen Mirren as Margaret and Alan Howard as Henry (Figure 7), Mirren's hair is intricately braided. This hairstyle was unlike any other photographs of Mirren in the RSC archive, and interestingly, within the narrative of the play, this interaction occurs in the same scene as Suffolk's departure and banishment (*2HVI*, 3.2). It may be that this hairstyle was abandoned or used at another time in the final production, but its existence within the archived production photographs, and at this point in Margaret's narrative development, make it a useful site of analysis when considering the relationship of Margaret and her husband as opposed to her relationship with her lover. A departure from her usually long, loose and flowing locks, having Margaret's hair braided like this at this particular moment in her narrative development demonstrates her legitimate sexuality when with her husband, and her performance of grief. When compared to the loose flowing hair that sits over her shoulders and tickles Suffolk's face in the previous photographs (Figures 5 and 6), this style is swept into one braid that hangs down her back, which is reminiscent of the medieval braiding styles detailed by Richard Corson (1965), and another plait which sits on the back of her head. Mirren also does not wear a crown here, the thick gold ring she wore with Suffolk, symbolising her marriage to another man, is replaced with this crown-like braid when with her husband. Instead of an ornamental symbol of regality, Mirren's crown of hair is "ideology [...] symbolized in the body" (Synnott, 1987, p. 394). Her regality, duty, and loyalty to Henry are represented in her hair.

Though difficult to see due to this reproduction of an archive photograph, at the bottom of the frame is the body of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, Henry's uncle and the Lord Protector whom Margaret and a number of lords (including Suffolk) have successfully plotted to kill (*2HVI* 3.1). Mirren's Margaret in the photograph is performing her grief, an exaggerated crying face, buried into Henry's neck, her arm clasped around his shoulder. However, she not only knew Gloucester was going to die, she was a key instigator in his death, and the braiding of Mirren's hair in this moment demonstrates that she is performing the role of the grief stricken queen.

Margaret's character development was foregrounded in Hands' cycle by the relationships she had onstage. Phyllis Rackin and Jean E. Howard argue that

in the first tetralogy female characters “undermine patriarchal authority (here meaning the authority of the father)” (1997, p. 29) through their sexual promiscuity. Margaret is no exception to this, and as they later argue, “to depict Margaret as a figure of open and unrestrained sexual passion is one way of demonizing her and representing the dangers of a femininity not firmly under the control of a father or husbands” (Howard & Rackin, p. 74). Whereas Ashcroft’s Margaret subverted the patriarchal order of *The Wars of the Roses* by moving outside the realms of femininity and into those of masculinity (making her monstrous), as represented through the covering of her hair (Figure 4), Mirren’s Margaret was a threat to the state due to her sexuality. In reading the hair of Mirren’s Margaret in photographs with Suffolk (Figures 5 and 6) and with Henry (Figure 7), it is possible to see what was most threatening of all to characters in the play, and also to the reviewers in the press who fixated on her body and her sexuality. Mirren’s Margaret was not just having an affair with Suffolk, but also cared deeply for Henry. This refusal to conform to either faithful wife, or unfaithful harlot, meant Mirren’s Margaret not only was a threat to the patriarchal order of the production, in which she was defined through her relationships with men, but to the sensibilities of those watching.

In addition to Mirren’s hair, Margaret and Henry’s pose demonstrate how different their relationship was compared to Margaret and Suffolk’s. The married couple are equals, both are kneeling and are dressed in light colours, as opposed to Margaret’s dominant position (Figure 6) over Suffolk, Suffolk’s body blocking her access to the throne (Figure 5), and their contrasting pale and dark colours. Though Margaret’s relationship with Suffolk is often thought to be the sexual one, Mirren herself thought that “Margaret is physical with every man, really — that’s her way. [...] But Alan and I have a subtext — flagellation in the chapel. That’s how they get their kicks, and Suffolk is pretty ordinary alongside that” (Swander, 1978, p. 153). Similarly, Terry Hands saw Margaret’s two relationships as not competing but as having different intentions, and when later reflecting on the plays described that “in a sense, Suffolk in *Henry VI Part II* is passion, and Henry’s feeling for Margaret is *amour*” (Billington, 1990, p. 106). This difference in Margaret’s two relationships is represented in her hair. Margaret loves Henry and has a great sense of loyalty to him, and believes greatly in the social order — as represented in the braided hair — but she is also

sexually free with Suffolk, as “made flesh” (Synnott, 1987, p. 405) in her long hippy like locks.

Mirren’s hair is very different in these images, representing the difference in her relationships with these two men. When she is with Suffolk (Figures 5 and 6) her hair is long and flowing with a thick gold band of a crown encircling her head. When she is with Henry (Figure 7) her hair is braided intricately down her back, and the crown — representing both her position as queen and as Henry’s wife — has been physically embodied in her hair, in a braid which sits crown-like on the back of her head. Both of these distinctive hairstyles reveal something about Margaret’s relationships with these two men, and Helen Mirren’s performance as reflective of social attitudes to sexual relationships in 1977. In the vast majority of scholarship about the relationships between Margaret, Suffolk, and Henry — both performance and textual — there seems to be a consensus that she can only care for one of the two men romantically. Gwyn Williams, believes this affection was for Suffolk, writing in his paper ‘Suffolk and Margaret: A Study of Some Sections of *Henry VI*’ that “for Margaret, Suffolk is the only love, the rest is bitterness” (1974, p. 319). Whereas Naomi C. Liebler and Lisa Scancella Shea argue that in order to be able to discuss Margaret’s political actions and her marriage to Henry in detail, they need to discount Margaret’s romantic entanglements with Suffolk, stating “although the text of the play suggests an adulterous liaison, for the purpose of this paper we concentrate on Margaret’s relationship with Suffolk as a political alliance and not a love affair” (2009, p. 96). It seems difficult for many scholars writing about these relationships to comprehend that Margaret could be in a romantic relationship with both Suffolk and Henry, and that she could have political *and* emotional relationships with both of them.

In the scene in which Margaret cradles Suffolk’s decapitated head (2*HVI* 4.4), it is almost explicitly said that Margaret has affection for both Henry and Suffolk. In order for the moment to make theatrical sense, Nina daVinci Nichols argues “mad she must be” (2009, p. 103). However, when understood from the perspective of a woman who is both current wife and grieving lover (foreshadowing her later role as avenging widow), it can be a moment of honesty and clarity. Henry, distracted from his need to flee London due Jack Cade’s encroaching mob, says to Margaret “I fear me, love, if that I had been dead / Thou wouldest not have mourned so much for me. (*Henry VI, Part ii*

4.4.20-23) To which Margaret replies: “No, my love, I should not mourn but die for thee.” (4.4.24) In the 1963 adaptation *The Wars of the Roses*, Barton and Hall excise the exchange between Margaret and Henry altogether, and instead, Warwick asks Margaret: “Comes’t though to weep for Gloucester or for Beaufort?” (*Henry VI*, 1965, 02:39:02) Margaret then replies: “Why should I weep for them? I weep for Suffolk.” (02:39:05) In doing this, Barton and Hall removed the sense of ambiguity in this moment about Margaret’s true affection, and instead made it clearly lie with Suffolk, and Henry, distracted, does not deign to question it. The hair of Ashcroft’s Margaret in this moment, the subversion of the bridal veil stained red with Suffolk’s blood (Figure 3), reinforces Barton’s textual rewrites. However, even when looking at the line as in the playtext of 2 *Henry VI*, Margaret’s reply is often not interpreted as an honest statement. Williams argues that “even in this situation she is quick-witted enough to reply, with ready and triumphant hypocrisy” (1974, p. 317). To Williams, there is no doubt that Margaret manipulates Henry and does not answer honestly.

Both the excision of the interaction between Margaret and Henry by Barton, and Williams’ accusation of Margaret’s hypocrisy, rely on the foundational belief that Margaret would not be, or could not be, telling the truth in this situation. Yet in the third play of the cycle she leads armies for her family, defending Henry’s title and her son Edward’s birthright, essentially enacting the premise she states in this scene. The difficulty in accepting that Margaret is telling the truth is a conflict in being able to believe that Margaret could care for both Suffolk *and* Henry at once. In 1977, however, Helen Mirren did not see Margaret caring for her husband and her lover as an issue, telling Homer D. Swander that

Margaret is of course sexually involved with Suffolk, but she is utterly loyal to Henry. He is the King, and she has a deep belief in hierarchy. She would leave Suffolk in a minute for the King. Henry isn’t what she expected, isn’t what she wanted — she had wanted him to be her hero — but she has no doubt about his right to the throne. He is King, she is Queen, and that’s that.

(1978, pp. 152-153)

In her interpretation of the character, Mirren was able to balance Margaret's feelings for both Suffolk and Henry, meaning she could proclaim honestly "No, my love, I should not mourn but die for thee." (4.4.24)

The sexuality and passion of Mirren's Margaret is embodied in her hair. Long hair, Synnott argues,

has for centuries been both a gender sign and a sex symbol in our society. St. Paul was probably not the first to describe a woman's long hair as a 'glory' and contemporary references in advertizing, poetry and fashion magazines to the 'crowning glory' are legion.

(1987, p. 384)

Anthropologist C.R. Hallpike, in 1969, also correlated long hair with ideological symbology, arguing "that long hair is associated with being outside society" (p. 260). In 1977, post hippie movement and sexual revolution, long uncut hair, such as that seen on Mirren's Margaret, was a recent and overt symbol of sexuality. The sexual freedom represented in Mirren's hair enabled Margaret to not be confined by the same ideals that ensured Peggy Ashcroft's Margaret was unable to declare her love for Henry whilst cradling Suffolk's head.

In Hands' 1977 cycle, the degree to which Margaret's sexuality was a cause of concern for Henry (played by Alan Howard) also shifted. Williams, discussing how much the plays of the first tetralogy deviate from the chronicle history, notes that "to Shakespeare's mind, the physical degree to which the love of Margaret and Suffolk had gone must have been common knowledge at Court" (1974, p. 316). Alan Howard, in his interpretation of Henry, agreed with this, revealing to Homer D. Swander that "the Margaret-Suffolk thing — he knows about them" (1978, p. 158). Rather than this causing a difficult interpersonal issue, however, Howard instead credits Suffolk with opening Henry's eyes to the joy of sex, as it was Suffolk who brought Margaret back to England to be Henry's wife. Howard told Swander that Henry "knows about the Devil — and suddenly there is Sex! Then Suffolk manages to create the whole romantic world for him, and he wants it" (1978, p. 158). Howard continues to say that, unfortunately for Henry, this "leads directly to the betrayal and the suffering" (1978, p. 158) of the rest of the plays and the many

battles and wars fought in his name. Sex and the sexuality of his wife became the cause and source of civil unrest.

There is a distinction between discussing a character's sexuality and sexually objectifying the actor. In response to Parkinson's questioning about her body, Mirren said that she wanted the audience (and her interviewers) to focus on what is presented onstage, and specifically the relationships of the characters (*Parkinson*, 1975, 02:46). In *Hands'* cycle, despite the open and understanding attitudes of the actors, within the world of the play female sexuality — or more specifically female desire — is perceived as the real threat to the English crown. This is seen throughout the rest of the plays in characters such as Eleanor Cobham (*2HVI*) and Lady Elizabeth Grey (*3HVI*). However, this is not just a threat in early modern drama as the language of female desire is, even in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, used to control women. The corporeal feminist and cultural studies scholar Susan Bordo explores this use of language of desire in case studies from the twentieth century. One particular example she examines is known as the Madyun case, where a woman refused to have a caesarean section but was challenged and taken to court by the hospital who, ultimately, won in their suit. In discussing the Madyun case, Bordo ruminates on the importance of the word "desire" as used in court, writing that it was used

over, for example, the more legally conventional wishes. [...] The idea of female 'desire' is potent and threatening in our culture, with its sexual overtones and suggestions of personal gratification and capricious self-interest – particularly when paired with the notion of indulgence, as in this judge's ruling.

(2003, p. 79)

Female desire and sexuality was still a core fear in twentieth century Western culture (the threat of which is used as a means of control and containment), and this was reflected in the world of *Hands'* cycle. The sexual desire of Mirren's Margaret for both Suffolk and Henry — and specifically the way that this threatens patriarchal bloodlines — is foregrounded by *Hands'* cycle as a means of representing the sexual liberation of the 1970s. However, despite the rationalising of the actors about the relationships between Margaret, Henry, and

Suffolk, the reviewers focussed on Mirren as sex object, rather than Margaret as sexually liberated, as the threat of female desire is (still) something to be controlled.

In describing Mirren's portrayal of Margaret in Hands' *Henry VI, Part 3*, Hampton-Reeves and Rutter write that "for this woman, divorcing Henry from her bed was no mere formality but sexual punishment that would cost her, too (although already she had another man in her arms, her son Ned)" (2009, p. 104). Once her lover had been murdered in *2HVI*, Margaret's only point of sexual release was Henry, but she denies herself her desires as a form of control, and even self-punishment. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter's observation, however, that her son was already in her arms, is reminiscent of the image of Margaret and Suffolk (Figure 5), and his desire for her to cradle him like a child. Margaret's shift from romantic love to maternal love in this production was no great leap. It was the arrival of her son, and her desire to protect him, that restored the sense of playfulness seen in the first image with Suffolk (Figure 5) to the subverted joy in the torture of York (Figure 8).

Hair in these three photographs of Helen Mirren's Margaret highlights the transformation of the sexuality of the character in the world of the play. The range of control and freedom in her hair is mirrored in the contrasting range of sexuality described by actors and interpreted in first night reviews and scholarly criticism. Mirren's Margaret subverted the patriarchal gender norms that constitute the plays' internal hierarchies through her sexuality, as Ashcroft's Margaret did through her rejection of femininity. This difference in how the two cycles represented Margaret's gender subversion can be analysed in the presentation of Margaret's hair as she confronts York after leading the Lancastrian army into battle.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

4 *Edward IV* (1964) Queen Margaret (Peggy Ashcroft) points to the molehill;
photograph by T.F. Holte.

[image redacted from this digitised version at the author's request]

8 *Henry. VI, Part iii* (1977) Queen Margaret (Helen Mirren) taunts York (Emrys James); photograph by Nobby Clark.

Margaret Subverting the Patriarchal Order

Like all of the female characters in the first tetralogy, Margaret poses a threat to the patriarchal order of the plays. Howard and Rackin summarise this, arguing that “there is always the anxiety that women, whether lovingly submissive or aggressively independent, will undo the patriarchal edifice and, with it, an always endangered masculinity” (1997, p. 99). In this sense, the mere presence of women in the first tetralogy is a threat to the state, and Peggy Ashcroft (1963) and Helen Mirren (1977) in their cycles each performed this threat to the “patriarchal edifice” in different ways. The threat these two Margarets encapsulated is clearly visible in their hair in these production photographs (Figures 4 and 8) from the battle in which Margaret tortures York on the molehill with the death of his son (*3HVI*, 1.4), as dramatised in Barton and Hall’s *Edward IV* and Hands’ *Henry VI, Part 3*.

Ashcroft is alone, staring down the lens of the camera (Figure 4). Her hair — the gendered symbol and extension of the humors — is covered. She is strong and stern, pointing to the molehill on which she will confront York, her threat comes in the form of an unwillingness to submit to the socially acceptable strictures of feminine behaviour. Mirren, on the other hand, is pictured with York mid-taunt (Figure 8). The scene is one that shows Margaret’s capacity for cruelty, and in this moment of violence Mirren’s hair hangs loose down her back, but it is pinned back from her face so she can commence battle — reminiscent of the combination of long flowing hair and practical pinning of Ashcroft’s Margaret at the beginning of her character development (Figure 1), which made her look younger, the ingénue full of hope for the future.

Mirren’s Margaret subverted cultural norms and expectations through her unrestrained sexual passion symbolically presented in her long, uncut hair. The covering of Ashcroft’s hair (Figure 4) implicitly infers early modern concepts of hiding and deceit, as well as masculinisation and the removal of her femininity, which are the ways in which Ashcroft’s Margaret transgressed in the 1963 adaptation. The presentation of Mirren’s long hair implicitly infers sociological ideas of sexual liberation and promiscuity. Both Margarets reject the patriarchal order in their respective cycles in a different way, but in both, the rejection is evident in their hair, what Synnott calls the “peculiar, perhaps unique [...] public and physical symbol of the self” (Synnott, 1987, p. 383).

In the performance of Shakespeare's plays, women are often present, but not speaking, their bodies performing when their words are not. Production photographs capture this stillness, and enable a study of a suspended moment and a detailed reading of the staged body and what it signifies. This chapter has focussed the reading of the female body in production photographs through reading hair, and the representations of society, culture, and gender that are present within it. Synnott writes that it is the "personal and biological origin of hair which gives it such richness and power." (1993, p. 122) The analysing of hair provides an opportunity to understand not just the theatrical and design decisions of a cycle, but the representation of contemporaneous understandings and attitudes towards women and ideas of female sexuality.

Helen Mirren's performance of Margaret has been entangled with Peggy Ashcroft's, in both contemporary reviews of the cycle and later critical discussions, seen as a comparison piece to the earlier interpretation of the character. Through reading the hair of Ashcroft and Mirren in production photographs, a new performance history can be written — one that allows a reading of these performances both isolated and together, of their own time and in the context of a broader and longer performance history of the first tetralogy. Rather than see these two performances as a hairball, an untangle-able mess of knots, we must rather think of them as a plait: a woven piece of theatre history combined of separate performances which are both part of the larger pattern and exist on their own.

In the chapter, hair was analysed as a way to explore how cultural attitudes to female sexuality and changes in the Royal Shakespeare Company management impacted the performance of Margaret. Through the examination of hair in performance photographs of Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren, the chapter explored how the body of Margaret in performance is directly affected by the cultural context in which the cycle was produced, and specifically, how changes in social attitudes to femininity and female sexuality created a shift in the performed body of Margaret. The chapter also explored how a change in RSC management and attitudes towards things such as design, and adaptation and full text productions, helped shape the body of Margaret in the context of these two differing cycles. For example, hair in the photographs of Peggy Ashcroft

and Helen Mirren on the molehill (Figures 4 and 8) can be directly compared as examples of these changes. Ashcroft's hair is covered, using conceptions of early modern costuming to hide her identity (as hair was thought of as an extension of the humours), and furthering the characterisation of Margaret as monstrous, as the cycle could not seem to reconcile Margaret's actions with those of a woman within its 1963 context. Mirren's hair, however, is long and flowing down her back, drawing on the twenty-first century image of long hair and the hippy and free love movements, and emphasising the sexual liberation of Mirren's post sexual revolution Margaret. Through reading hair in performance photographs, this chapter analysed how the body of Margaret in performance was impacted by the cultural moment, as well as the theatrical fashions, and the mode of production.

A key finding of the first chapter of this study is the direct impact that shifts in cultural attitudes to women's bodies and female sexuality can have on the body of Margaret in performance, and that an analysis of hair can be used as a way to read this change. This contributes to a central argument of the study that Margaret's body has been directly impacted by the social and cultural context in which she was performed. The way this chapter explored how the change in RSC management and attitudes towards theatrical design impacted the two Margarets also contributes to the aim of this study to examine how the theatrical context of the cycle in which Margaret exists shapes her body in performance. The next chapter will shift the focus from theatre to television, and further the central argument of this study by closely analysing how the mode of production can impact and shape the body of Margaret in performance by examining the relationship between Margaret and the camera in a Jane Howell's full text BBC/Time-Life cycle.

“Die neither mother, wife, nor England’s queen!”: The Centring of Margaret in
Jane Howell’s BBC cycle (1983)

The second chapter contributes to the central aim and argument of this study by analysing the relationship between Margaret’s body and the camera in Jane Howell’s 1983 BBC/Time-Life cycle, with a key focus on how the mode of production (full text and theatre as television) impacted the way in which Margaret’s body was framed in performance. The BBC/Time-Life project’s lack of textual cutting also presents the opportunity to also explore the role of Margaret’s theatrical mirrors in her narrative development. The chapter examines Margaret through key moments in her narrative development in which she is centred. This centring is analysed both in the context of the plays (for example, Margaret’s entrance centred between two scenes of Joan) and when Margaret is centred by Howell’s direction (such as the repeated images of Margaret cradling the male body). Through this analysis, the chapter builds on the first chapter of this study by examining how the body of Margaret was centred in this full text cycle, and how the mode of production (in the context of the BBC/Time-Life project), the televisual fashions of the early 1980s, and the cultural moment impacted the body of Margaret in performance.

In the early 1980s, Jane Howell directed the four plays of the first tetralogy as part of the BBC/Time-Life series *The BBC Television Shakespeare*. There were set restrictions on what Howell could do with her cycle for, as Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Carol Chillington Rutter explain, “mindful of its consumers, Time-Life apparently instigated clauses in its contract with the BBC that forbade modern interpretation, narrowing the artistic possibilities for directors.” (2009, p. 115) However, despite Time-Life’s restrictions, Howell created a cycle that — as Hardy M. Cook writes — “launches an all-out assault on the assumption that televised Shakespeare must use ‘realistic’ film techniques and naturalistic production designs.” (1992, p. 330) Howell combined theatrical set pieces and televisual approaches to create a cycle that is “an iconoclastic work with a strong political subtext.” (Hampton-Reeves & Rutter, 2009, p. 116) The study of Howell’s cycle in this chapter explores how, through her combination of televisual and theatrical techniques, Howell centred Margaret. This centring is

both metaphorical, focussing on key aspects of Margaret's narrative development, and literal, as Howell utilised the focus and precision afforded by television to centre Margaret within the camera lens.

This chapter explores how Margaret is centred in Howell's cycle, and how Margaret's theatrical mirrors are foregrounded in a production that, due to the nature of the larger BBC/Time-Life project, used the full text of the plays. The place of Margaret in Howell's cycle, both literally and metaphorically, is analysed in conjunction with the place of Joan, Eleanor, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York. As well as Margaret's relationship with her theatrical mirrors, three specific moments which highlight the impact and the use of centring are examined in detail: Margaret cradling Suffolk's head, the torture of York, and the murder of Prince Edward. Howell uses repeated camera images through these moments including two-person closeups, images of cradling, and the foregrounding of Margaret's body within the frame.

Howell's cycle is a balance between the televisual and the theatrical. She told Henry Fenwick, when discussing production choices for the published version of the playtext, that "practicality and artistic decisions go hand-in-hand; the technical and artistic solutions are the same thing." (1983a, p. 29) A key aspect that makes Howell's cycle seem so artistically theatrical, and yet at the same time is a practical decision, is her use of doubling in the cast, which Ronald Knowles calls "equally Brechtian, and Elizabethan" (2001, p. 24). Howell told Fenwick:

because I knew Shakespeare had written for a company, and you can sense in the plays that there's a lot of doubling, you just know that his company was fifteen or perhaps twenty-five, so there must have been a lot of doubling again, I felt: Go back to the original rules. It just seemed practically *and* artistically a good idea.

(1983a, p. 29)

Howell's use of doubling not only gave a sense of a working theatre company and of early modern staging, it also gave her cycle a feeling of progression and momentum, whilst at the same time instilling it with the sense of "eternal recurrence" (Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 38) identified by Robert Shaughnessy as a key aspect of performed cycles. Susan Willis, who was in the rehearsal room

and on set during many productions for the BBC/Time-Life project, comments that “those reappearing faces establish the repetitiveness of events and attitudes in the sequence — the ambitions, the efforts to protect, the promises, the betrayals.” (1991, p. 176) There are actors who appear in all four plays, and often doubled parts. For example, Ron Cook who plays Richard of Gloucester in *2 & 3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* appears as the Countess of Auvergne’s Porter in *1 Henry VI*, who is also portrayed as having a physical disability. Actors who play on one side of a battle sometimes return on the other side, for example Michael Byrne who plays the Duke of Alençon in *1 Henry VI* returns as the conjurer John Hume in *2 Henry VI*, the Marquess of Montague and Father that killed his son in *3 Henry VI*, and finally the Duke of Buckingham in *Richard III*. With the exception of Anne Carroll — who plays Eleanor in *2 Henry VI* and returns as the silent extra-textual Mistress Shore (*Richard III*, 1983, 01:43:31)) — none of the female actors double, no matter how small the part. Of course there are far fewer female parts in the plays, yet doubling of the parts has been utilised in other cycles for an interesting interpretive effect. For example, Katy Stephens played both Joan and Margaret in Michael Boyd’s 2007 RSC cycle, and in 2013, in the Shakespeare Globe touring production of the three parts of *Henry VI*, Beatriz Romilly played Joan, Eleanor, and Elizabeth. In Howell’s cycle, where there is only one minor occurrence of a woman doubling, Margaret’s presence as the only female character in all four plays becomes even more pronounced, as Julia Foster is the only woman who appears in all four plays.

Howell’s use of doubling and the theatricality of her approach is not only applied to the actors, but when watching all four plays as a continuous cycle, there is a sense of moments being mirrored, doubled, and repeated. These moments are shown as set images, and often feature and centre Julia Foster as Margaret. The repeated images include women being captured or overpowered by men (especially by Bernard Hill’s York), Julia Foster’s Margaret cradling the body of her lover, her son, and her adversary, and women being placed in opposition to each other within a camera shot. When Howell breaks away or reverses these set images — for example when Margaret overpowers York, or women band together — it becomes clear that something has shifted, and that set patterns are being broken and reforged. By repeating these set images throughout her cycle, Howell gives both a sense of momentum and progression, and of the potentially cyclical nature of history.

Julia Foster saw how the sense of circularity and repeated images was ingrained in the cycle of four plays. Foster told Fenwick that Margaret

starts in *Part I* aged about fourteen, and by the time we get to *Richard III* she is, I think, seventy-four, seventy-six, something like that. [...] So I approached the four plays as Margaret as one individual person who was going to start here and end up there. When you look at the four plays, Shakespeare is very fond of circling and joining up things from early on and things that happen. Characters repeat themselves in similar situations at different times, react in the same way and say the same words — there are tremendous loops all through. There was a lot of work to do before beginning. When I started I knew as much about *Part 3* and *Richard III* as I did about *Part I*, and as we do the plays there are constant references to what is coming up.

(1983b, pp. 24-25)

Foster's approach to playing Margaret and Howell's approach to the project was very much as a cycle, and the connections and repetitions that Foster alludes to are often seen in the repeated images of Margaret. The centring of Margaret's progression in Howell's tetralogy culminates in a final extra-textual shot of her sitting atop a pile of corpses, clutching the body of the dead Richard III to her in a final repetition of the image of Margaret cradling.

Whereas Jonathan Miller (who was the producer of the first two parts of Howell's cycle) designed his own BBC productions to be inspired by artists contemporary to the writing of the plays, such as Vermeer, with multiple large and highly decorated sets, Howell's design approach was more akin to theatre than to television. Howell's cycle used the same set throughout all four plays, which at times was highly theatrical, and at others surprisingly televisual. It began in *Part 1* like a school playground, and Hampton-Reeves and Rutter describe how

it was painted in bright primary colours; in successive episodes, the paintwork was progressively distressed to represent the eclipse of social values over time, until, in *Part Three*, a blanket of snow [...] transformed the set into a blank white space not unlike a television studio.

Finally in *Richard III*, set designer Oliver Bayldon, drawing comparisons with the ongoing political troubles in Northern Ireland, described how it “has been all boarded up, it’s like a derelict building site with rows of doors as fencing. The play-park of *Henry VI Part I* is now Belfast.” (Fenwick, 1983d, p. 23) Susan Willis outlines that the “original production rules” Howell was to follow were “not strict Elizabethan staging but the fact that one scene follows another immediately and that the focus must be on the actors.” (1991, p. 165) The single set both allowed Howell to focus on the actors, and also to show the meta-theatrically constructed historical (and personal) narrative of the plays. It gave the plays a unity whilst also allowing each to be stylistically different as they utilised the set in different ways. The duality of the stylistic consistency and individuality of the plays is indicative of Howell’s style, as she told Henry Fenwick: “I’m very interested in the through-line [...] I’ve never liked things which were stylistically all in the same direction.” (1983a, p. 22) Each of the plays in Howell’s cycle has its own style, but each is part of a bigger whole, and Julia Foster’s *Margaret* was centred throughout.

Not a television or film auteur, Jane Howell’s way of working with the company she created was not one based on a typical top-down directorial approach, rather as this was television as theatre, she ran her cast as an egalitarian theatre company. Mark Wing-Davey — who played multiple parts, including Warwick — said that

with Jane all sorts of traditional hierarchies within the theatre are dissolved — or certainly the edges are softened. I think that benefits these particular plays. One consequence is that every member of the company feels able to make suggestions, contribute during the rehearsal process.

(Fenwick, 1983c, p. 29)

Howell fostered a sense of community within her rehearsal room and on set. When describing Howell’s directing style, Henry Fenwick writes:

Jane is, she has said to me in the past, a director who works on the basis of affection, and that is clear when you see her in rehearsal. When she says 'My dears' to the actors there is nothing theatrical about it — it has a rare burry country sound to it, a little matriarchal and definitely warm.

(1983b, p. 26)

Henry Fenwick also takes a great deal of time to talk to the actors about their respective parts and how they approached them, and as such in this chapter it seems remiss to ascribe *all* character decisions solely to Howell.

Due to the BBC publishing a series of companion texts to go with each of the plays in the Television Shakespeare project, there is a record of both the rehearsal and filming process. For the first tetralogy, these published texts contain an introduction to the play by John Wilders, and then information about the production from Henry Fenwick, who interviewed cast and crew to gain their insights. Similarly, Susan Willis had access to the rehearsal process for a number of plays for the BBC project, which she discusses in her book *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (1991). In the chapter 'Jane Howell's approach', Willis focusses on all six plays Howell directed for the series (the first tetralogy, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Titus Andronicus*). For the RSC's earlier *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) and *Three Parts of Henry VI* (1977), much of the available information about the production process and actors is mediated through an individual, in terms of actors (Margaret in each cycle was played by a high profile actor), and in terms of directors/adaptors (Peter Hall and John Barton as revolutionary Shakespeareans, and Terry Hands as soon to be Artistic Director of the RSC). However the insight and information into Howell's cycle made available through these texts is filtered through the lens of the BBC project rather than a star individual or individuals.

There have been critical studies of the cycle from a televisual perspective, for example Hardy M. Cooke's 'Jane Howell's BBC First Tetralogy: Theatrical and Televisual Manipulation' (1992), though the theatrical explorations have been less frequent. More recently, Hampton-Reeves and Rutter's (2009) excellent production history of the *Henry VI* plays discusses Howell's production in detail, but does not include *Richard III* which falls out of the scope of their project. In published editions of the plays, how much emphasis is put on performance in general changes from edition to edition, and one of the difficult

choices editors must make is which productions to discuss, and in how much detail. For example, there is nothing on Howell's production in the introduction to the Arden Shakespeare Third series edition of *Richard III*, though there is some detail for the three parts of *Henry VI*.

Richard III is so often performed as a stand-alone play (with Margaret heavily edited), that *Richard III*s that are part of a cycle often do not make it into overviews of productions of the play. Howell describes how

the big discovery for the actors was that because we've done the other three plays they always have pictures in their heads of the past, and that's terribly important if you're going to find out what *Richard III*'s about. It's not a play about a single man.

(Fenwick, 1983d, p. 30)

Howell's approach to *Richard III* was antithetical to those who see it as a stand alone star vehicle. Rather, *Richard III* for Howell is the final play of a cycle where the sense of history and the driving momentum of the narrative comes to a close.

In her 1983 BBC cycle, Howell centred Margaret, both metaphorically as a key part of the cycle's connecting narrative, and literally within the camera lens. This chapter explores how Howell's combination of televisual and theatrical techniques, combined with her use of repeated images and her centring of Margaret, created a cycle with both circularity and progression that culminated with Margaret ending up on top of the heap.

Joan is Captured: Centring Joan's Summoning

The playtext of *1 Henry VI* centres the introduction of Margaret within two scenes of Joan la Pucelle and, more specifically, within the scenes of Joan's downfall and demise. Before Margaret enters, Joan is captured by York after she attempts to summon her "choice spirits" (5.2.24). The moment foregrounds Joan's body — it is her body that she offers them in exchange for their aid — and Howell centres Joan in a way which both establishes how her cycle will continue to centre the female body, and also emphasises the theatrical mirror the playtext creates between Joan and Margaret. In the moment of Joan's

summoning, the camera, and the viewers at home implicit in the camera's existence, becomes the means through which control over the narrative is fought. Though in Howell's cycle, the camera appears to gravitate towards the strong and powerful women in front of it, beginning here with Joan and seen later with Margaret, the patriarchal English of the cycle (such as York) attempt to wrest control of it and the narrative drive it represents.

Jane Howell's BBC cycle physicalised the centring of Margaret's entrance between two scenes of Joan by centring Joan within the camera lens. In doing so, Howell creates a theatrical mirror with Margaret's entrance, utilising the intimacy and control over the audience's view afforded by television with the use of the camera to frame what a viewer sees, whilst retaining the theatrical guidance and structure of the playtext. Howell in particular foregrounded the ambiguity inherent in Joan's epithet of *la Pucelle* to allow Brenda Blethyn's Joan to defy definition as either witch or saint, virgin or whore. Alison Findlay defines '*la Pucelle*', and highlights the ambiguity of the pun on "puzzle", as:

a maid or girl implicitly a virgin (from the French '*pucelle*'). With the definitive article, 'the Pucelle' was a name for Joan of Arc, the Holy maid of France. In complete contrast, the early modern English 'puzzle' was a term for a **drab**, a **harlot** or a **courtezan**.

(2014, p. 333)

Hampton-Reeves and Rutter captured the playfulness, and indefinability, of Blethyn's Joan, writing that, though *The Times* critic Peter Ackroyd

quipped that Joan had to be either Margaret Thatcher or principle boy: Brenda Blethyn played her as both, slapping her thighs and bossing the men around with exaggerated bravado. In battle, she charged around the stage wearing a helmet whose blue plume bobbed about ridiculously as she chased the English.

(2009, p. 122)

Blethyn's performance — drawing on those British theatrical traditions such as farce and pantomime — made her character inherently likeable. That, and a shift in the English perception of Joan of Arc as a saint since her canonisation in

1920, meant that whilst retaining the language of the playtext, including Joan's summoning of her "choice spirits" (5.2.24), Howell and Blethyn could push the ambiguity inherent in Joan's character even further in performance.

Howell was wary of defining Joan only as saint, however, and especially of drawing too many comparisons to George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, which she had previously directed for the BBC in 1979. Henry Fenwick writes how Howell's "knowledge was, she acknowledges, helpful to her, [but that] she stresses the danger of identifying the Joan of this play with our image of Joan of Arc." (1983a, p. 30) Howell told Fenwick that instead of a saint,

you've only got to think of a girl. She comes on like a 12-year-old bossy-boots who not only wants to play football with the boys but actually captain the team! And the French say, "Oh well! [here she does a beautiful imitation of gruff, nonplussed boys] Yes, perhaps you'd better then, if God's helping you — he'll be frightfully good to have. Fine, captain the football team!"

(p. 30)

Despite her wariness, through this approach, Howell was able to present the twelve year old bossy girl, *and* draw on a twentieth century Western understanding of the canonised Joan, once again demonstrating Joan's indefinability, and exposing the attempts of the English to construct her as something she is not.

The English men not only construct Joan's witchcraft, but they deny her self-proclaimed virginity to fashion her as whore, using the ambiguity of her epithet *la Pucelle* to their own advantage. Like her supposed witchcraft, throughout the majority of the play there has been no onstage evidence for Joan to be anything but virgin. She even rejects Charles' declaration of love when she first defeats him in single combat, proclaiming: "I must not yield to any rites of love, / For my profession's sacred from above" (1.2.113-114). Brenda Blethyn's Joan (after kneeling Charles in the groin during their fight when he tried to hold her to him), utters these lines to Charles, who is knelt before her with his arms clasped about her waist, with a gentle sincerity and softness (00:22:15). In *1 Henry VI* the only potential exception to the clarity of Joan's sexual purity is during the nighttime English siege of Orleans (2.1). Anna Kamaralli, in a study

that looks at the presentation of female characters in staged history cycles, argues that textually, “it must be stressed that *all* she does with the Dauphin in this scene is enter at the same time; there is no more explicit indication of a relationship.” (2010, p. 176) As Kamarilli emphasises, during the scene, the French nobility fly from the town as the English invade, and Joan and Charles enter together (only remarked upon with a wry comment from the Bastard of Orleans), and then the scene swiftly moves away from any implication of impropriety.

Howell heightened this brief moment with a touch of stage farce, in keeping with Blethyn’s pantomime principal boy Joan, which in turn played into the sense of both gender and sexual ambiguity inherent in the character and the moment onscreen. Joan and Charles, both in underclothes, appear together in the back of a shot of the Bastard and Alençon (both also in underclothes), and Joan is holding a blanket in front of her (00:47:05). As they enter, they stumble and fall to the ground, the blanket falls on them and creates a clear image of the two in bed together. The construction of this moment is highly theatrical, and highlights Howell’s drive to foreground the plays as *plays* throughout her versions of the tetralogy, and her skill at blending the theatrical and the televisual. As they sit in their bed, Charles’ shirt front is completely open, revealing his chest, and Joan wears nightwear, open at the neck. Joan’s state of undress, in shapeless and ungendered nightclothes, rather than aligning her with the similarly clad men, only seems to highlight her femininity and the slightness of Blethyn’s frame. Despite an emphasis on Joan’s entrance with Charles, the way the scene continues — with Charles behaving like a spoilt child, and Joan rallying the men like a shrewish and scolding wife — swiftly moves away from any potential sexual impropriety between Joan and Charles. In Howell’s cycle, Joan is playful, and perhaps even flirtatious, but certainly not the whore the patriarchal English construct her as.

Similarly, Howell highlighted the idea of Joan’s witchcraft as a patriarchal English construction by having no spirits appear to her. Joan herself does not refer to the powers she calls to for help as “fiends” (5.2.28 SD) as they are called in the stage directions of the play. Rather she summons her “choice spirits” (5.2.24), creating another space of ambiguity, as Joan’s spoken language (as opposed to the written language of the stage directions) has neither demonic nor divine connotations. In order to summon these “choice spirits” (5.2.24),

Brenda Blethyn's Joan kneels on the school gym-like parquet floor (02:34:36). The childlike setting contrasts starkly with her being exhausted from battle and dressed in full armour, which disguises any trace of a feminine or female body — a female body that Ian Saynor's Charles was clearly enamoured with in her first entrance — and embodying the threat of "masculine dress and masculine behaviour" (1997, p. 45) theorised by Howard and Rackin. Howell centres Joan's desperate pleas, focussing in on the stillness of Joan as the action continues around her, and establishing a shot that will then be repeated with Margaret, the next maid of France. Joan makes the first line of her invocation directly to the camera, before moving to look around at the fiends and at the floor. In a departure from the text, no fiends actually appear to Joan on the screen. However, Joan's language remains unaltered, heightening the space for interpretation in this moment — have the fiends ever really existed?

There have been other productions which have avoided the complications inherent in Joan's summoning through rewriting and adaptation. Several years after Howell's BBC production, the English Shakespeare Company, in *The Wars of the Roses* (1987), changed Joan's language in the scene (which was moved to after the introduction of Margaret and combined with excerpts from her trial) to remove any possible trace of her links to witchcraft. Instead of asking "Now help, ye charming spells and periapts," (5.3.23), Francesca Ryan's Joan appealed to the Virgin Mary, praying "Help gracious lady, appear to me" (*Henry VI: House of Lancaster*, 1990, 01:07:39). Lois Potter describes how Ryan's "Joan was innocent and rather fey, and her lines were altered so that she did not condemn her own country or (in soliloquy) reveal herself as a witch" (1991, p. 175-6), and therefore that there was no ambiguity of Joan's witch status at all in Ryan's summoning, and any sense of Joan's witchcraft was purely a patriarchal English construction.

Edward Burns discusses the theatrical impact of productions that choose to have no physical — or even implied — fiends in the scene, and the ambiguity it affords to Joan's witch status. Burns writes that when Joan talks to the fiends in "private, observed only by us, the audience [...] she has no witnesses but the audience [and that] keeps open the possibility of staging the scene as psychological allegory." (2001, p. 34) Blethyn's Joan certainly lends itself to this reading, as she speaks out desperately off past the camera that has centred her within the frame, she breathes heavily and pushes her hands against at the

unmoving parquet floor. She sees the spirits there, but the viewer does not, and rather than imply an eerie sense of the supernatural, the bright studio lighting and playground like set more seem to show a sad, scared, desperate little girl. The appearance of fiends or spirits in the scene, or the complete removal of the language of embodied witchcraft, has the potential to be disappointing when it does confirm Joan's witch status, either positively or negatively. If the fiends appear with Joan on stage or screen, and she promises to feed them with blood in what Kristin M. Smith, in her work on witchcraft and motherly transgression in the first tetralogy, calls an "act of demonic motherhood" (2007, p. 148), it confirms Joan as a witch, overwriting the ambiguity that has pervaded the play up until this point. However, without any fiends accompanying Blethyn's Joan as she speaks to the camera alone, the uncertainty of the character is able to continue, as is her dual role of masculine and feminine, political leader and principle boy.

Howell centres Joan in the camera lens and defines the camera itself as a player in the action, whilst also establishing how her cycle centres the female body, and how it is able to bear witness to private, intimate moments of grief and vulnerability. Howell signals the abandoning of Blethyn's Joan by the spirits by the camera slowly zooming in to her so the audience can see from centimetres away the disappointment and heartbreak in Joan's eyes as she realises she is now completely alone. She acknowledges the camera's presence as she glances her eyes towards it, her summoning having failed, and tells it directly "My ancient incantations are too weak, / And hell too strong for me to buckle with" (5.2.48-49). Blethyn is vulnerable and isolated, her once booming voice now quiet as she laments "Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust." (5.2.50) Suddenly the shouts of men and the call of trumpets are accompanied by an overlaid shot of soldiers swooping past. Howell uses a televisual and filmic device to heighten the theatrical tension of Joan's moment of quiet, as she remains completely still within an otherworldly swirl of action, only her hair blowing in the breeze made by the fast moving bodies. The soldiers around her become more solid as the overlay fades out, and then a French soldier — attacked by the Duke of York — falls at her knees, and York kneels to finish the job. He looks up and sees Joan, who avoids eye contact with him, and he takes a split second to recognise her, but then immediately and violently grabs her face. Howell zooms in on this interaction, making the audience a party to the

violence and bitterness of York's actions. Howell's close up shot, with their bodies close together, York in red and Joan in blue, him brunette and her blonde, him a man and Joan, now obviously in comparison, a young woman, centres and foregrounds Joan's vulnerability in this moment.

York has physically taken over Joan's space. Her place of solitude in the middle of the floor and in the centre of the camera has been usurped, and suddenly it is York who not only controls *what* the camera sees, but *how* it sees it in an attempt to reassert patriarchal English control. Just like Joan talks to the camera in her moment of desperation, York now turns directly to the camera to tell the audience "See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows" (5.2.55). Through his command of the camera's view, York makes the audience complicit in the English patriarchal construction of Joan as witch, even though they have just witnessed a scene in which no fiends or spirits appear to her. York continues to liken her to the sorceress Circe, and calls her "banning hag, enchantress" (5.2.56, 63). Textually, due to Joan's summoning of the fiends, she seems to have confirmed York's worst insults, and that she is indeed the witch the English have condemned her as all along. Yet, Howell's decision not to show any spirits complicates this, as although the viewer has seen her invoking spirits, they have had no empirical proof that they exist. York's attempts to include the viewer in his capture and ridicule of Joan are an attempt to persuade them to join the English patriarchal construction of Joan as witch, rather than confirming something which the viewer has already seen.

When Bernard Hill's York implies Joan's sexual impropriety with Charles, her reply (02:36:42) pushes him physically back. In response, Hill's York, in a gendered show of violence, grabs Joan by the throat and pushes her to the ground, threatening her with his sword whilst using the language of witchcraft against her ("hag, enchantress" (5.2.63)), and telling her to "hold thy tongue" (5.2.63). Not content only to not let her speak, he also holds her physically down with the weight of his body and the threat of his sword. The hilt and his hand unseen, it is the point of the sword, level with her neck, that has been thrust into the shot, York asserting his sexual dominance as well as his linguistic one. York's last act with Joan is to put his arm around her waist to pull her against her will out of the shot as the space becomes overrun with English soldiers. A theatrical exit rather than a televisual cutaway, Howell follows the rules of the BBC/Time-Life series as outlined by Susan Willis — that "one scene

follows another immediately" (1991, p. 165) — and the exit also enables Margaret and Suffolk to enter physically into the same space, creating a theatrical mirror between Margaret and Joan.

With her attempted summoning and then her forced exit from the scene, Blethyn's Joan seems truly out of control, rather than just out of favour with the French or despised by the English, and in her panic she retains the same high energy that has been propelling her joint role as politician and principle boy. Even in this moment, however, Howell defies the textual implications of the summoning scene (that the patriarchal English construction of Joan as witch was correct) by not staging the fiends, and ensuring Joan remains undefined and indefinable. It is Howell's centring of Joan, her relationship with the camera's view, and the ambiguity of the character that is then available for Julia Foster's Margaret to inherit, as she moves through the rest of the tetralogy.

The Pregnant Maid: Joan's Trial and Self-definition

The second scene of Joan's that Margaret is centred between is Joan's trial in front of the pseudo-court of English lords. Howell's cycle retains the full text of the trial (something which, along with much of Joan's role, is often cut in adaptations), and through this emphasises Joan's skill with language and her ability to self-define, another skill which draws a connection between Joan and Margaret. Similarly, Howell's focus both on Joan in the scene, and on York's reaction to her presence and his underlying fear of her power, emphasises Joan's use of language in an attempt to regain control over her body which York captured with a particularly gendered show of violence. By the end of Joan's trial, and by the end of Howell's *Henry VI, Part 1*, it is clear that Howell's cycle highlights the gendered struggle between the patriarchal English and the threat of female transgression as embodied in Joan and then Margaret, and that it is a cycle that will represent that gendered struggle onscreen through the centring of women.

As Foster's Margaret leaves to be married, Blethyn's Joan re-enters, for the last time, in a scene that plays out like a corrupted wedding, a wedding which is to be repeated and mirrored at the opening of the second play in Howell's cycle with the actual marriage of Margaret and Henry. Dressed in layered earth toned shapeless tunics, Joan is shoved through two columns of soldiers towards an expectant man. Joan's clothes are reminiscent of both her first entrance as a young, innocent peasant girl, and of the underclothes she wore in the siege of Orleans. Through the stripping of her blue battle armour, Howell emphasises the vulnerability of Joan as a young woman. York, the waiting bridegroom, sits relaxed and comfortable in the throne like chair (foreshadowing his later power grab). He nods to Warwick, who opens a door behind York's chair, and the Shepherd enters. The Shepherd in Howell's production is portrayed as a victim, and Joan's denial that he is her father wounds him deeply. However, through the confrontation with the Shepherd, Joan is afforded the opportunity to use language, the thing that has been used against her by her enemies (and even her friends), to reshape her past, and her future. Nancy A. Gutierrez, in her study of Joan and gender in *1 Henry VI*, describes how during her trial, Joan "rewrites her past, renouncing her pastoral roots and claiming power from a fulfilled sexuality (she pretends to be

pregnant)." (1990, p. 192) In this moment, Joan tries to seize power over her own body — a body that she was only moments ago in the summoning (5.2) willing to sacrifice (on her own terms) for French victory— through her construction of herself as both divine and pregnant. Howell, through the literal centring of Joan in between the columns of waiting soldiers and in the camera lens, places emphasis on this moment of linguistic character construction. Blethyn's Joan screamingly claims she is pregnant whilst breaking free from the soldiers who are dragging her back down the aisle to be burned, throwing herself at York's feet for mercy. The camera follows Joan to York's feet, displaying the two in a close up that mirrors York's earlier capture of Joan. The camera pulls back to allow Mark Wing-Davey's Warwick into the frame, the two men towering over each side of the shaking, bloody, and beaten Joan. They lean over her, using their stature as well as their words to domineer and overpower her, cruelly discussing her sexual exploits with Charles like particularly wicked schoolboys taunting an objectified, female outsider.

Throughout her trial, Blethyn's Joan uses different approaches in order to persuade the English men to relent. This is not to say she is cold or calculated, rather she is adept at understanding how to use different tactics in an attempt to gain sympathy from the English lords. Her attempts culminate in her resorting to the language of the curse, and frightened of the language of a woman condemned to die, the soldiers behind her — all armed men — pick up their pikes as if to protect themselves from the power of her speech. Not just scared of her physical presence (although an excellent fighter, she is physically defenceless), it is her command over language that they are frightened of in this moment. By showing the fear of the armed men, Howell emphasises the power Joan has with words, a power that the audience has been shown is inherent in Foster's Margaret as well.

As Burns argues about the summoning of the fiends as adhering to the English patriarchal constructions of Joan as witch (2001, p. 34), Gutierrez argues that by "refashioning" herself into a witch and claiming a pregnancy that alters her virgin status, Joan becomes "becomes a conventional female threat, and she is treated conventionally: she is burned." (1990, p. 193) The implication of Gutierrez's argument is that it is Joan's ability to change herself through the language she uses that makes her a threat, and a particularly female one at that. As such she is treated as a transgressive woman must be — she is burned alive.

Howell, following the playtext, did not show Joan's execution like other productions from the era did. For example, the ESC (1987) had a particularly gruesome depiction of Joan being 'necklaced' behind a screen, calling to the audience's mind the awful violent images that had been emerging out of South Africa in the late 1980s.

The method of execution specified in the playtext, burning at the stake, is one often associated with defiant women and depictions of witchcraft. Yet Howell's decision not to show the execution is itself a gendered statement. Rutter, in discussing the female corpse on stage and screen, writes that

death is a gendered topic in Shakespeare. Mostly, men die onstage, their violent deaths confirming the terms and conditions of male adventure, struggle, antagonism and contest, in a pattern that costs life but legitimises male heroism and law. [...] Women, however, mostly die offstage, accessories, both 'adjunct' and 'means to' heroic male dying.

(2001, p. 4)

By becoming, as Gutierrez argues, a particularly female threat, Joan is executed offstage. The woman who has led the French army (often to victory) throughout the play, has won several battles, and has excelled in hand-to-hand combat, is not allowed an onstage death that "legitimises" her "heroism" due to her gender transgression. Instead Blethyn's Joan is dragged off screaming, followed by roaring soldiers as York shouts after. With the space clear of everyone except for York, Warwick, and Cardinal Beaufort, York's demeanour changes, from mocking and almost playful, to serious and confrontational. Though York is stern with Charles, his sending the soldiers off with Joan seems to imply that though he mocked Joan, it is she that he truly fears. This pattern of the male leader of the House of York attempting to downplay their fear of a female threat, and instead focus on a non-threatening male counterpart, is repeated by Howell at the murder of Prince Edward (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 03:17:39).

It is Joan's command over language that becomes a unifying female trait throughout the tetralogy. Kristin M. Smith links this to the form of maternity through blood sacrifice Joan demonstrates in the summoning scene (5.2), by writing that her "(presumably) false pregnancy furthers the discourse of corrupt maternity that resonates throughout the rest of Shakespeare's first tetralogy as

she moves from the language of conjuration to the language of curse.” (2007, p. 149) The execution of Joan is not just about Joan as a character. It draws further connections between Joan and Margaret and gives emphasis to the power of female language that continues throughout the tetralogy until it reaches a climax in *Richard III*. Joan passes the ability to curse on to the next maid of France, Margaret, but also, as Smith outlines, it is a progression that follows the female characters in the plays, as they either utilise the language of conjuration (Eleanor Cobham) or the language of curse (Elizabeth, the Duchess of York). By understanding the importance of female language whilst foregrounding the female body, and by centring Joan in the first play of her tetralogy, Jane Howell ensured that Margaret inherited Joan’s position as the keeper of the strength and power that derives from female language, and as the centred figure of the rest of her cycle.

Margaret is Captured: Wooing and Meta-theatricality

Howell makes the exit of Joan and entrance of Margaret a particularly prominent theatrical mirror where the violent threat of York becomes a sexual threat from Suffolk, and from Margaret’s very first entrance she is centred both literally in the camera lens and in the cycle’s focus (*Henry VI, Part 1*, 1983, 02:37:02). Throughout her first scene, however, it becomes clear that Margaret’s gender transgression is less obvious to the men around her than Joan’s (for example, her costuming is highly feminine). As such the qualities that align her most clearly with Joan, such as her skill with language and her ability to engage the camera’s focus, do not result in her punishment, but in an elevation of her rank and social status, allowing her to infiltrate the patriarchal English court itself.

In the capture of Joan by York, Howell foregrounded Joan’s vulnerability in her exit, and through the physical mirroring of Margaret’s entrance, she does the same. As York drags Joan out of the space, a swooping overlaid shot of soldiers moves across the screen from left to right. Behind them, Paul Chapman’s statuesque Suffolk drags Julia Foster’s Margaret into the space, pushing her to the ground, lying on top of her and holding her down in a mirror image of the gendered show of violence by York to Joan. In discussing Foster’s performance, Ronald Knowles writes that what “now appears obvious

went unremarked by the reviews and critics, as far as I am aware. Julia Foster is of short stature.” (2001, p. 25) Howell utilised the height disparity between Chapman and Foster to further the gendered violence of the image first seen in York and Joan. However, unlike York, once on top of Margaret and forcibly holding her down, Suffolk becomes struck by Margaret’s beauty — a conventional feminine beauty as opposed to Joan’s transgressive donning of masculine dress — and softens towards her. However, the violent threat of Suffolk begins to become a sexual one, as though his expression softens, he remains lowering over her, holding her body down with his until he speaks.

Penny Gay, when introducing her monograph on Shakespeare’s women in comedies, writes that “the major plot centres on a young woman of wit and intelligence, apparently ripe for marriage (ipso facto, a virgin, and therefore a valuable commodity in the patriarchal economy.)” (1996, p. 2) Though the marriage plot analysis can also be applied to tragedies (such as *Romeo and Juliet*), it is the “young woman wit and intelligence” that is pertinent to the comically structured wooing scene between Margaret and Suffolk in Howell’s *1 Henry VI*. Gay’s observation is especially interesting to consider in the context of Howell’s approach to *1 Henry VI*, which Howell stages as farce, telling Henry Fenwick that “a lot of it is very simply based on good, old-fashioned theatre gags.” (1983a, p. 21) In terms of a full comic plot trajectory, Joan — who first embodies the role of the virgin — is unable to complete her story, having rejected marriage and courtly love (1.2.113-114). In her next entrance into Howell’s cycle, Joan wears masculine dress and has progressed from the quasi-wooing single combat with Charles, to chasing the English army away and earnestly challenging the less sexually viable Talbot (00:37:44). Joan is, of course, ultimately burned for her gender transgression. Where Joan rejects the wooing scene available in her combat with Charles, Margaret accepts it, and her interaction with Suffolk begins to follow a more traditional courtly love plot, replete with a witty, comic wooing scene.

Hardy M. Cook, when discussing Howell’s blending of television and theatre, highlights that “although direct address to the audience is common in theatre, direct address by looking right into the camera is seldom used in narrative film since this strategy destroys the illusion of the transparency of the film image.” (1992, p. 331) Howell utilised this strange cohesion of the intimacy afforded by a camera, and the way in which it destroys the idea of a silent

observer. As soon as Foster's Margaret begins to speak, the interaction between her and Suffolk begins to follow Gay's guidelines for a comic plot, with rapid fire lines — sometimes stichomythic — and linguistic play typical of a wooing scene such as Katherine and Petruchio's in *The Taming of the Shrew* (2.1) Though Howell uses direct address frequently in her cycle, it plays a different role in the wooing scene. This role is not dissimilar to the quasi-wooing scene between Joan and Charles, where Joan demonstrates her power by confiding in the camera, both with secrets (00:21:03) and with knowing looks, such as when Charles declares his love and admiration for her (00:22:00). In the actual wooing scene between Margaret and Suffolk, Howell enhances the meta-theatrical awareness of the other player not listening and speaking asides that is present in the playtext (5.2), by having Foster, Chapman, and the camera enter into a sort of dance, each lover speaking their asides directly to the camera, each attempting to gain control over its focus. The camera lens, which has been established as an allegory for the viewer's perspective on the action, is a focus for Foster's Margaret, who is attempting to recapture the central position that was stolen from Joan at her capture by York.

In another unusually meta-theatrical set piece — unusual for both television, and theatre — as Margaret and Suffolk each speak their asides to the camera, the other looks confused in the background, as if wondering to whom they are speaking, destroying an illusion of the aside being wholly private (02:38:22). Television lends itself to direct address as the camera is able to zoom in close to an actor who makes direct eye contact with the lens creating intimate and private moments, yet it is also a very theatrical motif of stopping the action in order to share a private thought. Howell used the moments of aside to draw attention to the balance of television and theatre in her productions, as Foster and Chapman looked baffled in the background when the other character speaks to camera.

Like a wooing scene in a comedy, Margaret and Suffolk's first meeting is very funny and playful, and Suffolk falls in love not just with Margaret's looks, but with her wit as she plays him at his own game. Frustrated by his long asides, she ignores his questions and instead speaks to the camera as audience, ensuring that she is centred within the camera's view. Where Joan's skill with language is seen as evidence of her witchcraft and her gender and sexual transgression — as demonstrated in the summoning before Margaret's entrance,

and in Joan's self-definition as pregnant afterwards — Margaret's use of language is framed as an extension of her wit and beauty, her linguistic skill making her even more desirable to Suffolk. Through her physical mirroring of the two women, Howell brings to the fore that though the English male construction of Joan and Margaret by York and by Suffolk may be different, both women are skilled with language and are headstrong maids of France. However, Margaret, unlike Joan, accepts rather than rejects the advances of the eligible (if married) man, and Margaret's strength and skill with language is not combined with the embodied gender transgression that leads to Joan's demise. In fact Foster's gender presentation in her first entrance is highly feminine.

Margaret's image when she enters in Howell's cycle is in striking contrast to the battle hardened Joan who has just been dragged out, and establishes that from this point on female gender transgression will be less obviously embodied through masculine adornments, but through more subtle forms of subversion. Dressed in a white dress with long sleeves and flower detailing, Foster's hair is down, blonde, curly, and flying about her face, and she wears a crown of flowers around it. Though the flowers make for highly feminine ornamentation, like Margarets before her — such as Peggy Ashcroft (1963) — the fact that Foster's Margaret is wearing a crown at all hints at her royal ambitions. The image created by Foster's Margaret entering in a crown immediately links her with monarchical power. Her hair free flowing before her marriage is a sign of youthfulness and burgeoning sexuality, as well as being reminiscent of the 1980s trend for voluminous hair. Her voice is light like that of a child, and her small stature is emphasised both by Chapman's height, and the camera looking up at him as if from her perspective, and occasionally from his eye-line looking down at her. However, it is very clear that "though she be but little, she is fierce." (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.2.325) Patricia Lennox, giving a history of the *Henry VI* plays on television, describes how

when she first meets Suffolk, she is dressed in an elaborate white satin dress and at a distance seems doll-like with her masses of long blonde hair. But in close-up her young Margaret is vapid, pudding-faced, certainly not someone to inflame Suffolk's passion.

(2009, p. 247)

The second part of Lennox's analysis of Margaret misses something vital. She may look "vapid" (though this is certainly a subjective opinion), but it is her linguistic skill and intelligence that take her from starting the scene on her back under Suffolk's weight, to walking out of it as the next Queen of England. By emphasising the playfulness of the scene in a way that invites parallels with comedies that contain strong female figures who excel with speech, Howell foregrounds Margaret's skill with language, and makes it apparent that Margaret and her linguistic skill (with the subtle gender transgressions that contains) are to be the centred in her cycle.

The Royal Wedding: BBC Authority

The opening of the second play in Howell's cycle showed a royal wedding, echoing the royal wedding of two years previously: Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. Not only did Howell's decision to stage a wedding create a connection with current political and cultural events of the early 1980s, but also it embodied the politics of marital exchange, placing a greater emphasis on Margaret's body through her physical crossing of the court to join Henry by his side as wife and queen. Margaret's entrance into the second instalment of Howell's cycle is — like her entrance into her *1 Henry VI* — literally centralised as she walks through two columns of soldiers creating a makeshift aisle.

Throughout Howell's tetralogy, there is a sense that each play is both an individual stand alone piece, and that together the plays form part of a cycle of one continuous story. Each play — broadcast separately — has a defined beginning and end, and unlike the other BBC productions of the first tetralogy — *An Age of Kings* (1960), the BBC televising of the RSC *The Wars of the Roses* (1965), and *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* (2016) — the four plays are not adapted into three. Howell furthered this sense of the plays as individual entities by displaying the title within a scene at the beginning of each play. However, Howell's display of the title came after the BBC's own introduction. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter describe how the authority of the BBC title sequence, "worked to predetermine responses to the work before Howell's interpretation could properly begin." (2009, p. 110) The BBC title sequence feels at odds with Howell's cycle. The use of the First Folio, the first authoritative collection of Shakespeare's plays suggests that the BBC, in their complete works

project, are presenting the authoritative collection of the plays on television. These televised plays are lifted straight from the text, which in turn was from the mind of Shakespeare, whose head the camera passes through, as if there has been little performance interpretation from the directors of the works themselves. However, the pomp and circumstance of the grand opening titles, and the sense of Shakespearean and early modern authority afforded by the entering of the First Folio set to early modern music, clashed with the playful spirit and self-aware meta-theatricality of Howell's work.

Howell's own titles seem to re-focus the attention back onto her cycle rather than on the BBC project as a whole. As Howell's second play begins, a white carpet decorated with silver crowns is rolled out toward the double doors on the right of the screen, and a banner covered in bright colours and patterns — seemingly hand painted with poster paint — is revealed over the door announcing *Henry VI Part Two* (00:01:04). Set to the backdrop of trumpets and the roar of the commons, it is a far cry from the formality of the BBC's own opening. The banner is incorporated into the scene as it moves forward, becoming an awning under which characters enter ceremoniously. A meta-theatrical (and meta-televisual) device, the banner marks the beginning of the play proper. There is a stark tonal difference between the BBC title sequence and Howell's, not least of which is that the in-play banner reads *Henry VI Part Two* and the BBC title card *The Second Part of Henry The Sixth*, the title of the play in the First Folio. Howell reclaims the opening of the play, a statement that seems to declare that what is about to be seen does not necessarily conform to the British Broadcasting Corporation's authoritative Shakespeare.

After the unfurling of the banner, Howell's *Henry VI Part Two* opens with a wedding. As Hampton-Reeves and Rutter highlight

there is, in fact, no wedding in the play — Suffolk just presents Queen Margaret to Henry. Howell turned this into a real show, a national celebration that echoes the real royal marriage that all of the company would have remembered, and some participated in, only weeks before.

(2009, p. 125)

The wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer occurred on the 29th July 1981, and Howell's 2 *Henry VI* was filmed in 1982, though the broadcast of

the play was not until the 9th January 1983. That is not to say the original audience would not have noticed the allusions to the Royal Wedding. In fact, the legacy of Charles and Diana's wedding, and the life of Diana, has still yet to leave the public consciousness. In early 2020, the British right wing press were obsessed with 'Megxit' (a word coined by *The Sun* newspaper), which became their term for Diana's son Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle wanting to step back from being senior royals and live a more private life. Though the roles of the three women (Margaret, Diana, and Meghan) were and are of course different in terms of their proximity to the throne, all three were marked as female outsiders to the English monarchy, defined in the public eye (or reception of the lords in the play) by their ability to conform to the expectations of Royal women. From the amount of press coverage and outraged headlines (arguing everything from how Diana would be heartbroken to proud), it is clear how the British public still obsess over the minutiae of royal events and relationships, and specifically with the legacy of Diana, the 'People's Princess', in a way which reaffirms that watching Howell's cycle in the 2020s still draws on that same cultural understanding.

By interpreting Margaret's arrival in England as a wedding ceremony, Howell both placed a greater emphasis on the shift in Margaret's role and identity in becoming married to Henry, and also presented the wedding ceremony (and the giving away of the bride) as a political act. Judith Butler — reflecting on Levi-Strauss' theory of kinship — theorises that

patrilineality is secured through the ritualistic expulsion of women and, reciprocally, the ritualistic importation of women. As wives, women not only secure the reproduction of the name (the functional purpose), but effect a symbolic intercourse between clans of men. As the site of a patronymic exchange, women are and are not the patronymic sign, excluded from the signifier, the very patronymic they bear.

(2007, pp. 52-53)

By staging a royal wedding, Howell not only draws connections with the recent actual royal wedding between Charles and Diana, but presented an embodied representation of Margaret's shift in identity. She moves from both one side of the court to the other, and from one man to the other, and as she does so moves

from Margaret the captured princess of Anjou, signified by Suffolk, to being at Henry's side, who signifies not only another "clan", but whose body (due to the divine right of kings) is a representation of God on earth and of England itself. The exchange of Margaret between the two men, symbolic not only of the intercourse between France and England, but between Suffolk and Henry, also has the effect of altering Margaret's identity from a captured woman to a ruling one, symbolised in Howell's production by Margaret's joining Henry by the throne, ready to rule by his side.

Though the wedding in Howell's production is a rather more subdued (and low budget) affair than its contemporary counterpart, there are many commonalities that draw parallels between the two, and made it clear that the wedding of Margaret and Henry was another national event to be watched. The commoners are gathered like those that lined the streets outside St Paul's Cathedral, and they shout to the sound of marching drums. White and yellow confetti — like that which showered Joan in *1 Henry VI* after her victory at Orleans (*Henry VI, Part 1*, 1983, 00:43:31) — flutters down from where the commoners are standing and settles in the folds of Margaret's dress. She is wearing close to bridal white in a cream dress covered in a tunic, with large puffy sleeves. This is the 1980s meets medieval, and again reminiscent of the large puffed sleeves on Princess Diana's iconic wedding dress designed by David and Elizabeth Emanuel. Throughout her entrance, Margaret is viewed over Henry's shoulder, central in the frame she is the focus of everyone around her. In the height of Megxit-mania, *The Daily Mail* ran a story about how "Princess Diana felt like a 'lamb to the slaughter' on her wedding day" (Pearson-Jones, 2020). Howell's framing of the scene, Foster's small figure being brought into the English court and being surrounded by (particularly tall) English men, connects her to Diana — the young woman being married off to the English king (or heir). Yet it also connects her again to Joan, the maid of France at the mercy of the patriarchal English, who at the end of her own subverted wedding ceremony was burned at the stake.

Howell also made the decision to introduce the commoners of England (a vital player in *2 Henry VI*) during the wedding. British royal weddings are of course famous for their ability to attract the attention of hundreds of thousands of people who line the streets where the royal procession makes its way to the church or cathedral. But by including the commoners in the wedding, ensuring

they were present in the first scene of the new play, Howell foregrounded them immediately in a story that contains many moments of commons' action, including Jack Cade's popular uprising. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter comment on how Howell's combining of these two things (the royal wedding and the keen presence of the commons) reflected not only the events of the early 1980s, but the way in which they were treated and depicted in the national news, specifically on television. They argue that

whether consciously or not, Howell's staged ceremony commented on the politics of media events in which national identity is uncritically represented. On television, inner-city riots and the royal marriage were simply different items of news — or, to echo Raymond Williams, different segments with no apparent relationship with each other. *Part Two* subverted this separation by drawing a direct line between the commoners' role in the wedding and their subsequent uprising.

(2009, p. 126)

Through the staging of a wedding between Margaret and Henry, Howell drew comparisons to the recent royal wedding, foregrounded the commons in the playtext, connected royal events of the playtext and the popular uprising, reflected current political events such as the riots, and enhanced the playtext by staging a visual spectacle. The staging of the wedding also meant that Howell was enacting the moment of Margaret's transition from the maid of France, to the Queen of England, and re-connecting her to Joan in the previous play.

The enormity of the wedding ceremony is not lost on Julia Foster's Margaret or Peter Benson's Henry. Both are a little anxious, with Benson's already large eyes wide in anticipation as Margaret enters, his thin face showing the micro expressions of both nerves and excitement. Margaret cannot take her eyes off of Henry — only occasionally looking to Suffolk for reassurance that this man in front of her is indeed the man she will be marrying. Even when curtsying, she continues to look Henry directly in the eye, as if trying to weigh him up. He is so pious, so effeminate compared to Paul Chapman's Suffolk who still holds her firmly by the hand. The style and the design of the production, though in many ways medieval meets 1980s, also contained — by the nature of

it being Shakespeare and the formal BBC title sequence — allusions to a 1980s version of early modern England.

Howard and Rackin describe how

the French women who threaten to subvert the English historical project in *Part I* are unmarried; in *Part II*, the dangers they embody quite literally come home to England in the form of ambitious wives, married to the men who govern the land.

(1997, p. 65)

At the moment of being proclaimed queen, Foster's Margaret embodies that role. As Henry stands, with the also standing Margaret, amid the kneeling Lords who speak "with one cheerful voice" (1.1.36) "Long live Queen Margaret, England's happiness!" (1.1.37) and as a sennet sounds, there is a notable shift in Margaret's demeanour. The camera looking up at her ever so slightly, her eyes furtively glance around until she lifts her chin and her chest and speaks her first line as confirmed queen and wife: "We thank you all." (1.1.38) She is no longer I, but We. Foster's physical performance changes in this moment: the unmarried French woman has "come home to England" as bride. Her role has changed from the virgin of *1 Henry VI* — aligned most closely with Brenda Blethyn's Joan — to the ambitious wife of *2 Henry VI*, who will find her match in Anne Carroll's equally strident (and equally blonde) Duchess Eleanor Cobham.

The Confrontation: Margaret and Eleanor

Julia Foster's Margaret suits queenly power. Margaret both attracts its focus when she is in the stage space, and is centred by the camera lens. At times her ability to draw the camera's focus involves Margaret relinquishing her central place within the frame, yet this only seems to emphasise her importance. The focus she is able to draw is made especially evident in the one confrontation between Margaret and Eleanor (1.3), where Margaret defines not just what the camera and the viewer sees, but how Eleanor is perceived in opposition to her. Though a short interaction, in it Howell demonstrates Margaret's control over the court and the camera, her ability to embody the role she needs to in the

moment, and both her and Eleanor's skill with language, which in Howell's cycle is a particularly feminine trait linked to a subversive female transgression.

When Margaret and Suffolk confront the petitioners (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:26:17), Margaret is centred in the camera lens, and has taken to the power she has over Suffolk, the court, and the camera immediately. She revels in tearing up the petitioners complaints, and in ordering the men to leave. Her instruction to Suffolk to "let them go" (1.3.41) is spoken confidently, and Suffolk immediately obeys. When Margaret then complains to him about Eleanor, she parades around mocking Anne Carroll's Eleanor, taking control of the space by sweeping across the floor. Foster's Margaret makes it abundantly clear that despite Eleanor's inflated sense of pride, it is Margaret who is now the most senior woman in England, and it is she the camera centres and the cycle focusses on. Chapman's Suffolk, like the camera itself, watches Margaret glide around him like a dedicated puppy, and when they kiss after he ensures her that he has "have limed a bush for" Eleanor (1.3.89), Margaret puts her finger between their lips, so whilst they do indeed kiss, she controls the level of intimacy.

In a particularly theatrical styling, as the rest of the court enter the space Margaret and Suffolk have just been occupying, there is a sense that the court is wherever these figures are assembled, and Foster's Margaret transforms from lover to queen as she and Suffolk peel away from each other. For the first time in Howell's *2 Henry VI* Margaret and Eleanor are in the same space, and Howell heightens the antagonism and makes a strong visual connection and distinction between the two women, physically balancing them in the space as they attract and repel each other like magnets, Eleanor in black and Margaret in white. Eleanor's hair is covered in a highly decorated black scarf. It is concealed and confined, yet decadently, and the ornate styling is perhaps her attempt to crown herself. Margaret's hair, however, is still big, blonde, and wild. Despite being queen, Foster's Margaret is still in control of her own body and sexuality.

As the rest of the court enters, Margaret slinks away. The camera stays with Henry and the bickering lords until Margaret from off-camera says quite calmly "Because the King, forsooth, will have it so." (1.3.116) The court all turns to look behind them, and the camera sits over Margaret's right shoulder observing the court from her perspective. Mirrored in the left of the shot is Eleanor who stands silently, as a woman should, with her hands in front of her,

for as her husband Gloucester says “These are no women’s matters.” (1.3.118) As Gloucester moves to confront Margaret, Eleanor goes with him and the two couples stand in opposition to each other. But instead of Henry, Margaret’s partner is Suffolk, who skilfully moves in with his linguistic attack on Gloucester. Foster’s Margaret is able to get what she wants from both Suffolk and Henry. Eleanor’s later taunt, “Though in this place most master wear no breeches” (1.3.147-148), is very evident.

There is one moment between Margaret and Eleanor (that lasts five lines until Henry interrupts) that could possibly be said to pass the Bechdel test. Credited to cartoonist Alison Bechdel (2008) who featured it in her comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, the test states that in order to pass, a film must have three things:

1. Two named female characters
2. Who talk to each other
3. About something other than a man.

In Howell’s production she signals the beginning of this moment with a cut from the camera, a rare occurrence in her cycle, and in the sequence that follows, Margaret is the focus of the camera, and by extension, the viewer. After Humphrey leaves, Howell centres the camera on Margaret’s fan, which Foster holds by the cord between her thumb and forefinger. The camera gets a close up view of Margaret letting go of the fan’s cord, and hears it clatter to the ground before she tells Eleanor (feigning to not know who it is) to “Give me my fan.” (1.3.139) Margaret walks past Eleanor with her back to her, and swings her skirts with her hands playfully. Eleanor, of course, is loath to pick up the fan, for as Levine remarks when describing the historical Eleanor,

in the absence of a queen, Eleanor occupied the highest position among women in England, and after the death of John, duke of Bedford, in 1435, she and her husband stood to inherit the throne in the event of the king’s death.

(1998, p. 51)

The camera follows Margaret — as both it and Suffolk did when she mocked Eleanor previously in the scene — and as Margaret calmly walks away from the fan on the floor, she turns to Eleanor and slaps her across the face. Foster's Margaret gives herself plausible deniability for striking Eleanor, as she does not look at her properly until after the slap, and follows the rhythm of the text's line, in which the slap sits in the caesura, as she quickly asks "I cry you mercy, madam; was it you?" (1.3.140) Rather than a theatrical stage slap, or a clever trick of the camera to disguise the lack of contact, Foster actually slaps Carroll, who raises her hand to her face in disbelief before turning to look at Margaret with eyes full of rage. The once poised Eleanor (who "Strangers in court do take [...] for the Queen" (1.3.80)) has to be held back by smirking lords, as she spits through gritted teeth "Could I come near your beauty with my nails, / I'd set my ten commandments in your face." (1.3.142-143)

Foster revels in the playful power she has demonstrated since her very first entrance in the previous play. Like Blethyn's Joan at her trial, Foster's Margaret uses different tactics to manipulate the patriarchal English court. However, unlike Joan, and perhaps due to her lack of externally apparent gender transgression, Margaret is successful. Her ability to portray the innocent young queen, batting her eyelashes at the lords of the English court who are either convinced by her performance or are happy to play along with her, makes Carroll's Eleanor seem outrageous in comparison, and her reaction disproportionate. Margaret's calmness and coolness in this situation makes Eleanor unwittingly play the hysterical woman, and the hysterical woman must be contained.

The slap itself is a shock to Eleanor — and to the viewer too due to it being a real slap — and Peter Benson's King Henry immediately, and smilingly, gently places his hands on Margaret's shoulders, perhaps meekly protecting her. Finally, Carroll's Eleanor storms out, after bitingly delivering the lines:

Against her will! Good King, look to't in time;
She'll pamper thee, and dandle thee like a baby.
Though in this place most master wear no breeches,
She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unrevenged.

(1.3.145-148)

In anticipation of her consultation with the witch Margery Jourdain (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:38:12), Eleanor is making her own prophecy here. And like the prophecies of Jourdain and the other women in the play who utilise the power of language, Eleanor's prophecy will come true. Margaret is clearly already taking control of the court, and in *3 Henry VI* even metaphorically wears the breeches to lead the Lancastrian army in Henry's stead. As Eleanor leaves the scene, Margaret looks smug, not only having humiliated her rival, but having Henry defend her in a step towards independence from the Lord Protector Duke Humphrey. Yet the camera has centred Eleanor in its frame as she leaves, and Howell makes it clear that indeed, Eleanor will attempt revenge.

The Conjuring: Howell's Hyper-theatricality

Through the successful arrest and trial of Eleanor for consulting with a witch (who is duly punished), fears of an ambitious woman are manifested and then contained, only to be rediscovered again in Margaret. The presence of the witch Margery Jourdain further positions Eleanor, through her association with witchcraft, as the great patriarchal fear of the ambitious wife. That Eleanor's downfall is brought through a trap set up by her husband's rivals places Eleanor as a victim of patriarchal fear, and Howell's hyper-theatrical staging of the conjuring foregrounds the artificial nature of the trap. The single set of Howell's cycle appears transformed through the use of low red lighting, candles, and a haze of smoke (00:38:12). Howell repeats the image of women being placed in opposition to each other seen in the confrontation, as Margery Jourdain is instructed to be "prostrate and grovel on the / earth" (1.4.11-12), and Eleanor is to be "aloft" (8). The image of Eleanor standing above Margery Jourdain, literally looking down on her, reinforces the class disparity between the two women. Yet it also foregrounds Eleanor's connection to Joan, who in the first play of Howell's cycle assumed a similarly elevated position to speak to Talbot after the French army's canny invasion of Rouen through pretending to be corn sellers (*Henry VI, Part 1*, 01:33:43).

Howell's staging of the scene plays extensively with the performance of the conjuration. Susan Willis discusses how Howell often treats performance in the text meta-televisually *as* performance, writing that "we see this impulse in the treatment of the witchcraft/entrapment scene in *2 Henry VI* (1.4) [...] the

presentation is self-consciously theatrical as Howell uses her material and blends her mediums." (1991, p. 176) The theatrical nature of Howell's presentation also creates a clever way of avoiding a possibly difficult aspect of the first tetralogy. As Edward Burns — writing about Joan as a critical scapegoat — asks, "what is magic doing in this and other Elizabethan history plays?" (2001, p. 36) By foregrounding the performance of magic, Howell deftly negotiates a potential sticking point for contemporary audiences for whom the elision of "history" and the supernatural may be troubling.

Nina S. Levine argues that the conjuring scene was potentially written as a conjuration due to its theatrical potential. The conjuring as it exists in the playtext is not to be found in any of the play's chronicle sources, though the characters are all based on figures that the historical Eleanor Cobham had consorted with. Levine also highlights how it centres Jourdain as another threatening woman by citing Paola Pugliatti, who "for instance, has argued that the substitution makes the scene more subversive, in part because it displays Margery Jourdain's 'conjuring competence.'" (1998, p. 62) In Howell's *2 Henry VI*, Jourdain is not only a competent conjurer, but actually embodies the spirit of Asmath.

Howell foregrounds the meta-theatrical, and meta-televisual, potential of the scene. The set is lit with an unnatural red light, and Howell shows Jourdain whitening her face with ash (which she coughs on) to get ready for the conjuration. She pulls her large, shapeless tunic up so only her eyes and the top of her head are visible, before kneeling on the floor face down as Eleanor enters above. The contrast between the two women is startling: the noble duchess elevated above the space, and the dirt covered witch face down on the ground. This configuration emphasises the class disparity between the two women, whilst at the same time creating a playing space in which Jourdain and her acolytes will perform the conjuration for Eleanor. There are several elements of the scene that demonstrate Howell's playing with the meta-theatricality of the conjuration. Bolingbroke delivers his first line up to Eleanor in almost Gielgudian fashion. John Southwell, lit by candlelight, has a one man foley studio set up behind Jourdain, complete with thunder sheet, which he sets off as Bolingbroke declares "the silent of the night" (1.4.16, 00:39:34), much to Bolingbroke's chagrin. The meta-theatrical nature of the conjuration reaches its pinnacle, however, when Bolingbroke circles the keeling Jourdain with a staff which has a

hidden lighter in the bottom of it, and fire erupts around her. In the medium of television, Howell could have either made this practical effect invisible to the camera — just as she could have positioned the camera in such a way to make a convincing stage slap between Margaret and Eleanor — or even have replaced it with an effect in post-production (though this would have been against the ethos of the BBC project). Yet instead, though Bolingbroke hides the lighter from Eleanor, Howell does not hide the lighter from the audience, ensuring they (if not Eleanor) are fully aware that the conjuring is a performance.

Once the circle is lit, Jourdain rises from her face down position and speaks for the first time. Her voice is hoarse and throaty as she embodies the spirit Asmath. Her teeth yellow with decay, her face white with ash, Jourdain represents a type of woman not seen before in the tetralogy: poor. Though Joan is “by birth a Shepherds daughter” (1HVI, 1.2.72), Blethyn’s Joan is beautiful, youthful, and spry. She comes to Charles with long blonde hair and physical fitness, ready as much for a potential wooing scene as single combat, her youth and beauty its own commodity. Through focussing on the body of Margery Jourdain and emphasising the physical effects of her poverty, Howell highlights that Eleanor, and of course Margaret, are able to present a particular form of heightened femininity due to their affluence. In a textual change rare for Howell’s cycle, Jourdain’s lines are reassigned, and Howell centres Jourdain’s body as she becomes possessed with the spirit in her own body, her voice becoming that of Asmath. The focus remains on the body of Jourdain and on Bolingbroke who asks the spirit Eleanor’s prepared questions. Like Joan before her, and Margaret after, Eleanor’s questions lead to prophecies which all come true. She has found her part to play in “Fortune’s pageant” (2HVI, 1.2.67). When the spirit leaves Jourdain, the fire explodes into a green flame and she collapses forward, and remains there, unmoving like a marionette whose strings have been cut.

The atmosphere of the performance space is suddenly broken, when York and other lords enter, and it becomes clear to Eleanor what the audience have known all along, that Hume was working with the enemies of her husband to set her up. Eleanor is centred in a position of conflict: both as perpetrator and victim. Nina S. Levine argues the importance of the conjuration scene in the arrest of Eleanor.

For though Shakespeare's Eleanor does indeed desire the crown and consort with necromancers [...] she also is the victim of what might be called political entrapment: her ambitions are exploited and even manipulated by her husband's enemies to further their own power over the Lancastrian state.

(1994, p. 105)

Jourdain is also a victim of the lords in Howell's conjuration scene. Silent except for when possessed (or performing as such) by the spirit, it is clear through his attitude to the invasion of the lords, Hume knows that Jourdain will be arrested along with Eleanor, and that the penalty will be high. Pat Kean's Jourdain stays in her collapsed state until dragged violently away by the soldiers, and is next seen being dragged in for her sentencing (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 01:01:33). Like the previous witch Joan before her, Jourdain is sentenced to "be burnt to ashes" (2.3.7) in the way that the patriarchal English court has established as how to deal with female witchlike transgressors. Though unlike Joan, Jourdain is given no chance to speak for herself at the moment of her execution. At no point in Howell's *2 Henry VI* does Margery Jourdain speak in her own voice. Howell emphasises that Jourdain is used by the men around her to both trick and entrap Eleanor by foregrounding her body and, in an uncharacteristic reassigning of lines, make her the vessel through which the spirit of Asmath speaks.

Levine also discusses that it is structurally and thematically important that it is York who enters into the scene to arrest Eleanor and Margery Jourdain, just as he has done with Joan in the previous play. Levine writes

that Shakespeare should again cast the conspiring York as the 'hero' who triumphs over the subversive female, a choice that like York's capture of Joan in *1 Henry VI* involved rewriting chronicle history, calls into question the model of power that derives its authority from a myth of patriarchal domination.

(1998, p. 65)

The arrest of Anne Carroll's Eleanor by Bernard Hill's York not only mirrors her with Brenda Blethyn's Joan in the first play of Howell's cycle, but also — as the

parallels between Joan's exit and Margaret's entrance were purposefully highlighted by Howell, it connects Eleanor yet again back to Foster's Margaret. That two mirrors of Margaret have been captured and defeated by York, something which Howell highlights and foregrounds, foreshadows the precarity of Margaret's situation. She may be queen for now, but she can (and will) fall, and Howell highlights the impact of Margaret's fall on the narrative arc of the tetralogy through centring her body in her moments of triumph and despair.

Margaret Cradling Suffolk's Head: Grief and Sincerity

The death of Suffolk — predicted by Margery Jourdain embodying the spirit of Asmath during the conjuration (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:38:12) — is a major narrative and character turning point for Margaret who spends a scene cradling his decapitated head (02:28:56). The image of Margaret cradling the body of a man she loves (or has become fixated on) is one of the repeated motifs that Howell uses to draw theatrical parallels throughout the plays. Margaret holding the head of Suffolk is the second time this has been seen, the first being when the lovers part after Suffolk's banishment (02:01:10). As Henry and the rest of the court are attempting to leave before Jack Cade and his army of rebels appear, Margaret is battling with her own emotions, attempting to get them to drive her to action rather than to stay in her grief. Bridget Escolme interestingly frames the moment as one of a mind/body dualism, where Margaret's emotions, stemming from her body, overwhelm her mind as "she cradles Suffolk's head, and it is her throbbing breast, rather than the mind that might reason out a revenge, which controls her actions." (2014, pp. 185-6) Escolme here not only connects Margaret's emotions to "her throbbing breast", but connects Suffolk to Margaret's body as well, an association both evident in the text ("But where's the body that I should embrace?" (4.4.6)) and in Foster's performance as she clutched the decapitated head desperately to her. Howell foregrounds Margaret's devastation by mirroring her cradling of Suffolk's decapitated head where earlier she had held his living body. Foster's Margaret is sincere when she says "My hope is gone, now Suffolk is deceased" (4.4.55). Through a repeated theatrical motif Howell emphasises this moment as one

where Margaret moves from the powerfully playful wife figure of the confrontation with Eleanor, to the protective warrior mother of *3 Henry VI*.

After his banishment, Margaret and Suffolk share a farewell where he emphasises their physical closeness and centres Margaret's body in his relationship to his own life:

If I depart from thee I cannot live,
And in thy sight to die, what were it else
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?
Here could I breathe my soul into the air,
As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe
Dying with mother's dug between its lips;
Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad
And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,
To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth;
So shouldst thou either turn my flying soul,
Or I should breathe it so into thy body,
And then it lived in sweet Elysium.

(3.2.388-399)

In discussing this speech, Howard and Rackin describe how "his desire infantilizes him and renders him passive." (1997, p. 73) Margaret is centred in Suffolk's parting speech, her body, as Howard and Rackin note, is the thing that he feels connects him to his own life, and Howell foregrounds this physical bond between the lovers, centring Margaret's body. As Paul Chapman's Suffolk delivers these lines, he kneels and Julia Foster holds his head to her breast, gently touching the skin around a cut on his head, stroking his face, and kissing his forehead. The height disparity between the two make his kneeling a tender gesture of submission, and she accepts it with a loving gentleness. The tableau is hauntingly recreated when Margaret is reunited with Suffolk's head — the first repetition of Howell's theatrical motif of Margaret cradling.

Key to Suffolk's speech, and emphasised in Howell's staging, is the immediate corporeal nature of the images. The infant is reliant physically on the mother's body for food, for warmth and comfort, and for protection. Suffolk positions himself as physically dependent on Margaret's body, so much so he

would die without it — which, of course, he does. The next time the two are seen together, Margaret holds him like a “cradle-babe” (3.2.392), clasping him to her “throbbing breast” (4.4.5), but this time there is no body of his to nourish, comfort, or protect with hers. Janet Adelman sees Suffolk’s speech and the image of Margaret cradling his head as a warning, writing that “death and the mother’s body coalesce in his image of union and the grim image of Margaret parading around the stage with his head in her arms (4.4) suggests what happens to the men who succumb to its allure.” (1992, p. 8) In Howell’s *2 Henry VI*, when Margaret and Suffolk part, the cradling image is not sexual, but certainly more tender and feminine. The combination of Suffolk’s surrender of the power inherent in his height by kneeling and Margaret’s lower cut dress, means that she does indeed hold him to her. The moment reads as a combination of desire and sexuality, and a maternal protection (which she later plays out with Edward). In contrast, the gruesome visage of Suffolk’s decapitated head being held by a sobbing Margaret to her “throbbing breast” (4.4.5) now swathed in black, centrally figures Margaret’s loss rather than her and Suffolk’s sexual trespass. Adelman’s analysis is of Margaret cradling the head of Suffolk as a warning to men, and yet in Howell’s production, especially due to the contrast with the earlier use of the cradling image, it is more of an exploration and centring of an embodied female grief, a driving force for Margaret throughout the rest of Howell’s cycle.

Howell centred Margaret’s body and Suffolk’s head as not only the focal point of the scene, but as a moment of change for Margaret as a character. After Cade and his rebels drag the bodies of those slain in battle off screen, the camera fades to a close up of Suffolk’s pale, bloody head wrapped in bandages like swaddling bands (02:28:55). Howell uses the camera to give the audience an immediate connection to Margaret, and to see the embodiment of her grief in Suffolk’s head foregrounded in the shot. The decision to bring the camera in for this moment is typical of Howell who, as Susan Willis describes,

frequently engages the camera eye and its accompanying sound-boom ear in every production to provide inside information or private reaction, whether verbal or facial, giving the camera the role of confidant in these productions, a technological adaption of an age-old theatrical tradition.

(1991, p. 169)

The closeness of the camera allows the audience to see the details of Suffolk's head. The mouth is slightly open with blood running down the chin, calling to mind a corrupted version of Suffolk's image of a babe "Dying with mother's dug between its lips" (3.2.393). The shot zooms out slightly, and by the time the transition is complete, it is clear that Margaret is kneeling on the floor, holding Suffolk's head to her.

Jim Atkinson, the senior camera operator on all of the BBC Television Shakespeare productions, spoke to Henry Fenwick about the complexity of filming the scene, and how Howell knew that Margaret needed to be at the centre of it. Atkinson told Fenwick:

the scene where the court is packing to leave and Queen Margaret has received Suffolk's head — that is a crowded scene to be done in one shot and the cameraman has to get the idea that the scene is hers and that everything else is happening around her.

(1983b, pp. 22-23)

In order to create the sense of everything happening around Margaret, Foster moves in a fascinating way. She gives her first lines directly to camera, still kneeling on the floor. The dark, rich green of Henry's coat is visible behind her but she, here and now on the ground, is the focal point. As she pines for Suffolk, she reaches for his body with her right arm and that leads her to stand up and circle out of shot, the camera then looking at Henry and the rest of the court. She circles back into the shot, as if she has done one full rotation of the space. At no point in this scene does Foster really stop moving, and all of her movements are circular, whether on the spot, or in and out of sight of the camera. The camera never follows her, but when she is in the frame, Howell ensures all of the focus of the camera, and of the scene, is on her.

Howell found this scene particularly interesting to her as a director, telling Henry Fenwick: "there's Margaret having a total nervous breakdown, Henry being calm in the middle of it, and everybody else in chaos around him — quite an extraordinary scene!" (1983b, p. 23) The constant movement echoes both that grief may have softened Margaret's mind, and also the struggle of Margaret to overcome herself and her emotions to move beyond grief to

revenge. In one of the few moments when Foster's Margaret is not moving in and out of the camera lens (though still circling on the spot), Peter Benson as Henry quietly and plainly tells her "I fear me, love, if that I had been dead / Thou wouldest not have mourned so much for me." (4.4.22-23) Margaret's attention is suddenly intently on Henry, her eyes become fixed and focussed as she speaks with clear intent: "No, my love, I should not mourn but die for thee." (4.4.24) In a delivery that is earnest and honest, there can be no doubt about Margaret's truthfulness. For the first time still, Margaret stops circling, stops moving, and tells Peter Benson's Henry that she will in no uncertain terms, die for him. She waits just long enough for him to look up and meet her gaze, before circling off again, the moment of clarity gone and grief once again taking hold.

Julia Foster (like Peggy Ashcroft and Helen Mirren before her) saw Margaret's cradling of Suffolk's head as an important turning point for her performance of the character throughout the plays. For Foster, it is not just that the death of Suffolk spurs Margaret to revenge, but that the kind revenge she then takes is based in love, passion, and loss. She told Henry Fenwick that when Suffolk

is killed, that is the beginning of revenge. [...] She becomes intent on revenge for one reason or another for the rest of her life. Her redeeming feature, I think, is that she never did anything cold-bloodedly, everything was always done in an ardent, passionate way.

(1983b, p. 25)

That Foster says Margaret "never did anything cold-bloodedly" supports the interpretation of her line to Henry being truthful — she is driven by love and passion, not by cold-blooded ruthlessness. After the death of Suffolk, Foster's Margaret becomes imbued with a fiery passion, and when later in the cycle she does things that some (characters and critics) see as heinous, there is a knowing undercurrent that they were also done for love. Like Tamora who swears revenge on the Andronici after the death of Alarbus in *Titus Andronicus*, it is the death of Suffolk (and later of Edward) that drives Margaret forward. The connection between these two women may have been evident to Howell, who later directed *Titus Andronicus* (1985) for the BBC/Time-Life series.

Howard and Rackin posit that Margaret's actions in the scene are demonstrative of her passionate nature, even before she swears revenge, writing that "the public nature of her grief and her fetishizing of this severed body part characterize Margaret as a figure of willful passion, dangerously oblivious to the decorum that should govern the behaviour of the king's wife." (1997, p. 74) Margaret being "dangerously oblivious" to how she should behave as both queen and wife is what leads her to be able to transgress and subvert both of these roles later in Howell's cycle, and to work through her passionate revenge. Margaret's cradling of Suffolk's head not only foregrounds their physical relationship, but reveals more about her relationship with Henry and, moreover, the lengths she will be willing to go to protect her king and family in the next play. Through centring Margaret as she cradles Suffolk's decapitated head, Howell once again uses a repeated image (cradling) to emphasise both character and story progression. As Foster highlights, this moment is the one in which Margaret's trajectory changes. Howell emphasises this change in Margaret through her interaction with the camera, both foregrounding her in the scene's opening shot, and then allowing Margaret to drift in and out of the camera's focus. When she is present in the camera's view, however, Howell centres her. From this moment on Foster's Margaret is fuelled by a passionate determination to fight for her son and for her husband, and just as she takes control of the camera, she proceeds to take control of the Lancastrian army. Margaret goes on to subvert the repeated image of men capturing women first seen with York's capture of Joan, by capturing and torturing York herself in the next play of Howell's cycle.

Margaret Captures York: The Personal and the Political

The scene in which Margaret torments York on the molehill with the death of his youngest son Rutland (*3HVI*, 1.4) can be read as evidence of Margaret losing her the last shreds of femininity, and even her humanity. However the torture of York on the molehill in Howell's *3 Henry VI*, rather than de-gendering Margaret or fashioning her as monstrous, foregrounds her femininity and sexuality. The tight closeup of Margaret and York instils the scene with a sexual tension that both Foster and Hill later described as a key factor of their onscreen relationship and character development. Similarly, the manor in which Howell focusses on

Margaret's character and development throughout cycle, including the frequent use of closeups and direct address, gives the viewer a potential insight into the reasoning behind her cruel actions.

Howell's emphasising of the repeated textual image of men capturing women is reversed when Margaret captures and then tortures York in battle (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 00:26:47). With Bernard Hill's York standing on a molehill and Foster standing below him (emphasising her already short stature) the image is one Howell has shown many times before. And yet, in this instance Hill's height make him vulnerable, an easy target, and Foster is grounded and rooted in the earth, like a hunting lioness preparing herself to pounce. The moment is one that demonstrates the lengths Margaret is prepared to go in order to protect her son's birthright and defend her own place, and her act of torturing and killing York and revelling in the death of Rutland can be read as showing the last shred of her humanity being stripped away.

Similarly to the contention that surrounds Margaret's declaration of love for Henry whilst cradling the head of Suffolk, the validity of Margaret's motivations for her actions (torturing York and revelling in the death of Rutland) are often called into question. John Wilders writes that in this scene Margaret "is no longer concerned with the right or wrongs of the cause for which she is fighting but has become possessed by the desire to inflict pain." (1983c, p. 13) These two things are not mutually exclusive. Taken as two separate points, the second is arguable: that Margaret has become "possessed" by wanting to cause pain to her enemy. However, that does not imply the first: that she no longer is motivated by wanting to do what she deems right. Foster herself views Margaret's attempts to "get rid of the people who hated her and whom she hated" as having "escalated out of control" (Fenwick, 1983b, p. 25), yet this again does not mean that she is no longer concerned with "the right or wrongs" (Wilders, 1983c, p. 13) of her actions. Foster continued to say that Margaret's "redeeming feature, I think, is that she never did anything cold-bloodedly, everything was always done in an ardent, passionate way." (Fenwick, 1983b, p. 25) Foster's performance does not lend itself to Wilders' interpretation that it is not possible for Margaret to want to inflict pain on York *and* that this stems from her desire to protect and support her son, ultimately from a place of love. In fact, in Foster's performance, the tonal shift in the speech where she starts to berate York for his manipulation of Henry is where

her rage builds to its greatest height. She spits the words “adopted heir” (1.4.98), and the textual ‘oh’ of “O, ’tis a fault too too unpardonable” (1.4.106) becomes a guttural “urgh” of anger and frustration. After making this point, Margaret is ready to sentence York to death, having exorcised her anger. The speech is structured so that this final culminating argument is that Margaret is torturing York because he manipulated her husband and caused her son to be disinherited. It may be a terrible act, but it comes from a place of both maternal and queenly protection.

Kate Aughterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson, in analysing the maternal body in the *Henry VI* plays, note how in York’s rebuttal, his “rhetoric displaces the debate about the law and succession onto other cultural assumptions about how a women should or should not act.” (2020, p. 235) Howell shows this shift of focus onto Margaret’s femininity, as well as foregrounding her intense anger and frustration with York, by centring her in his speech (00:34:10). She steels herself for his response, clenches her fists and walks up to look squarely in the eye of Bernard Hill’s York as he delivers his impassioned plea. For the first few lines of his speech, Margaret is centred in the frame, her reaction the focus. The camera slowly zooms in until it is just the faces of Margaret and York in a repetition of the image created by York’s capturing of Joan in *1 Henry VI*. But instead of his face bearing down in triumph, the light captures a single tear roll down Hill’s cheek as Foster’s Margaret stands with her face “vizard-like, unchanging” (1.4.116). Like the capture of Joan and of Margaret in *1 Henry VI*, Howell uses the close up shot of Margaret and York to make the moment intimate and private, and to emphasise the gendered dynamic and the sexual tension between the two. It is a technique she utilises again later in *Richard III* to contrast the personal and political implications of Richard’s wooing of Anne (1.2), alternating between closeup shots of Richard and Anne, and wide shots of the assembled soldiers and the corpse of Henry VI. Howell creates the sense that the scene at the molehill is about Margaret and York’s personal altercations as well as the larger political consequences, by closing the camera in on them.

Though spoken and embodied with strong emotional intensity, Howell instils the scene with moments of playfulness and theatricality. For example, the paper crown that Margaret sets atop York’s head is fashioned from a piece of paper held in Prince Edward’s belt. Margaret takes the paper from Prince Edward and begins to rip it like she is crafting it into a crown, before tossing

what seems like the envelope away, and performatively unfolding and pinning the crown together. The strangely practical moment of arts and crafts in the midst of the scene's intensity demonstrates the multiple layers of performance in Howell's production, from children's playground to royals' battlefield. Howell's deft transitions, between the intimate two shots of Margaret and York and the wider shots encompassing all the characters who are present and watching, merges the personal with the political, and the theatrical with the televisual.

The close-up Howell has on Foster during York's speech foregrounds the emotional coldness of her response. Margaret's hardened reaction is another reason cited for her ruthlessness, especially when contrasted with the lachrymose Northumberland, and Alison Findlay describes how the contrast between Margaret's and Northumberland's actions demonstrates "her lack of so-called womanly virtue." (2014, p. 251) It is the disparity between the reactions that, as Howard and Rackin describe, "invites the audience to recognize the extent of her violation of proper femininity." (1997, p. 95) Howell cuts the camera to look at John Benfield's Northumberland in the centre of the frame, his hair wild, and tears are in his eyes and rolling down his cheeks. Though Clifford and a soldier stand either side of him, he does nothing to hide his sorrow. Seeing the "brave" (1.4.66) Northumberland now standing openly weeping, unable to "check [his] eyes from tears" (151) in contrast to the hardened Margaret, who stands with her jaw tense and eyes cold, further demonises the cruel woman who colludes in child murder. However, through her centring of Margaret throughout the cycle, Howell has allowed the audience to connect to Margaret and her potential motivations. Through closeups and direct address to the camera, the audience have been made privy to Margaret's inner thoughts and emotions, and may potentially see that as the reason for her hardness at York's words, and not purely unwomanly ruthlessness.

Howell and Foster also explore Margaret's womanhood and sexuality in the scene as, contrary to the critical analysis of the play that reads Margaret's torture of York as displaying her lack of femininity, in performance it is a scene that can highlight it. Foster's Margaret is steely eyed and focussed. Entering with her army after Bernard Hill's York has collapsed to the floor, her raucous entrance causes him to struggle to his feet and she stands there, out of breath and watching him, ready to pounce. Her costume is dark and commanding. A

long black pleated skirt, black belted quilted leather jacket with silver gauntlet like cuffs and a silver metal collar, and a battle helmet crown, like a pickelhaube ringed in gold, balance her masculine role in leading the army, and her feminine role as queen and mother. The tension between her and York is palpable, their eyes locked together. Throughout the confrontation the two seem to grow more and more connected, and at one point, at the height of Margaret's tormenting as the camera is in an extreme closeup, their faces are so close they could kiss, and the sexual energy can almost be felt through the screen.

Bernard Hill told Henry Fenwick that the sexuality of the scene was something that he and Foster found in rehearsal:

we were rehearsing York's death scene — a wonderful scene, a long scene between Margaret and York. We did it a couple of times in rehearsal, then it began to click and Julia and I both decided we'd have a little bask — do it properly, let our emotions go, and we felt very *stimulated* by the end of it because it's very sexual as well, and at the end Julia said, 'Oh, wouldn't we have made a good team' — and they would! York and Margaret together, they would have conquered the world, no question about it.

(1983c, p. 28)

Howell shows the tension, and the idea that these two would have made a politically and sexually satisfied couple, by filming most of the scene in tight closeup, just occasionally swapping from one face to the other, in a way reminiscent of the wooing scene between Margaret and Suffolk in *1 Henry VI*. It is intimate and intense, and occasionally it is possible to forget that this humiliation is actually public. Rather than the sexual tension being relieved by the consummation of their relationship, it is broken by Margaret (and Clifford's) penetration of Hill's York with their daggers. Clifford having stabbed York in the back (literally), he ends up on his knees in front of Foster's Margaret who looks him in the eye, before grabbing his hair to pull his head back, and plunging her dagger into him. Hill and Foster were not the first York and Margaret to play the erotic undertones of Margaret's torture of York and his reposte. In the RSC's 1977 production, as Emrys James' York launched his verbal attack at Helen Mirren's Margaret, he physically forced himself onto her.

Although this was less of a meeting of equals who could have “conquered the world”, and more a man forcing himself between the legs of a woman in an attempt to dominate her sexuality.

Margaret’s torture of York, and her proximity to child murder through her revelling in the death of Rutland, are often cited as moments that remove her further and further away from femininity and from motherhood. However, Foster’s performance in Howell’s cycle not only centres Margaret’s actions in her love for and protection of her son, but also allows her womanhood to be foregrounded through the (intense) onstage relationship with Bernard Hill’s York. The love for, and drive to protect, Prince Edward are what propel Foster’s Margaret forward in the cycle. When he is killed in front of her (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 03:19:17), it changes the trajectory and drive of her character and performance, just as the death of Suffolk did in *2 Henry VI*. The importance of these moments for Margaret’s character development is symbolised by Howell in her repetition of the cradling image, first seen with the live, and then the dead, Suffolk.

Margaret Cradling Prince Edward: A Mother’s Savage Grief

Howell repeats the cradling image for the third time, and the second time with a dead ‘body’, when Margaret cradles the corpse of her son (*3HVI*, 5.5). In display of performative masculinity, King Edward — like his father York before him — saves his ire for the male stand-in of his female threat. Prince Edward’s male body stands as a proxy for Margaret’s, and in Howell’s production, it is clear from the emphasis placed on King Edward’s lines, and the camera centring her within its frame, that the murder of Prince Edward is about the destruction of Margaret rather than of Prince Edward himself. This emphasis on Margaret is furthered through a staged mirroring with the death of Suffolk, as Margaret sits at the forward centre of the frame cradling the body of her love, the physical closeness of it meaning she is unable to move past her grief (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983: 03:20:45). Howell’s focus on Margaret and her outward display of grief in this moment, also draws further parallels with the grieving fathers of *3 Henry VI* and looks forward to the grieving mothers of *Richard III*. In Howell’s cycle, Margaret is the embodiment of this gendered shift.

Unlike Margaret's transition to mother, which happens offstage between *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI*, Margaret's transition out of motherhood into the role of crone happens quickly and violently onstage. During a slow motion battle, snow falls, perhaps symbolising the success of the Yorkist cause, until the set has been completed whited out. In another repeated image, after Oxford and Somerset are taken away to be executed, Margaret moves forward to face King Edward with steely eyes and clenched fists, just as she did with his father York. Howell also centres Margaret in the frame when Prince Edward is brought in. The camera is so focussed on her and her reaction, that he is blurred in the background — this is a moment about her as mother, rather than Prince Edward as heir.

As Prince Edward unleashes his final insults to the York brothers, the camera is in closeup of the four young men. Howell repeats the pattern of the leader of the House of York being at first jovial with the woman who is his biggest threat, to aggressive and then stern with the non-threatening male counterpart. Like York was with Joan and then Charles, King Edward is jovial with Margaret, the real threat, before becoming incandescent with rage as Prince Edward calls him "lascivious" (5.5.34). King Edward, like his father York before him, seems intent on performing a patriarchal dominance over Margaret (as York did with Joan) laughing off her threats and her actions, and instead allowing Prince Edward's male body to become her proxy. Through the destruction of Prince Edward's body in front of Margaret, King Edward is able to act as if it is the young male who threatens him (and not his mother), whilst at the same time tormenting Margaret through destroying the thing she cares about most, the body born of her body.

King Edward, who has been shaking with rage throughout Prince Edward's linguistic attack, stands and stabs him in the stomach, pushing him back towards his mother. The camera follows Prince Edward as he staggers back, and settles with Margaret centred in the frame as she unleashes a cry of grief. The move of the camera to focus back again on Margaret, combined with the emphasis Brian Protheroe as King Edward places on "this railer here" (5.5.38), shows that both to King Edward as a character, and to Howell's cycle, the murder of Prince Edward is about the destruction of a part of Margaret, his body standing as proxy for hers. As the other brothers each stab Prince Edward, Margaret reaches out helplessly to the body of her son which is being abused at

her feet. The camera centres her in the frame throughout, and as she drops to her knees crying “O, kill me too!” (5.5.41), it follows her down to the ground. However, King Edward stops Richard stabbing Margaret with urgency, unable to condone the literal destruction of her female body now the proxy body of her son has been contained. By centring Margaret in this moment, Howell foregrounds that she loses her son, her power, and her will to live. Alison Findlay, in her entry on ‘mother’ in *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, writes that “in Shakespeare, as in most Western culture, mothers are defined in terms of loss.” (2014, p. 286) Margaret experiencing the loss of Edward is the moment that concretises her role as mother. Margaret transitions from the warrior mother of *3 Henry VI* to reappear again as the childless crone of *Richard III* whose grief continues to propel her forward, and enables her to impart her skills with language and cursing to the other grieving mothers.

When the three York brothers stab Nick Reding’s Prince Edward, Julia Foster’s Margaret breaks. With every stab her shouts and wails grow louder, her arms reaching out towards his dying body. When she goes over to the corpse and tries to revive it — “O Ned, Sweet Ned, speak to thy mother, boy.” (5.5.51) — the strength of her voice (which has become a defining characteristic) is hoarse and strange, choked with grief so much so that sometimes no words escape her lips. Kneeling, she pulls her son up to her breast and cradles him, in a position reminiscent of cradling first the live body, and then the decapitated head of her lover Suffolk in *2 Henry VI*, and foreshadowing her holding the corpse of Richard at the end of *Richard III*. It becomes a striking moment that reiterates the loss she has endured throughout the cycle so far, and the loss that will propel her to carry on. Julia Foster, speaking to Henry Fenwick, said that in her performance

the death of her son is really the end for Margaret. A bit of her had died throughout the play through things she did as well as things that were done to her — the king giving up the throne, York’s death — each time it was a kind of attrition, a wearing down until the death of her son, when it came, was so totally destructive that out of it came something else — a power of its own, a passion to live on just to see Richard die.

(1983c, p. 28)

Rather than allow the death of Prince Edward to diminish her, it changes Margaret, and as Foster says, out of it comes a warped passion to live. Howell uses Margaret's obsession with the death of Richard as a driving force through *Richard III*, and centres Margaret for the last time as she cradles Richard's boar speared corpse. Just as after the death of Suffolk Foster's Margaret poured her passion and her drive into Edward, after Edward's death Margaret becomes fixated on Ron Cook's Richard.

In describing Foster's performance, Hampton-Reeves and Rutter write that "her emotion frightened those around her, who pulled back as she tugged frantically at their shirts, begging for her own death." (2009, p. 132) The heartbreak she is filled with quickly turns to seething rage, a type of female fury that terrifies the men around her. Like Blethyn's Joan, Margaret's acts of physical violence in battle turn to those of linguistic violence as she begins to curse in her last line of the play, a prophetic cry of "So come to you and yours as to this Prince!" (5.5.82), and just as Joan caused the armed men to pick up their pikes in response to her curse, the language of the short and unarmed Foster causes the patriarchal English men to fear her, if not for her violent potential, but for the strangeness with which the former queen is acting. Howell centres Margaret in a close-up, the soldiers and brothers of the House of York softly out of focus in the background. The foregrounded Margaret is an image seen before as she cradled Suffolk's head, and like with Suffolk, though she attempts to throw off the shackles of grief, it is the blood of her loved one and the physically embodied form of that grief that draws her back to the pits of her despair.

Liebler and Shea focus on this moment as key to Margaret's move from mother to crone, writing that "Margaret does not go quietly from the stage; the queen is not silenced. 'Defeated' she may be, but not 'disempowered'; her damning prophecy comes true in the next play." (2009, p. 91) It is not that Margaret's power has gone, it has transformed. In *3 Henry VI* the power she derived from motherhood enabled her to lead armies and enact physical violence. When she reappears in *Richard III*, her power stems from grief, and gives her not only the power to curse, but as Foster found, the strength to live on to see her enemy defeated.

Interestingly, this moment of loss for Margaret is often regarded as a moment that re-feminises her after her donning of armour to lead the

Lancastrians in her husband's place. Unlike Liebler and Shea, who explicitly state that Margaret is not disempowered, Howard and Rackin argue that

the tigerish queen is here so completely disempowered and so firmly repositioned in a feminine subject position. Swooning, lamenting, begging for death at her captors' hands, but unable to taunt them into doing the deed, Margaret is finally taken from the stage.

(1997, p. 98)

Whilst it is true that Margaret's grief removes the physically violent threat that she posed to the Yorkists, Foster's Margaret is by no means "disempowered" as Howell's camera centres her in her moment of grief, causing those in the background to be out of focus. The closeup on Foster, who keeps being drawn back to her grief by the physical presence of Prince Edward's body which she cradles in front of her, invites the audience to empathise with her in spite of the previous acts of violence she has committed. Even though Margaret is unable to "taunt" the Yorkists into killing her, she still retains the power of the camera (and by extension the viewer) as it follows her through the scene. Her open display of feminine grief causes such discomfort in the men around her, it is empowering.

The moment of onstage grief whilst on the one hand feminising Margaret, as argued by Howard and Rackin, in performance also aligns her with several men in the play, drawing connections to the grief of powerful men rather than women. Up until this point in *3 Henry VI*, all loss has been focussed on men (if not counting Elizabeth's loss of her husband that she reports when she meets Edward (3.2)). The viewer has seen a father lose his son, and a son lose his father (2.5), in an incredibly powerful show of the human sacrifice of war. They have seen Young Clifford, enraged by grief about the death of his own father, kill Rutland (1.3), and then Margaret torment York with the news (1.4). All of those the audience have seen experience the pain of the loss of a child onstage are men, not women. In Howell's production, all weep, all wail, not just Margaret. It is not even just Margaret who turns to the power of language, as York delivers his linguistic tirade against Margaret's femininity. To say that Margaret is reduced to a feminine subject position through her grief,

then, discounts the show of grief displayed by men in performance, and which have been highlighted in Howell's *3 Henry VI*.

Howard and Rackin's analysis may be because they are looking forward to *Richard III*, where women have the monopoly on grief, and Margaret joins the "group of suffering women who play no major role in the action except to call on heaven to rain vengeance on Richard's head." (1997, p. 98) In this way, Margaret embodies a shift in grief from a male concern to a female one, as the women becomes more domesticated than before, only able to exert control over and through language. Interestingly though, it appears that the women's curses do come true, and that the women's calls to heaven do indeed influence the events of the play. Starting with Joan's curse (*1HVI*, 5.3.86-91), through the prophecies of Margery Jourdain in answer to Eleanor's questions (*2HVI*, 1.4.29-38), and Margaret's parting curse after the murder of her son (*3HVI*, 5.5.82) — all come true. Calling on heaven is perhaps the most powerful thing they could do, because it has been seen throughout the tetralogy to work. Howard and Rackin's analysis of the first tetralogy contributes to their feminist re-readings of the history plays as a whole, and they use this move from physical threat to linguistic one as evidence of women moving from the political to the domestic sphere through the two tetralogies, resulting in the non-English speaking and conquered Katherine in *Henry V*. However, when focussing on this moment of grief and loss for Margaret, it is important to see how it both places her in the feminine subject position (Howard & Rackin), equates her with the form of loss that defines motherhood (Findlay), and draws parallels with the men who have displayed grief openly in the play, making Margaret the embodiment of this shift from masculine to feminine grief.

Julia Foster's Margaret performs the duality of this moment (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 03:23:06). Having fainted after Prince Edward's death and needing to be peeled off the floor by her enemies, when King Edward commands that Margaret be taken away, she screams before the soldiers can touch her. They stop in their tracks as she fixes them with a cold hard stare, before she stalks over to Brian Protheroe's King Edward and hisses her curse, Foster's skill with Shakespearean verse speaking allowing her to emphasise the sibilance of "prince" (5.5.82) in a highly disturbing way. King Edward's face is locked in fear, and then the guards grab Margaret from behind, and her energy spent, she faints into their arms and is quickly dragged away. Her voice ringing loudly as

she is forcibly pulled away from the camera, the echo of her presence is felt even after she has gone. Once she has left the stage-space, she can be heard again sobbing — foreshadowing her cackling as the last sound of the cycle — as the camera watches the men who are shaken, and King Edward flinches as Clarence approaches him, disturbed by Margaret's curse. Despite being dragged off by men twice her size, and despite fainting, Foster's Margaret is not disempowered as the men reel from their encounter. Rather, as Foster herself said, there seems to be a new power, a new driving force that gives Margaret the strength to live on and to curse her enemies: her need to defeat Richard.

The Scene of Mothers: Three Grieving Women

The male aligned grief Margaret displays in her exit from *3 Henry VI* is transformed into female aligned grief in *Richard III*. Margaret embodies this shift, and the other grieving mothers look to her as the guardian of grief, and ask her to bestow her gifts to them (4.4). The way in which Howell centres Margaret in this scene, and throughout the cycle, shows that Margaret (and by extension the women she represents and who seek to emulate her) has a strength derived from a different type of power than the martial prowess she showed in the earlier plays of the cycle. The camera centres her throughout the scene, playing out versions of shots from earlier in the cycle: the foregrounding of her body in the space as in the cradling of Suffolk's head and Prince Edward's murder, and the intimate two person closeups from York's capturing of Joan and Margaret's torture of York. When she leaves the scene, the camera seems almost bereft, leaving an empty space in the centre of the scene.

In the playtext of *Richard III*, Margaret's last moments onstage are when she, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York meet to lament the death of their families (4.4). French classicist Nicole Loraux, in discussing images of mourning women throughout antiquity, and analysing *Richard III* as a prime example of grief filled women, writes about how these women speak together for the first and only time, stating that "the scene is characteristically Shakespearean, whether we call it the great scene of queens, or, taking a Greek approach, whether we call it — and this would be my choice — the scene of mothers." (1998, p. 1) It is interesting that Loraux calls the scene "characteristically Shakespearean" as in many ways it is atypical. Until *Richard III*, there is only

one scene in the first tetralogy that involves women speaking to each other, and it is the very brief interaction between Margaret and Eleanor in *2 Henry VI* that results in Margaret slapping Eleanor across the face (*2HVI*, 1.3). Eleanor and Margery Jourdain never actually speak to each other in the conjuring scene (*2HVI*, 1.4), and when Margaret speaks to Lady Bona (*3HVI*, 3.3), they are always mediated through King Louis. Earlier in *Richard III*, Elizabeth and the Duchess of York speak together whilst there are men and children present (*RIII*, 2.4), and also Anne, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York go to the tower together (*RIII*, 4.3), but there is scarcely twelve lines of text before Brakenbury enters. In the “scene of mothers” however, Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York spend time together as “resentment supplants love” (Loraux, 1998, p. 3) between the women, and by the time of Margaret’s exit, she has imparted to her former foes the knowledge of how to be strong in the face of their common enemy.

Throughout Howell’s cycle, Margaret has had the ability to turn her griefs into her motivation, propelling her forward throughout the rest of the cycle. The death of Suffolk, where she cradles her deceased lover’s head (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:38:12), turns her mind to revenge. The murder of her only son in front of her (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 03:19:17), where she cradles his lifeless body, gives her enough strength to propel her forward to be a-historically written into *Richard III*, when the historical Margaret died in France having never returned to England. Nina S. Levine highlights how Margaret’s presence in *Richard III* is itself a testament to her power. She writes that “although Margaret is only a shadow of her former self, her presence here in the enemy’s court testifies to the vestiges of power she retains.” (1998, pp. 102-103) It is Margaret’s grief that keeps her moving forward, even into spaces where she should not be. In Howell’s cycle, Margaret becomes determined to defeat Richard and continue her cycle long motivation to outlive the members of the court “who hated her and whom she hated” (Foster in Fenwick, 1983b, p. 25). Foster found in Margaret’s grief a driving force that continues to see her centred in the last play of Howell’s cycle, even as the wisened old crone.

When Joan, the maid of France, dies at the end of *1 Henry VI*, she metaphorically passes on the roles of maid, witch, and warrior to Margaret and the other women of the tetralogy. In her final Joan-like act, Margaret literally passes on her own acquired set of skills, using grief as a source of motivation

and strength, in front of the audience. Julia Foster as Margaret and Rowena Cooper as Elizabeth place great emphasis on the rhyming couplet that leads to Margaret's exit, stressing "thine" (4.4.124) and "mine" (125). In doing so they foreground the connection between the two grieving mothers, as well as Margaret's bestowing of the language of curse. This is Margaret's legacy to the woman who she sees as her replacement, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York, who though quiet whilst the advice is given, heeds Margaret, and uses these new skills to curse her only living son Richard moments later.

However, in Howell's BBC cycle, the scene of mothers is not Margaret's last scene, as after the action of the play has finished, the viewers are shown Margaret sitting atop a pile of corpses. Howell once again uses the repeated image of Margaret cradling bodies, as she clutches the body of Richard to her and laughs into the end credits. The framing of the camera after Margaret's exit from the scene of mothers indicates that it is not her final exit from Howell's cycle. Throughout the scene, Foster's Margaret is centred, speaking candidly to the camera, and drawing its focus. As in the cradling of Suffolk's head and at the murder of Prince Edward, Margaret is foregrounded in the staging, not only centralised in the camera lens, but the action behind her — in this case Elizabeth and the Duchess of York — is mediated both through her asides directly to camera, and her physical presence. After she exits, the camera is almost bereft, and though it turns back to see the Duchess of York and Elizabeth, the central space on the screen is empty.

Before Margaret's exit from the scene the audience is shown three women who are unusual for the tetralogy as they are not mirrors of the subversive women clad in battle armour or aligned with witchcraft that have been seen in the plays up to this point. Levine writes that "for the first time in the tetralogy, in fact, Shakespeare presents what many Elizabethans would have considered an acceptable model for female heroism with a string of lamenting women who grieve for their murdered husbands and sons." (1998, p. 101) For Howard and Rackin and for Levine, the shift from action to language is one that makes the female characters of *Richard III* less subversive, and their strength as stemming from their accepted forms of femininity. The display of an "acceptable" form of "female heroism" — which Nicole Loroux (1998) also explores as a form known throughout the ancient as well as the early modern world — is a departure from the images of women that have been presented

throughout the cycle up to this point. Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York sitting together is both unusual for the tetralogy, and in direct contradiction to Margaret's previous actions and words. She explicitly says in 2 *Henry VI* when cradling Suffolk's head "Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep" (2HVI, 4.4.3), and in a rousing speech to the Lancastrian army in 3 *Henry VI*: "wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss" (3HVI, 5.4.1). This cursing, lamenting, grief-filled Margaret, then, is a contrast to the warrior woman of the *Henry VI* plays.

Howard and Rackin highlight this stark difference, by discussing the move of women from the public to the private spheres throughout the two tetralogies, writing that "unlike the *Henry VI* plays, where both Joan and Margaret appeared onstage in masculine battledress and led armies on fields of battle, the female characters in *Richard III* are confined to domestic roles in domestic settings." (1997, p. 116) In Howell's BBC cycle this contrast between the Margaret of the earlier plays — especially the warrior mother of 3 *Henry VI* — and the Margaret now dressed in black and reliant on a cane, is especially pronounced. The risk, however, is to see Margaret (and the other women) as weak and passive, as she no longer wields a sword and leads armies. However, as Kristin M. Smith writes, "while the women may have given up martial masculinity, their language remains powerful, corrupt and illegitimate." (2007, p. 153) In Howell's production, it is especially evident that there is strength that is not derived from martiality, and that women have power in and over language.

Margaret's linguistic prowess is centred in Howell's *Richard III* when, in the scene of mothers, Julia Foster's Margaret enters the playing space and speaks directly to the camera. She is dressed almost entirely in black, a thick woollen coat, and a big black hat with a grey hood that ties underneath her chin, making her reminiscent of various renditions of the ghost of Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*. She, like Marley, is haunting the space she used to control. Henry Fenwick told Julia Foster that Margaret's costume in *Richard III* reminded him of the contemporary 1980s image "of the women who wander around the city streets with all their belongings in battered shopping bags, cursing to themselves" (1983d, p. 21). Foster echoed the image of these women who retain relics of their past, replying that

you knew, as she stood there, that what she had with her was everything she had — no home, no pillow, no bed; everything was in the skirts or in the bag or underneath the hat. I imagined that the handkerchief with Rutland's blood on it was tucked in one sleeve, and Suffolk's skull under the skirt; that she was a complete identity on her own and wherever she went she took this whole world with her.

(1983d, p. 21)

Margaret's body is a physical embodiment of Howell's cycle, and the sense of weight to her costume, containing all of her worldly possessions and memories, perhaps is the reason why she needs to rely on a cane to move around. This once great warrior is now physically encumbered. Rather than standing with her chin lifted and her shoulders back — a stance she adopted as soon as she was pronounced queen at the beginning of *2 Henry VI* — Foster's Margaret in *Richard III* is hunched forward, her chin down, and she speaks to the camera looking up at it from under her brow.

That is not to say that she is not still formidable. Her eyes burn with rage and her yellowed teeth are bared. It is important to note, however, that she is not "mad". Foster told Fenwick that

so many people, when they talk about *Richard III*, talk about Mad Margaret, so it was superimposed on my mind that she was mad. But when I started reading it I began to think, 'She's not mad; she's *exceedingly* sane.' Everything she says is so precise and so accurate and right to the point. All those deaths and all those terrible things have driven her somewhere else, but not to madness.

(1983d, p. 21)

This radical sanity is Foster's driving force throughout the scene. Just as when she cradled Suffolk's head (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:38:12), Howell gives Margaret power over the camera's focus by having her move in and out of shot. When Rowena Cooper as Elizabeth and Annette Crosbie as the Duchess of York begin to enter, Margaret moves out of view of the camera which enables it to zoom in to see them. The two women both wear long black dresses as a clear visual symbol of their grief. The camera pulls back to foreground Margaret

again, as it did at the cradling of Suffolk's head and at the murder of Prince Edward. Elizabeth speaks to the heavens, the Duchess of York to Elizabeth, and Margaret to the camera. Together, the three women form a single entity, an entity with Margaret at its centre. Even when the camera begins to zoom in on the Duchess of York during her meditations on life and death (*Richard III*, 1983, 02:40:48), it is never static, circling around her to include Elizabeth, who kneels down on the line "Ah, who hath any cause to mourn but we?" (4.4.34). The Quarto version (1597) of this line reads, 'I' instead of 'we', which James Siemon argues "accords with the play's pervasive self-centredness" (2015, p. 336). However, Siemon in his Arden Third Series edition decided on the Folio's 'we' as "this moment is about as close as the speakers come to genuine sympathy" (2015, p. 336). Crosbie's the Duchess of York also uses 'we', and the sense of sympathy and unity this creates is highlighted by Margaret joining Elizabeth and the Duchess of York moments later, standing centrally between them, three-legged with her cane. Nicole Loraux, creating a connection between Margaret and the Ancient Greek Erinyes (the three goddesses of vengeance), writes that

Margaret's greatness lies in the Queen-Erinyes's knowledge that there is a sort of dreadful complicity or even better — this is her word — a 'society' among mourning mothers. She once hated Elizabeth; now for a moment she can be her ally, since the same Richard, in order to become Richard III, is responsible for both women's woes.

(1998, p. 4).

Loraux's observation of Margaret's understanding of the unity that shared grief brings, is physicalised in Howell's production. Foster's Margaret struggles to her knees as she says "If sorrow can admit society," (4.4.38) joining the other women on the ground. As she moves fully into the camera's view, it now shows all three of them close together both physically and in their grief. Howell now reverses the image of women in opposition to each other of previous plays — for example Eleanor and Margaret (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:32:02) and Eleanor and Margery Jourdain (*Henry VI, Part 2*, 1983, 00:38:12) — and shows the three women united in their grief and sat upon the ground.

As the three women sit together on the floor, Margaret's focus is split between Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, and the camera follows wherever

her attention goes. As Margaret tells the Duchess of York to “Bear with me” (4.4.61) the camera zooms to show just the heads of the two women, reminiscent of the closeups shared with the Duchess’ husband the Duke of York in *1 Henry VI* when he captures Joan (*Henry VI, Part 1*, 1983, 02:36:25), and in *3 Henry VI* when he is tortured by Margaret (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983, 00:30:11). Intimately linked through their shared grief, Margaret lists how the York family killed her own, playing on the repeated names. As she turns to look at the weeping and shaking Elizabeth on “Thy Edward he is dead,” (4.4.63) the camera follows suit, keeping the tight two shot now on Margaret and Elizabeth. It does not move until she again turns back to the Duchess of York, and then the camera begins to slowly pull back, showing all three women knelt together as Margaret continues speaking her griefs, her voice becoming whispered and fervent with her seething rage. She has developed from wanting to chastise the Yorkists with accusations of their wrong doing, to conspiring with the women to shortly teach them how to curse, and Howell mirrors Margaret’s development by pulling the camera back to show all three women together.

The Duchess of York looks up at Margaret from under a furrowed brow, and Elizabeth stares forward, tears streaming down her face, unable to look up until Margaret places her hand on Elizabeth’s lap when saying “but at hand” (4.4.73). When given the physical connection, an acceptance into the society of grieving mothers, Rowena Cooper’s Elizabeth looks up at Foster’s Margaret, and hangs off her every word. When she finally speaks, Cooper does so with an uncharacteristic growl that matches the tone and timbre of Foster’s Margaret, like she is inheriting not just the power to curse in this scene, but the voice with which to do it. When Margaret turns her focus to Elizabeth for “I called thee then vain flourish of my fortune;” (4.4.82) the camera once again begins to zoom in on the two women, but instead of focussing on Elizabeth’s reaction to Margaret’s tirade, it turns to behind Elizabeth’s head and zooms in so Margaret is centred and takes up approximately two thirds of the screen space. In Howell’s *Richard III*, the interaction is not about Elizabeth hearing these words from Margaret, this is about Margaret being able to say them.

The sense of a society or acceptance between these women is reinforced by Margaret as when she stands (with some difficulty) to leave, she taps Annette Crosbie’s Duchess of York on the shoulder as she calls her “York’s wife” (4.4.114). It is almost warm and affectionate, as well as playful, as

previously the Duchess of York called Margaret “Harry’s wife” (4.4.59). In the entry on ‘wife’ in *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, Alison Findlay writes that “wifely forms of address demonstrate the different Yorkist and Lancastrian allegiances of the women in *Richard III* alongside their common sympathies as victims to Richard III’s tyranny” (2014, p. 450). Through referring to each other via the names of their dead husbands, these women are aligning themselves with their respective houses, a conflict all but forgotten at the start of *Richard III* where familial infighting takes precedent. Yet as Findlay says, they also are aligning themselves as victims: of Richard and of death itself. The names they invoke are of husbands long dead and a time long forgotten, and the warmth in Foster’s delivery gives a sense of longing for those days where her power was not confined solely to the camera.

As she stands, the camera again follows Margaret, and once she is standing the other two women cannot be seen in the frame. She turns to leave and the camera follows her, but then Elizabeth’s plea from the ground forces it to pull back, and with it Margaret turns, the two almost acting as one. Already having learnt from Margaret, Elizabeth wants to use her grief to spur her to action. Bridget Escolme writes that “grief here turns not to impotent tears but to the linguistically performative as the women shift from the helpless language of mourning [...] to the language of the curse, which Elizabeth explicitly asks Margaret to teach her” (2014, p. 189). By calling out to Margaret, Elizabeth for the first time in the scene wrestles the camera away from Margaret and forces herself into the frame, emphasising how Elizabeth wants to learn the skills in language that Margaret can bestow, and that she is willing to become like Margaret in order to do it.

Liebler and Shea, in their reading of the first tetralogy through the lens of Jungian archetypes of femininity, discuss how Margaret fulfils the role of the crone in *Richard III*. They state that “the crone is not desexualised; rather, she remains female but surpasses — is no longer limited to or by — her domestic and reproductive roles.” (2009, p. 92) Margaret may no longer be leading armies, but by fulfilling the role of the crone, she is accorded a freedom beyond domesticity, and a power beyond the militaristic. What Cooper’s Elizabeth is asking for when she pleads for Margaret to teach her how to curse, is the power to command language and the freedom to break free of her domestic role. Foster’s Margaret leaves again in the same way, and the camera follows her.

With Elizabeth's second plea she turns to look, but instead of rejoining the other women, she continues to leave the space. Abandoning the camera that has been following her, she speaks her final line no longer in sight of its lens. Once Margaret has left, the camera slowly circles back to the other two women, but instead of Margaret at the centre of its frame, there is nothing but an empty space.

Crosbie's Duchess of York sits silently and sadly as Margaret teaches Elizabeth how to weaponise her grief and then exits. However, she listens to Margaret's lesson, as she curses Richard when he enters. Liebler and Shea discuss how the Duchess of York learns "from Margaret, moving beyond her function as Richard's mother, she becomes a crone-in-training; she takes on Margaret's position." (2009, p. 94) Crosbie's Duchess of York delivers her denouncement of Ron Cook's Richard calmly and plainly, and as she continues to curse, Howell begins to centre her in the camera lens.

The Body on Top: Reverse Pietà

The final shot of Howell's cycle is — uncharacteristically for her relatively textually faithful production — an interpretive addition. In it Margaret holds the corpse of Richard in the final repetition of the cradling image, symbolising that Margaret's narrative arc that began in *1 Henry VI* has drawn to a close. After Richmond slays Richard in the final battle of the play, Brian Deacon's Richmond kneels and prays for peace and resolution. On "God say amen" (5.5.41) he looks up to the heavens. The camera moves past him to the spear-pierced body of Richard, who is also kneeling, his eyes staring glassily forward. This shot of Richard fades to a pile of bodies, as the sound of wind whistles. In the heap, actors the viewers have seen repeatedly throughout the plays are visible. Henry Fenwick describes how throughout the cycle, "no great attempt was made to disguise each actor as he came on in a new role" (1983d, p. 27). For Howell this was purposeful and as well as being due to the sense of the theatrical style production she wanted to create, Howell also told Fenwick that "*Richard* is a play haunted by the other three plays and also by the presence of the same actors." (1983d, p. 27) In this final shot, there is less of a supernatural presence than a very physical and mortal one, as the camera moves around the corpses, showcasing the bloody limbs and deathly stares of actors the audience

has seen in all four plays, now lying lifeless. Suddenly, as the camera reaches the bodies of Bernard Hill and Anne Carrol (the actors who played York and Eleanor) a low, hoarse cackle can be heard mixing with the wind (*Richard III*, 1983, 03:46:32).

The camera continues to pan round the bodies, confronting the audience with the abject horror of war. They see faces, corpses, people, bodies, all in detail as a maniacal laugh echoes on in the background, growing louder and louder. The camera pans up, revealing that bodies are piled up to a great height. Then it becomes clear a deformed looking hand is hanging directly down, and a body is moving with the laughter. There is life at the top of this heap of death. Finally the camera settles at the top of the pile, centring Margaret once again in its frame. Her hair is loose and her blonde curls are wild and exaggerated. A theatrical shortcut, her hair is almost an exact enactment of Dessen and Thomson's entry on 'hair' in *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642*, which describes "a female figure enters with her hair loose, disheveled, or about her ears to convey that she is distraught with madness, shame, rage, extreme grief, or the effects of recent violence" (2000, p. 107). By the end of Howell's *Richard III*, Margaret has experienced all of these.

She holds the shirtless corpse of Richard, on whose torso the puncture wounds of the 'boar' spears that killed him are visible. Susan Willis describes how Foster is a "wild-haired Margaret, a Queen of Death, who sits atop the pile laughing and cradling the mangled body of Richard in what Howell called a 'reverse Pietà.'" (1991, p. 179) Howell's image of the pietà is "reverse" in that Margaret is triumphing in Richard's death rather than mourning it, and the image is a mirror of many famous pietàs, including Michelangelo's in St. Peter's Basilica. What Willis does not highlight, however, is that this is not the first time we have seen Margaret in the same position. In *2 Henry VI*, she cradles Suffolk's living body and then his lifeless head in this way (02:28:56). In *3 Henry VI* she holds the body of her dead child, much more pietà than reverse (*Henry VI, Part 3*, 1983: 03:20:45). Here, the cycle becomes complete as she clutches the corpse of her greatest enemy to her, rather than her greatest loves. This is the man she has been fixated on since the death of her son, in the same way her son became her focus after the death of her lover. She rocks Richard back and forth and side to side, often throwing back her head with laughter, then looking down at the open-eyed corpse which prompts another bout of cackling.

Unlike her exit from the scene of mothers (02:48:18) — where Margaret leaves the camera's view, forcing it to attempt to refocus, but finding an empty space before refocusing on the next crone, the Duchess of York — the camera decides to leave Margaret here. It pulls back, now showing her atop the pile of bodies, lit from above, her gold hair glowing, she continues to cackle and rock, very much alive amidst all this death. The camera slowly fades to black, leaving Margaret triumphant now that her story has finished. Her laugh can be heard into the start of the end credits until it becomes swallowed by the music. Even until the last moments, Margaret is centred in Howell's cycle. By creating this final additional shot of Margaret, Howell centres her literally in the camera lens, and metaphorically as it is Margaret's triumph rather than Richard's death which concludes the cycle. The story of Howell's BBC cycle is centred on Margaret, and she ends up literally as the body on top.

This chapter explored how, through her full text cycle, Jane Howell prioritised Margaret's narrative development, and as such created a Margaret centred cycle which also highlighted her theatrical mirrors. It examined the way in which Howell used the camera to centre Margaret, using repeated images to create a narrative through line which culminated in the body of Margaret being, literally, on top of the heap. For example, the chapter analysed in detail the repeated image of Margaret cradling the male body, and how Howell utilised her hybrid theatrical and televisual mode of production to foreground this image which highlighted Margaret's development throughout the cycle. Margaret first cradles Suffolk alive, then his decapitated head. She cradles the body of her dead son, then the corpse of Richard (her enemy) whilst sitting triumphantly on top of a pile of corpses. The focus Howell places on this image is representative of the way in which she centred Margaret, both literally and figuratively, throughout her cycle. Through a close analysis of how the mode of production of Howell's cycle centred Margaret's narrative development, and the presentation of her theatrical mirrors, this chapter examined how the body of Margaret is impacted by the mode of production, the televisual fashions and the cultural context of the cycle in which she is performed.

A key finding of the second chapter of this study is that the mode of production of a cycle, in this case a full text theatre as television cycle, impacts and shapes the body

of Margaret in performance. Howell utilised hybrid televisual and theatrical fashions to create a cycle that centred Julia Foster's Margaret, and the fullness of Margaret's narrative was reflected in her theatrical mirrors. The next chapter of this study will examine in detail a highly adapted cycle which adheres to fashions for heightened realism and bombastic television, and how this, in contrast to Howell's Margaret centred full text cycle, creates a marginalised, fragmented, and silenced Margaret.

“Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret”: Adapting and Marginalising Margaret in
Dominic Cooke’s BBC Cycle (2016)

*The third chapter contributes to the central aim and argument of this study by closely analysing how Margaret was marginalised, fragmented, and silenced in a highly adapted television cycle which adhered to 2010s televisual fashions. The chapter examines in detail the role of Margaret in Dominic Cooke and Ben Power’s 2016 *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* and interrogates how the cycle allowed characters to marginalise and use female bodies, and did so itself. The chapter forms this analysis through an examination of the cycle’s adherence to cinematically realistic televisual fashions, the casting of star actors, and the nature of adaptation (specifically from four plays into three episodes). Due to the recorded nature of Cooke’s cycle creating the opportunity for repeated viewing and close filmic readings, the chapter analyses the presentation of the body of Margaret as framed by the bodies of her theatrical mirrors (those that have been retained in Cooke and Power’s adapted text). The analysis of Margaret in Cooke and Power’s adaptation aims to explore the impact that a selected narrative based around a star player has on female bodies in performance, and considers how the change in fashion of Shakespearean television, and the advent of online streaming, has reshaped the body of Margaret in performance. This chapter builds on the previous two chapters of this study by foregrounding the impact that televisual fashions and adaptation has on the body of Margaret in performance, whilst also interrogating the way in which the cultural and political moment impacts and shapes the body of Margaret in performance.*

Carol Chillington Rutter, in her chapter ‘Looking at Shakespeare’s women on film’, states that “cinema is a ‘looking’ medium that writes its texts in visual language, and cinema has always been interested in looking at women.” (2007, p. 245) Dominic Cooke’s 2016 cycle of the first tetralogy, in a cinematic televisual style, is no exception. Utilising the desire for epic scale television — the cycle was “likened to *Game of Thrones*” (Sweeney, 2016) — Cooke has a physical presence of women not seen before in screen or stage cycles of the plays. Not even Jane Howell’s Margaret focussed 1983 BBC cycle has as strong a

female presence of non-speaking roles as Cooke's. Rutter continues to argue that

on film, female bodies proliferate, women's roles multiply, filling in the *mise-en-scène* with supplementary extra-texts that are there to be read with — or against — the dominant narrative. As film deprivileges Shakespeare's words, so it coincidentally redistributes the balance of power between men's and women's roles: not only are there more women in Shakespeare films than play texts but they have much more to perform.

(2007, p. 247)

Aligning itself more with Shakespeare films and big budget BBC costume dramas than televised plays (such as Howell's earlier BBC cycle), the redistribution in Cooke's cycle comes in the form of noble women, ladies-in-waiting, screaming mothers trying to save their children, and buxom masseuses. However, Cooke fills his shots with this added silent extra-textual femininity whilst simultaneously excising some of the women who do speak from his cycle: the Countess of Auvergne, Simpcox's Wife, and Margery Jourdain. The women who remain and speak (though in some cases in a very limited way) are repeatedly used as tools or devices in Cooke's cycle, both by the characters in the episodes, and by the adaptation itself.

This chapter analyses how the male characters in Cooke's cycle, and the adaptation itself, uses female characters as tools or devices, and how this is represented in the control and then destruction of women's bodies. Cooke establishes these concepts in the radically cut Joan of Arc, and how the contradictions this creates in her makes her otherworldly, allowing the adaptation to justify the violent destruction of Joan's body onscreen. In Eleanor, the ideas established in Joan are brought back to England, and she becomes a device for the Lancastrian lords to gain power. For the adaptation, however, Eleanor embodies the role of the transgressive wife in a mirror of Margaret, and furthermore is a vessel for Humphrey's sin. Through an examination of the relationship between Margaret and Somerset, it is possible to locate Margaret's power in her female body and how she both grants and denies access to it. Margaret's power over her own body also creates moments of gender

subversion, when the bodies of men she loves (Somerset and Prince Ned) are destroyed in an attempt to control her.

Whilst Margaret is compared to Eleanor, she is also contrasted with Cecily Neville, who is presented in Cooke's cycle as the model of the 'good' wife. Margaret is defined in opposition to the House of York, presented by Cooke as a strong family unit. The splintering of the House of York at the opening of Cooke's second episode enables Richard to emerge as a central figure, and to eventually come to power. Played by star of stage and screen Benedict Cumberbatch, the rise of Richard through the Wars of the Roses is the narrative which Cooke's cycle prioritises. Having failed to contain Margaret's body, in order to restore patriarchal order the House of York attempt to control her language, and after the death of Plantagenet (a moment in which Cooke figures Margaret as demonic and Plantagenet as literally Christlike), this task is undertaken by his sons, where the narrative focus of the cycle shifts wholly onto Richard. With the centre of the cycle now firmly Cumberbatch's Richard, finally the chapter examines how in Cooke's third episode (an essentially stand alone *Richard III*), Margaret herself becomes a device used by the adaptation to act as Richard's psyche, reflecting back at him his past crimes and traumas, and becoming a tool through which Elizabeth and the Duchess of York enact their own revenge, resulting in Margaret too becoming engulfed and contained.

In 2016, when the nation was celebrating the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's death, the BBC broadcast the second series of *The Hollow Crown*. Subtitled *The Wars of the Roses* it was a three part adaptation of the first tetralogy, co-adapted by Cooke and theatre and film writer Ben Power. The adaptation attempted to answer the question, proposed by Cooke, of "how do we get to a point where a despotic ruler — dictator if you like — kills children?" (*Today*, 2016) As such, the focus on Richard (played by Benedict Cumberbatch) is the driving force throughout the cycle. The series was highly successful and, as Mark Sweeney reported in *The Guardian*, the first episode "drew just over 1 million viewers and a 5.8% share of all TV viewing in its slot." (2016) Sweeney also highlights that this meant it was "popular enough to beat Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, the prequel to the hit *Alien* franchise." (2016) That Sweeney both directly and indirectly compares Cooke's cycle to the television sensation *Game of Thrones* and the Hollywood blockbuster *Prometheus* is fitting, as the cycle is highly cinematic, using realistic locations and costuming, and avoiding many

theatrical elements of the plays altogether. Much of the text is cut until *Richard III*, and direct address to camera is strictly avoided. Cumberbatch's Richard is afforded his Machiavellian soliloquies by the end of the second episode, when Cooke's cycle shifts to prioritising its star. As Margaret is centred in Howell's cycle, Richard is in Cooke's. However, whereas the focus on Foster's Margaret arose from Howell's interpretation of the (relatively) full text of the plays for the BBC/Time-Life complete works project, Cooke's prioritisation of Cumberbatch's Richard was the result of an adaptation of the text based on a selected narrative, the Wars of the Roses and Richard's rise to power, and a star player.

Due to this being, as reviewer Robert Hanks argues, "Shakespeare redone for the *Game of Thrones* generation", it meant that the cycle's cast was "confined largely to faces already familiar from TV" (2016, p. 100). However, only one reviewer — Kelly Newman O'Connor — commented on the fact that the production was "still frustratingly pale" (2016, p. 1), with Sophie Okonedo, who plays Margaret, as the only actor of colour in a major role. Rutter, in her analysis of Margaret in selected RSC cycles, writes that "the symbolic space assigned to the female domestic body in *Henry VI* is literally occupied by a stranger, a foreigner, an upstart, a French 'other'." (2006, p. 185) In Cooke's cycle, the "symbolic space" is also racially signified, as the French Queen Margaret is the only black character for the first two episodes of the series — and the only black woman at all — and it is her race that marks her largely as an outsider to the English court. Marilyn L. Williamson writes that in the play *Eleanor* "correctly perceives that Margaret, the foreigner, is simply the extreme form of — and scapegoat for — the hatred among the English nobility." (1987, p. 49) Eleanor Rycroft, in her recent essay 'Hair in the BBC's *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Class, Nation, Gender, Race, and Difference*' (2020), stated that the "initial promotional materials for the show quite rightly do not mention Okonedo's heritage, although sadly this did not stop racist responses to her casting as Queen Margaret" (Rycroft, 2020, p. 10) When asked a year later in an interview with *The Guardian* if the "colour-blind" casting was a concern, Okonedo replied "no, it wasn't an issue. I didn't talk about it with Dominic." (Williams, 2017) Utilising Ayanna Thomson's arguments (2006) as to the complexities and difficulties of a colour-blind casting approach, Rycroft pinpoints the key issue that

the colour blindness of *The Wars of the Roses* is ultimately unsuccessful as it proves impossible to separate Okonedo's performance from the fact that she is the only actor of colour among a cast of white nobles for nearly six hours of TV.

(Rycroft, 2020, p. 16)

2016 was also the year of the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum and Okonedo herself became a focus for frustrated nationalists on the internet, who commented under the BBC Youtube trailers and clips for the series that Okonedo was "blackwashing" (Odette, 2016) history and that, due to casting her, the series was "historically inaccurate" (Vlad Pepes, 2016). (Of course there were no such accusations about Benedict Cumberbatch — an able bodied actor — playing a particularly physically disabled Richard.) Though in her later interviews Okonedo seemed unconcerned, and though race was not something addressed in the production process, this did not stop one (racist) sub-section of the BBC audience from spouting vitriol online.

Cooke's cycle drives towards Benedict Cumberbatch's Richard. As Hodgdon notes, "roles still draw stars and stars bring audiences" (2008, p. 61), and the emphasis on Richard as a star role is demonstrated by the adaptation's third episode being, essentially, the play of *Richard III*. The three parts of *Henry VI*, however, were adapted into two episodes, a decision that often disproportionately affects the female characters. Cooke and Power's adaptation also placed a greater emphasis on Richard's backstory, attempting to create a rationale for his later actions. Cumberbatch's Richard was at the centre of the marketing material, with the eponymous protagonist for the two earlier episodes in the cycle (Tom Sturridge as Henry) almost hiding behind other figures (including Judi Dench and Hugh Bonneville, who are only in one episode of the cycle each). The second series of *The Hollow Crown* was centred around Richard, and Cumberbatch distinguished 'his' Richard from others, as the medium of television allowed for a focus on his physical disability. Cumberbatch described how, due to the

scrutiny of the lens [...] it took me about 3-4 hours to put on the prosthetics. The weight of the silicone is incredible. It's painted to match

the skin tone and it looks distressingly real. By contrast on stage Richard's body has always been something to hide.

(2016)

Not only is Richard the character centred in Cooke's production, but due to the medium of television, Cumberbatch was able to realise an especially detailed physicality.

By the time of Cooke's cycle, Cumberbatch had become a Hollywood star. 2016 was also the release of the fourteenth film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe *Doctor Strange* (in which he played the eponymous protagonist), and he has been in three other Marvel films since. In 2015 he played Hamlet in the National Theatre's production, which was streamed to cinemas in Europe and North America by National Theatre Live, and seen, according to the National Theatre website, "by 690,000 people." (*NT Live FAQs*, 2017) That same year he was nominated for the Best Actor Golden Globe for his performance as Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*, and in 2014 he won an Emmy for *Sherlock*. By the time of Cooke's cycle, Benedict Cumberbatch was a bona fide star of both stage and screen. Dominic Cooke's cinematic televisual style lent itself to the star treatment of Cumberbatch's Richard. Barbara Hodgdon, in her study of the Shakespearean star, writes that "the cinematic close-up [can] close the distance between spectator and star, giving fresh emphasis to the precise articulation of Shakespearean speech." (2008, p. 52) Cooke's cycle is filled with cinematic close-ups of characters, capturing the minute changes in expression or flicker of the eyes. And yet the looks to camera, the connection made through the lens, and soliloquies are reserved almost exclusively for Richard.

The decision to adapt the four plays into three episodes of television, combined with the choice to centre the star, meant that the text was cut dramatically, and, guided by Cooke's question, the adaptation focusses on Richard and the narrative of the Wars of the Roses. This is a narrative arc on which many adaptations have focussed. However, it is a narrative that disproportionately has an adverse effect on the female characters of the tetralogy. In 1974, Gwyn Williams highlighted the impact that prioritising the story of the male characters striving for power over other aspects of the play has on Margaret, and especially her love affair with Suffolk.

Recent productions of *Henry VI*, concentrating on the Wars of the Roses rather than on the human interest of Shakespeare's play and making the weakness of the King and ruthless covetousness of the barons the cause of all, have but the three great scenes — the courtship, the farewell, and the death of Suffolk — so that the love story almost disappears from the play and the nursing of Suffolk's severed head by Margaret almost becomes a shocking irrelevance.

(1974, p. 319)

Williams' paper is strangely prophetic. Not only was this true of the adaptations that Williams explicitly discussed — the BBC's 1960 *An Age of Kings*, the RSC's 1963 *The Wars of the Roses* — but of several adaptations that came after. The English Shakespeare Company's *The Wars of the Roses* (1988), and the RSC's *The Plantagenets* (1989), which though different in name, was similar in nature. The BBC's *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, the RSC's upcoming *The Wars of the Roses* (2022), all focus on just that: the Wars of the Roses. The emphasis on the narrative of the Wars has the side effect (whether intentional or not) of telling the stories of men, and in the case of Cooke's cycle, the story of Richard, and severely cutting, or even eliminating, the stories of women.

Another aspect of Cooke's cycle is the altering of characters, specifically their names. York is called Plantagenet, and his wife Cecily Neville is also introduced in the first episode in the series, and she goes from 'Young Cecily' in the first two episodes of the cycle (played by Lucy Robinson) to the Duchess of York in *Richard III* (played by that other Shakespearean star, Dame Judi Dench). Sophie Okonedo's Margaret is not captured by Suffolk, as in the play. The part of Suffolk remains in Cooke's cycle (played by Jason Watkins), but the majority of Suffolk's story arc — specifically his relationship with Margaret — is conflated with Somerset, played by Ben Miles. The change places a greater emphasis on the power play of the Wars of the Roses by making the man who plucked the first red rose also the man who wins Margaret for Henry and leads many of the schemes and plots to depose Gloucester and gain Henry (and Margaret) more power. It was also the only major name change to have gained comments from reviewers. Michael Billington highlights that the combination of the two parts means that Margaret's lover and right hand man also becomes the man "who helps start the whole conflict between the red and white roses"

(2016a). Considering the change, Billington continues to ask “does it matter? Probably not when Cooke directs with such sweep and when there are so many tremendous performances.” (2016a) Peter Davies — writing for *The London Magazine* — does say that the change “was irritating because unnecessary. But of course it didn’t seem to matter.” (2016, p. 39) Whether or not the reviewers had decided a reason why the name was changed, all seemed to agree that the change was, ultimately, irrelevant. Though the change from Suffolk to Somerset has an impact on the iambic rhythm of the verse, there are several other name changes and textual changes that also alter the pentameter. In Cooke’s cycle, the emphasis seems to be on ensuring the clarity of the Wars of the Roses narrative, and not on iambic fidelity.

The women in Cooke’s cycle are used by others in the production as scapegoats, traps, and a means for men to further their political careers. The cycle uses them as the embodiment of transgression, female ambition, and in one case, a nation, which must be contained and then engulfed and destroyed. This chapter focusses on three women in Cooke’s cycle for whom this is the case: Joan of Arc, Eleanor, and Cecily Neville (the Duchess of York). The adaptation’s need to use these women as narrative devices creates inconsistencies in their characters that make the women almost otherworldly or, in some cases, witchlike. The nature these women possess, an unacceptable and otherworldly form of female power, seems to be more palatable in the cycle, where female transgression is seen as unnatural and therefore duly and justly punished. However, the chapter also looks at these women in contrast with one who seems to flout these rules of Cooke’s cycle and whose bodily autonomy, at first, prevents her from being a tool or device to be used either by the characters or by Cooke and Power’s adaptation: Margaret. Where the other women of Cooke’s cycle become the embodied representations of either transgressive (Joan, Eleanor) or conforming (Cecily) femininity, Margaret’s control over her own body, and her ability to perform the roles needed of her, see her able to climb up the political ladder under her own volition. However, due to the adaptation’s restructuring, and its focus on the star player Benedict Cumberbatch, by the cycle’s third episode, even Margaret has become a device used by the cycle as a representation of Richard’s psyche. She is a strong female extra-text and presence, but she too becomes a silent and engulfed one.

Embodying a Nation: Joan and France

In Cooke's *The Wars of the Roses: The Hollow Crown: Henry VI Part 1*, the idea of the transgressive woman that is used by the characters around her, and by the cycle itself, is introduced with Joan. She is a device by which the English lord Plantagenet demonstrates his commitment to England (and to King Henry VI) through his capture and defeat of France as embodied in Joan. Yet she is also a tool for the cycle to represent the 'good' patriarchal English (in Talbot) and the 'bad' feminine and female led French (through Joan) — a narrative that continues through his cycle in the York family and Margaret. However, like the women who come after her in Cooke's cycle (Margaret, Eleanor, Elizabeth, the Duchess of York, and Anne), this duality of use for Joan results in inconsistencies in her character. She is given several important and powerful moments, but these are not rooted or grounded in any earlier onscreen character development, and the language of the play that allows Joan to define herself in her own terms is excised. The result of this is a Joan whose lack of onscreen development or self-definition intensifies the ways in which she can be otherworldly, unreal, and witchlike.

The restructuring of Cooke and Power's adaptation causes Joan to not be defined in isolation, but rather through the eyes of the English. She is heard about before she is seen, reported to Henry in a letter from Charles the Dauphin (the letter is adapted from Burgundy's letter in the play (1.4), Burgundy having been cut from the adaptation). Cooke's production carefully ensures that the viewers are not presented with Joan unmediated, and she is never shown without the context of the English perspective. Nancy A. Gutierrez, when writing about perceptions of Joan la Pucelle in the play of *1 Henry VI*, describes how "Shakespeare's dramatic technique of presenting Joan's character to the audience through the perspective of other characters, [is] an operation that forces the audience into collusion with the patriarchal point of view." (1990, p. 184) Cooke furthers this framing of Joan within the English perspective by only presenting her to the audience after the reports from the disparaging English.

The viewers are first shown Laura Morgan as Joan at Rouen where she is rallying the French army to fight against Philip Glenister's proud English Talbot (*The Wars of the Roses: The Hollow Crown: Henry VI Part 1*, 2016, 00:24:44). Joan is seen in closeup, the scene tinted blue to reflect the French colours, her dark hair

cropped short, and her eyes matching the grey of her chainmail. The orchestration of strings soars, as undefinable whispering then clearly becomes the name Joan. Before she speaks, a flashback shows a young Joan lying on the floor, her eyes wide in terror and her face pale. Before her is the statue of the Virgin who, as Joan watches, begins to weep blood that runs down her face and drops onto the ground. Cooke cuts between the wide staring eyes of the child Joan, the pale marble bleeding eyes of the Virgin, and the cold determined eyes of the adult Joan remembering this childhood experience. Cooke moves the camera to behind the present day adult Joan and the viewers can then see she is standing on a bridge, preparing to make a speech to the gathered troops.

The supernatural quality of Joan is heightened as the men (and they are all men) look up at her, as if worshipping their valiant leader on a pedestal above them all. It almost does not matter to the French what or who Joan is in this moment, or that she is masculinised or ungendered in her presentation. To the French she is both a warrior who will lead them into battle and, as suggested in the flashback, a prophet who will bring them righteous glory. She is untouchable, and perhaps even inhuman. Her short hair and masculine dress, combined with her northern accent, indicating, as Rycroft describes, a “gendered otherness as well as alien nationality” (2020, p. 5). The “otherness” of Joan, both as un-English and un-gendered, makes her later onscreen execution more acceptable to a distanced twenty-first century viewer. By framing Joan’s flashback of her religious experience (or perceived religious experience) within the context of her rallying speech, Cooke implies that in his cycle, it is that early childhood moment and the sense of moral and religious duty conveyed within it, that motivates Joan to lead the French army against the English.

Whereas Joan stands on high above her troops and they look up at her, almost worshipping her (a false idol), Cooke cuts to Talbot in the mud with his men, leading from the front with bellowing cheers and laughter. Through the cut between the two, Cooke once again ensures that Joan is understood by the viewer as an opposition to the ‘good’ English Talbot, played by television stalwart Phillip Glenister, who critic Robert Hanks described as “well cast in a macho role” (2016, p. 100). Cooke’s contrasting of these two characters, combined with his framing of Joan solely through the English patriarchal gaze due to the adaptation’s restructuring and rewriting of her introduction and character, creates an antagonistic relationship between them without their ever

having shared a screen. Unlike the Joan of the play, who transforms from peasant girl to self-defined warrior in front of the audience's eyes, meeting several times with Talbot on the battlefield, Morgan's Joan is introduced as an ungendered warrior (defined by Cooke and Power's adaptation in the context of the English men, rather than by herself) ready for action whose last shreds of humanity, or saintliness, disappear when she murders Talbot in cold blood after the Battle of Rouen.

The cycle's presentation of Joan changes dramatically (as the use and need for her changes in the narrative), and she becomes not deity but devil as she not only kills Talbot herself, but does so in a moment of vulnerability. Cooke emphasises that the Battle of Rouen is nearing its end by having the camera hover above the corpse strewn and muddy battlefield (00:33:31). The camera then returns to a close-up of Talbot who lovingly strokes the face of his dead son at which point Joan, blood-soaked from battle, plunges her sword into his back. Kelly Newman O'Connor describes Morgan's Joan as "a bloodthirsty hooligan who stabs Talbot in the back and treats his corpse with contempt" (2016, p. 6), and the sense of unlawfulness — or hooliganism — is heightened by the action taking place outside of the parameters of battle. In Joan's killing of Talbot, Cooke uses Joan to establish a narrative of women not just transgressing, but of acting in violent defiance of the laws of combat and of the (English) patriarchal order. O'Connor emphasises Joan's disrespectful treatment of Talbot's corpse as representative of her hooliganism, and it is an act which Cooke later mirrors in Margaret's violation of the body of the young Edmund. The moment Joan stabs Talbot, she transforms from warrior to "hooligan", and despite Cooke framing her motivation to lead the French as divine, in this act she becomes demonic. The change from divine to demonic then allows Joan to be captured and executed by Plantagenet and for the viewer to still perceive him as a good man. Alison Findlay writes of Joan's epithet 'la Pucelle' that "the derogatory associations of the name become dominant as the English dominate the action." (2014, pp. 333-334) In Cooke's cycle, however, Joan is never defined outside of the derogatory English associations of the name, and her sudden change from saint to sinner after the Battle of Rouen is indicative of her fulfilling her role in the cycle as the antagonist to the patriarchal English.

Cooke reinforces that Joan has brutally slain the pride of England by showing a funeral (00:34:58). The mud of the battlefield is exchanged for the

dark earth of a grave as the bodies of Talbot Senior and Junior, wrapped in Saint George's Crosses, are lowered into its depths. It is over the graves of these brave English men that the rest of the English lords decide to win back Rouen and, more importantly, capture the evil Joan who slaughtered their valiant leader. Cooke foregrounds the gendered nature of this rivalry by showing Joan, in a pure white nightdress, awakened from her bed by the sound of the English battering ram at the gates (00:36:33). Like Brenda Blethyn's Joan in Howell's earlier BBC cycle (1983), it is strange to see the usually armour clad Joan in a state of undress. However, whereas the night-time invasion of Orleans in Howell's cycle is played as a moment of farce, Joan and the French lords all in underclothes (*Henry VI, Part 1*, 1983, 00:47:05), in Cooke's cycle it highlights the vulnerability of Laura Morgan's Joan. She is alone, in a state of undress, and the castle she is in is being invaded by fully armed, armour clad and aggressive English soldiers. Joan is tempted away from fighting and towards a small statue of the Virgin by the whispering of her name. Candles surround the statue foreshadowing Joan's own fate, and Cooke cuts between the English raiding the town and the now passive praying Joan.

Up until this point in Cooke's cycle, Joan has been an ungendered military leader, deified by her troops and villainised by the patriarchal English. Yet, at the moment of her capture by Plantagenet, dressed in her long white nightgown and praying to the Virgin, her female body and femininity embodies the nation of France that the English now conquer. There is no other scene of French surrender in Cooke's production, it is symbolised in the capture of Joan. As Plantagenet enters the chamber, Joan reveals to him blood that is dripping from her hands in the form of stigmata. The stigmata received from praying at the statue, combined with Joan's flashback to her younger self and the implication that it is this formative experience that has driven her to lead France against the English, in some ways clarifies some of the thorny complications of Joan's dual position of both witch and saint present in the play. And yet, within the context of the cycle, there has been a large contradictory shift in the presentation of Joan: from deified genderless leader, to barbarous hooligan, now to weakened and bleeding woman. For the purposes of the cycle, Joan *is* France in this moment, and Adrian Dunbar as Plantagenet sweeps her up into his arms like a groom carrying his bride across the threshold. Although she shouts and

screams, somehow the great warrior maid who was able to slay the English hope Talbot is carried away like a child throwing a tantrum.

Joan is next seen bloody and beaten, being dragged kicking and screaming through the French town (00:46:32). Her head has been shaved in a Christian symbol of female public shame (Corinthians 11: 5-10). She is dragged to Plantagenet, who sits behind a long wooden table with the other English lords in a facsimile of a courtroom, and he snatches from her neck a little wooden Greek cross, the last symbol of her faith. For both the English men and for Cooke, Joan is no longer a symbol of Catholic divinity, but the embodiment of France itself, and Cooke shows this through the women, men, and children who are crying and shouting, mourning France's hope.

There is no trial for Morgan's Joan, as she is immediately strapped to the stake atop a pyre. As there is no trial, Joan is not able to define herself in opposition to the Shepherd, and she also does not claim to be pregnant as in the play. Joan's lack of self-definition in these moments, combined with her first appearance in the episode as deified warrior (rather than peasant girl), heightens her otherworldliness, as there is a limited sense of who she is or where she has come from. Kelly Newman O'Connor argues that the cutting of Joan's claim to pregnancy in Cooke's cycle is positive, and perhaps even progressive. She writes that Joan's "last-ditch equivocation, pleading pregnancy to save her life, disappears from the film's script, which also mercifully trims much of the misogynist heckling during her final moments." (2016, p. 6) For O'Connor cutting the pregnancy claim is empowering for Joan as a character, as with its removal is also the loss of the English noblemen who taunt and abuse her as she pleads for mercy. However, as Nancy A. Gutierrez highlights, in Joan's denial of the Shepherd and her claim to pregnancy "she rewrites her past, renouncing her pastoral roots and claiming power from a fulfilled sexuality" (1990, p. 192). In Cooke's cycle, Joan is introduced initially as a deified warrior, and not as a self-defining peasant girl, and her continued lack of self-definition creates the sense of her as something otherworldly. Later in Cooke's cycle the male protagonists, specifically Richard, are afforded this act of self-creation, where Joan (and the other women of the cycle) are not.

As Joan spits her final cursing speech, her shaved head and wild eyes show her as a mad female embodiment of France, which must be contained and destroyed. Cooke moves into a closeup of Joan's face, her breathing becoming

heavier as the flames rise up behind her, before showing her graphically burn onscreen. She splutters and chokes on the smoke, and as the flames catch her body she begins to scream. Cooke cuts away to show the reactions of the French townspeople, in particular a little girl, who does not cry, but watches intently as, effectively, France burns before her. Cooke also shows the English nobleman, most of whom are solemn and stern, aware that they are doing the right thing, yet not taking any enjoyment. Somerset, however, eats and drinks merrily as he, like Plantagenet, has captured a French woman (Margaret) through which to declare his loyalty to king and country. Unlike Plantagenet, however, he will not destroy her, but take her back to England.

The screaming eventually stops, and a charred body can be seen amongst the flames as the camera fades to Westminster. Though not in the play (which reserves onstage deaths for men) many cycles have decided to show Joan's execution alongside fuller cuts of the scene — such as Michael Bogdanov's English Shakespeare Company cycle in 1987, and Adrian Noble's for the RSC in 1988. Yet the inclusion of it in Cooke's cycle, which has removed Joan's ability to both speak for herself and define herself, places the emphasis on Joan's body, and how her destruction symbolises the conquering of France. The charred remains of Joan fade into peaceful Westminster, where Somerset is telling Henry of his conquered French woman: Margaret. Here, the cycle makes the mirror and the connection between these two women clear. Margaret, like Joan, is a French woman who also is to be used by the characters, and by the adaptation, and ultimately, will need to be contained and punished.

Joan is a device used by Plantagenet to show his commitment to England and to Henry, and his assumption of the role of the good English Talbot's avenger. She is also a device used by the cycle to show the dual figure of transgressive French deity and "hooligan" (O'Connor, 2016, p. 6) that Talbot and the English are constructed in opposition to, and later becomes the embodiment of France itself, to be captured and then destroyed by Plantagenet. The large shifts and contradictions in the character this causes — combined with the restructuring and rewriting of the part meaning her earlier introduction and then attempts to self-define are excised — make Joan almost otherworldly or supernatural. She is an entity that enters the story, has some fantastically powerful and dramatic moments, and then is destroyed. This pattern is established in Joan, and is then seen in the women throughout

Cooke's cycle, who each have moments in which they serve their dramatic purpose, and which leave them seeming almost supernatural.

Embodying Ambition: Margaret, Eleanor, and England

With the feminine threat of France as embodied in Joan contained and destroyed, Eleanor Cobham embodies a more domesticated version of the transgressive women in the second half of the Cooke's first episode. Eleanor, like Joan, has interesting and dramatic moments. However, as with Joan, the restructuring and rewriting of Cooke and Power's adaptation imbues Eleanor with an otherworldliness, explicitly related to witchcraft, due to the inconsistencies and contradictions that occur when she is used to serve both the adaptation and is used by the Lancastrian lords (and Margaret) to meet their own ends. To the Lancastrian lords, she is a snare through which to entrap Humphrey and gain more power. To the cycle, she is the embodiment of the ambitious wife and Humphrey's sin, and the containment and destruction of her both shows a woman duly punished, and allows Humphrey to be an innocent devoid of sin, making Margaret's part in his later murder a sign of her own transgression. Cooke's cycle uses Eleanor as the embodiment of wifely ambition and transgression, whilst at the same time drawing parallels between her and Margaret, which Cooke first shows at Margaret's wedding to Henry.

The prolonged burning of Joan fades into the tranquility of Westminster. Cooke, like Howell before him, added a wedding. However, the restructuring of Cooke and Power's adaptation means that the wedding occurs approximately halfway through the first episode (00:53:00), and not at the opening of a new play. As such, the ceremony is swift, with less pomp and circumstance than Jane Howell's Charles and Diana-esque wedding for her BBC cycle (1983). However, that is not to say that Cooke does not imbue the ceremony with a sense of scale and grandeur, and despite its swiftness onscreen, emphasis was placed on the wedding as it used as the promotional image of the episode on the BBC website (*Henry VI Part 1*, 2016). The cinematic realism of the cycle means that the camera sweeps through the medieval style court, showing gatherings of lavishly dressed lords and ladies in ornate period costumes. The big room, with a big cast, also highlights the isolation and difference of Okonedo's Margaret,

who is closely scrutinised as she makes her way up the aisle on the arm of Somerset.

Though not as close in time as the wedding of Charles and Diana was to Howell's cycle, five years before Cooke's there had been another major royal wedding: that of Charles and Diana's son William to another 'commoner' like Diana, Kate Middleton. In discussing the BBC's two previous productions of the tetralogy — Jane Howell's full text (1983) and the earlier adaptation *An Age of Kings* (1960) — Hampton-Reeves and Rutter highlight how the BBC is especially well positioned to show such events, as "royal weddings, coronations, state funerals and jubilee celebrations are as much a part of the BBC's institutional identity as the making of drama." (2009, p. 111) The wedding of Margaret and Henry in Cooke's production, though not as celebratory as in Howell's cycle, was still clearly a wedding ceremony being broadcast on the BBC five years after the wedding of 'Wills and Kate', another young and beautiful royal couple. There is a sense of anticipation to Margaret's arrival into the English court, which is full of the rich and beautiful nobles of England. The commons are not seen lining the street and throwing confetti, but there is a sense of privileged access afforded by the camera to be able to participate in this royal occasion.

Okonedo's Margaret is not in a typical twenty-first century wedding dress reminiscent of Kate Middleton's Sarah Burton (for Alexander McQueen) designed gown, unlike Julia Foster's medieval meets 1980s creation for Howell's cycle. Instead Okonedo is dressed in a deep red velvet gown, its rich colour matching Somerset's own costume. On her head she wears a hennin covered in white silk that hangs down her back as a wedding veil, an important symbol of a wife's subservience to her husband (Corinthians 11: 5-10), and importantly a symbol of a wedding recognisable to a contemporary audience. Like many Margarets before her (Ashcroft, Mirren, and Foster included), at this point Okonedo's hair is still loose — fitting for a medieval young woman still not technically wed (Corson, 1965, p. 139). In front of her, Margaret holds a red and white bouquet (overt symbols of the two houses shortly to split), the white matching her bridal veil, the red matching the deep red of her dress. The paleness of the white flowers and her veil, the colour of purity, also links her to Tom Sturridge's nervous but sweet Henry, who wears pale gold and greens. The richness of her red dress, the colour of passion and blood, links her to

Somerset's own deep red costume. Already this is a Margaret being torn between her mind (Henry), and her body (Somerset).

Cooke contrasts Margaret as she is led up the aisle with the other women of the English court, specifically with Sally Hawkins' Eleanor, who stands close to Henry's throne. Margaret's race, the only black woman in Cooke's cycle, and at this point the only actor of colour, marks her as different to the white women who watch on, eyeing up the new outsider queen. In a series of extreme closeups that define the earlier episodes of his cycle, Cooke also shows the lords giving each other sly looks, surprised at this woman who is becoming queen. Liebler and Shea argue, that "by extending Eleanor's 'life' Shakespeare underscores Margaret's and Eleanor's comparable roles as wives" (2009, p. 85), and the addition of Eleanor into this scene mirrors the play's addition of Eleanor into the life of Margaret. Cooke however does not just contrast Margaret with Eleanor, but with Cecily Neville, shown in another closeup standing next to her husband Plantagenet. Cooke brings Cecily into his cycle earlier than her entrance as the Duchess of York (Margaret's crone counterpart) in *Richard III*. In her procession up the aisle, Cooke associates Margaret both with Eleanor, the ambitious wife who looks on with a smug smile, and also contrasts her with Cecily, the 'good' wife who stands with her husband, and whose family Margaret will destroy.

Once presented with his queen, Henry kisses her. It is a soft trembling kiss, completely unlike the long, slow kiss lit by fire and fuelled by blood taken from her by Somerset in France. As Henry leans in to kiss his Margaret, Cooke shows Somerset in the background of the shot, slightly out of focus, but clearly trying to hold back a smile. He watches the interaction not with a sense of jealousy, but with a sense of knowing that Henry is no sexual threat. Margaret does not kiss Henry back, but keeps her eyes downcast stifling a smirk, potentially seeing his weakness and sexual innocence as a way for her to assert her feminine power. As Henry praises her beauty, addressing God rather than her, Margaret's expression remains passive. But as soon as she starts speaking, it is clear that she is clever, erudite, and witty. She kneels on "salute my King" (1.1.29), and the court gasp and applaud her as Henry looks around at them smiling, incredibly pleased with his new bride who knows just what to do and say. She is clever, and will continue to perform and adapt herself to future situations in order to gain what she wants.

Okonedo's Margaret is a performer who is able to play a part when needed. For example, as the entire court pronounce "Long live Queen Margaret, England's happiness!" (2HVI, 1.1.37), Margaret's "We thank you all" (38) elicits giggles from the gathered nobles and herself. Despite her own royal aspirations, Margaret presents the court with a young, innocent queen for whom use of the royal we is strange and unfamiliar. Eleanor, however, does not believe Margaret's performance, and Cooke highlights this by resting the camera on her as she looks Margaret up and down, her mouth slightly open in disdain. Similarly to the interplay of shots between Joan and Talbot, without Margaret or Eleanor having spoken a word to or about each other, it is clear in Cooke's cycle that the two women are direct rivals.

Like the role of Joan in the earlier part of the episode, both the role of Eleanor and the rivalry between her and Margaret serves the cycle. Margaret, unlike Joan before her and the other women who she is contrasted with and compared to, has a control over her femininity that allows her to begin to assume power. Whereas Joan became feminine in order for the cycle to represent the conquering of France through the conquering of her body, Margaret's rise to power is rooted in her femininity. Not only that, but through her control over her own female body, parts of France are once again lost by England (due to Somerset's bargaining with the Duke of Anjou). During the wedding, the tension of the English nobility looking on is due to a fear of female power, one which they allay through the control and disposal of another female body: that of Eleanor. The strong association and rivalry between the two women, foregrounded by Cooke when Margaret enters the English court, foreshadows the place Eleanor's body will take in the cycle's attempt to control Margaret's female power.

Cooke draws further parallels between Margaret and Eleanor, and further contrasts Margaret with Cecily, by presenting three couples consecutively. The first is Cecily with her husband Plantagenet. Plantagenet's speech about his right to the throne is not spoken as a soliloquy, but is given the more cinematically realistic setting of his home (01:01:37). Cooke invites the viewers into Plantagenet's inner sanctuary, demonstrating the strong family unit as he sits with Cecily and they watch two of their sons practice their swordplay. Placing the speech within the confines of Plantagenet's home both enables Cooke to avoid a theatrical aside that conflicts with the cinematic

realism of the early episodes of his cycle, and again shows Plantagenet as the family man, supported by his wife and his sons. In Cooke's cycle Cecily is the ever supportive wife to the extent that Plantagenet's speech is split between the two of them. She tells him to "be still awhile" (01:01:49), holding his hand as their eyes remain fixed on their duelling sons (whose sparring foreshadows later betrayals).

Cooke then cuts to a second couple: Margaret and Somerset. In contrast to Cecily and Plantagenet, who are in their day-lit home, Margaret and Somerset are presented as illicit and hiding in the dark of the passageway (01:02:23). Somerset attempts to kiss Margaret, but instead of accepting it, she leans away and guides his hands down before ducking back through the door of her bedchamber. Margaret's power over both Henry and Somerset is based in her control of her own femininity. Whereas she accepted Henry's nervous tender kiss — the kiss that cemented their relationship as man and wife — she now rejects Somerset's, denying him the affection that he craves. Cooke focusses on Somerset's frustration, showing him leaning against the wall outside her door, staring at it as it has come between them. Margaret, unlike the 'good' supportive wife Cecily, utilises her feminine body, and begins to assert her control through both granting and denying access to it.

The third couple are preceded by a messenger walking with purpose through a busy market place, in a shot typical of a BBC costume drama (01:02:38). The market place is contrasted with the front of a grand building, and the camera almost imperceptibly zooms into an upstairs window. Eleanor and Humphrey are inside, both dressed in nightclothes. Eleanor's long dark hair hangs over her shoulders, and compared to the ornate and intricate plaits she is seen wearing at the wedding, this is a woman who is being open, vulnerable, and intimate with her husband. She is in a white nightdress, like that of Joan and Margaret earlier in the episode, but unlike either of these women she wears a beautiful rich blue and gold embroidered robe over it, the gold thread occasionally gleaming in the light. Howard and Rackin, discussing Eleanor as a subversive figure, write that "Eleanor's fantasy of usurpation focusses on her theatrical assumption of the clothes and symbols of royalty." (1997, p. 75) The blue of Eleanor's robe is similar to the purple permitted via the Sumptuary Laws to only be worn by the Queen (and her immediate female

family) in early modern England, so that even in her state of undressed vulnerability, she is still performing her ambition.

While Cecily is a supportive wife who advises Plantagenet to have patience, Eleanor tries to push Humphrey to go against his better nature and lust after the crown. She attempts — like Margaret — to use her female body to manipulate Humphrey, and O'Connor reviewed this moment as a seduction of "her true-hearted husband" (2016, pp. 6-7). Humphrey is, of course, unswayed by her efforts. Cooke presents Humphrey, and later Plantagenet, as a good man who will endure personal hardship and sacrifice rather than break his oath. The cycle not only presents Eleanor as the ambitious wife, but as the vessel of Humphrey's sins, and the containment and destruction of them in Eleanor enables him to become a Christlike innocent. Hugh Bonneville told the BBC in a promotional interview for the cycle that Humphrey's "downfall is ultimately because his wife Eleanor enjoys using the credit card too much!" (2016) Bonneville's reasoning about Humphrey's downfall is not because of his faults, or even because of Eleanor's ambition, but because she likes to shop. As Howard and Rackin argue, Eleanor's threat to Margaret is largely "the theatrical assumption of clothes" (1997, p. 75), but their analysis stems from Eleanor's tendency to dress above her station. The assembled lords do later attack Humphrey for spending too much money as a means to undermine his authority, but it is not just "thy wife's attire", but also "Thy sumptuous buildings" (*2HVI*, 1.3.131) that causes them to take umbrage. Bonneville's reading of the character is informed by Cooke and Power's adaptation, which centres Humphrey in Eleanor's story, and radically alters the trap laid for Eleanor by Humphrey's enemies. Instead of being both a victim of the lords' plots to overthrow Humphrey, and a perpetrator of a treasonous act (an interesting and complex duality), Eleanor becomes the trap itself.

The trap is facilitated by the messenger seen approaching the Gloucester residence, who watches Eleanor intensely as he tells Humphrey that he is needed in court. Once left alone — or so she thinks — Eleanor enters an anteroom and the viewers are shown her shadowy figure (shrouded in darkness, foreshadowing her later disgrace) leaning down to pick something up. Transfixed on the doorway the men exited through, she carries the black wood box, her face pale in comparison and, Hamlet-like, she "find[s her] way without [her] eyes" (2.1.96). Like Joan before her, Eleanor serves a purpose for

the cycle, and this causes inconsistencies within her character which lead to her becoming otherworldly, and witchlike. One of these is Eleanor's hiding place for the box and the secrecy with which she treats the contents within. Despite this box obviously being precious or secret enough to kept in a separate room (though obviously not well hidden, seeing as how quickly she brought it through) and the need to check no one is looking, it is not locked, and she opens it with ease in front of a large window in which a figure can be seen.

In a wonderfully clichéd show of 'witchy' items, the camera begins to zoom in on Eleanor as she pulls out of the box a perfectly spherical crystal ball (01:07:30). Next comes a tiny skull. Lady Macbeth like, it is perhaps that of a baby. Finally, she picks up a doll of Henry (though the doll can be seen leaning at the back of the box and in no way would have been obstructed by the other items, begging the question why did she need to pull them out). The doll is made of cloth and is wearing Henry's pale gown with grey overcoat. If there was any doubt as to who it was, on its faceless head the doll has the distinct long black hair of Tom Sturridge's Henry, and a little gold crown. Cooke's episode replaces the conjuring scene of the play (*2HVI* 1.4) with this voodoo doll style figuration of Henry. The play itself is replacing the story — as documented in *Holinshed's Chronicles* (Holinshed, 1577, p. 1132) — that Eleanor was arrested for prophesying with a wax image. The change in the play of *1 Henry VI*, from the historical wax image to a conjuring, makes for a much more theatrical scene. The conjuration is replete with priests, witches, and layers of meta-theatrical performance which raise the question of whether a spirit is really being summoned, as shown by Jane Howell in her BBC cycle (1983). The play's conjuration also has a large impact on Eleanor herself. Nina S. Levine, in discussing Eleanor as both victim and perpetrator in the scene, describes how the

exchange of a prophesying spirit for a wax image is significant, for rather than conspiring to kill the king, the duchess in *2 Henry VI* is guilty of what would appear to be a lesser crime, that of inquiring into the king's future.

(1994, p. 113)

The Eleanor of the play does indeed consort with witches and Catholic priests, but she only asks them questions. Through the voodoo doll, Cooke not only presents an Eleanor who wishes actual harm on the king — therefore making her punishment (like Joan's) just and reasonable — but also an Eleanor who serves the cycle. With the doll she becomes a rogue transgressing woman acting out on her own ambitious and selfish motives, as opposed to the conjuring occurring against the backdrop of magic and Catholicism.

Eleanor in Cooke's cycle is not the victim of what Levine calls "political entrapment" (1998, p. 48), lured into committing an act of treason by the lords who wish Humphrey harm. Instead, her actions are presented as entirely her own. She lifts her left hand and in it she holds a pin. Behind her, in the large window, a figure in red can barely be seen. She tightens her grip on the pin, looks intently at the doll then closes her eyes and lifts her head back moving her lips. (In prayer? In curse? Casting a spell?) She jabs the pin hard into the chest of the doll, and as soon as the pin enters the doll the focus of the camera shifts so Eleanor and the doll become blurred, and the messenger who has been watching through the window comes into focus. There is a strange *deus ex machina* in the messenger's presence, and there are inconsistencies in Eleanor's character as someone who keeps her eyes on the door and hides her possessions, but commits a treasonous act in front of a large window. The exchange of the conjuring — in which Eleanor's questions are asked and voiced by someone else — for her physical act of stabbing the voodoo doll foregrounds Eleanor's body as the site of the trap that has now been set for Humphrey.

Cooke connects Eleanor's actions to Margaret and her own ambition by crossfading the piercing of the doll to an archery target being pierced by an arrow — Margaret's arrow as she talks with Somerset about her disdain for Eleanor. The first time the couple have been shown together since Margaret's rejection of Somerset's kiss, the public nature of the archery (on the lawns of the palace) reinforces Margaret's control over the level of intimacy in their relationship, and Somerset's access to her body. As Margaret mocks Eleanor, the camera cuts to show Eleanor reflected in a mirror that slightly distorts her image (01:09:36). When Margaret describes how Eleanor thinks herself "More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife" (2HVI, 1.3.79), a servant places a crown like headdress on Eleanor's head which she adjusts to ensure it is sitting just right. Cooke here shows both how Margaret views Eleanor — as her rival

whose “challenge to Queen Margaret is essentially theatrical,” (Findlay, 2014, pp. 122-123) — and also the distortion of the mirror shot from a low angle (as if the viewers are spying on her), reminds the viewers of Eleanor’s own transgression. When Humphrey joins Eleanor in the mirror, Cooke cuts back to the scene of archery, and this time Somerset looses an arrow that strikes the bullseye, implying that it is through the deployment of Eleanor’s body that Humphrey will be trapped.

Cooke’s cycle attempts to communicate two, potentially conflicting, narratives around Eleanor’s act of treason. The first is that Eleanor herself is an ambitious witch, who takes it upon herself (with no prompting) to stab a voodoo doll of the king. The second is that Somerset and the Lancastrian lords have set up a trap for Eleanor and Humphrey, as indicated by Somerset telling Margaret as they practice their archery “Madam, myself have limed a bush for her” (1.3.89). In order to reconcile these two narratives, Cooke’s cycle relies on an uncharacteristically theatrical set piece, where Eleanor just so happens to commit her act of treason in full view of the window that the messenger just so happens to be looking through. As Somerset tells Margaret of his scheme, Cooke shows Eleanor isolated on the street, walking slightly uphill against the flow of the one or two peasants who walk down the hill opposite her. Cooke contrasts this duchess swimming upstream, trying to push herself above her station, with Margaret and Somerset, a couple now united in their hatred of her, who easily shoot swift arrows to meet their target.

In accordance with the cinematic style of Cooke’s cycle, and the strong sense of time and place that this affords, the scene in which Margaret and Eleanor confront each other (the only time they interact directly at all) takes place in the luxurious and extravagant court (01:12:47). It is imbued with a sense of public life, and therefore the humiliation of Eleanor that occurs is clearly a public event. The moment is serious, and it again demonstrates Margaret’s skills as a performer, as she manages to both humiliate Eleanor and perform the role of the victim herself.

Cooke foregrounds the scale of the court and the number of people present for Eleanor’s humiliation by positioning the camera behind Margaret as she descends from the throne, her shoes echoing through the silent hall as the gathered nobility watch with bated breath. Margaret has the power in this moment, and her actions are clearly her own and not those of the men who seek

to control and contain her. Cooke shifts the camera's focus onto Margaret's right hand in which she holds a fan that she used to cool herself as the lords bickered. Her actual use of the fan earlier in the scene implies that, rather than an orchestrated incident, her decision to drop the fan is spontaneous. She opens her hand and the fan falls out. Despite the clearly purposeful nature of the fan drop, Okonedo's Margaret is a consummate performer, and gasps a shocked "oh!" (01:12:57) as it clatters to the ground. When Margaret's ladies-in-waiting rush to pick up the fan, she holds her hand out to them before turning to look directly at Sally Hawkins' Eleanor. Margaret's "Give me my fan" (1.3.39) is said in a light sing-song voice as she rocks backward and forwards like a school girl, establishing herself as the innocent party. During Eleanor's long walk across the court, Cooke shows the viewer the impact of Margaret's control over the court and her usurpation of Eleanor's place through close-ups of Humphrey (who looks concerned) and Somerset (who looks both smug and proud of his lover's cunning).

Again foregrounding Eleanor's material threat to Margaret's royal position, Cooke focusses on her elegant shoes walking slowly across the floor, and the swaying of her silk skirts. When she reaches Margaret, her face is defiant. In the two shot of the women, their extravagant hairstyles become an important feature. Both wear appropriate hair for two married noblewomen (Corson, 1965, p. 14) in the medieval period, which is up and covered with a beautifully beaded and decorative head covering. Margaret wears both an intricate crown and a pearl encrusted caul that cages her ornately plaited hair. Eleanor wears an elaborate headdress on the back of her head that could be mistaken for a crown, and her own plaited hair remains slightly uncovered, showing the subversion of her apparel. As at her wedding, Margaret wears a deep red dress that continues to link her with Somerset who, in the course of the scene, has helped further Margaret's attacks against Humphrey. Eleanor wears bright sunshine yellow that — although not nearly as rich or luxuriant as the fabric of Margaret's dress — is a colour fitting for high nobility. At a glance, for example for one of the "Strangers in court" (1.3.80), it might be difficult to determine which of these women is the queen. Until, that is, Margaret asserts her dominance by slapping Eleanor with the entire force of her body.

After the closeups of the two women, suddenly the public nature of their confrontation comes back to the fore as the court erupts in gasps. As Eleanor

herself is the trap for Humphrey, he has not exited the court (as in the play), but instead rushes to hold Eleanor back, though still retaining the staff of office in his hand, emphasising that it is Eleanor that will cause him to lose his position. Cooke and Power's adaptation rewrites Eleanor's response to Henry's (softly spoken) "Sweet aunt, be quiet; 'twas against her will" (1.3.144), to emphasise her own prideful nature, and excises her warnings to Henry about his own wife. In the early episodes of Cooke's cycle, women are not vessels of prophecy (as the play presents Joan, Eleanor, and Margery Jourdain), but they are utilised by the cycle to embody the sinful and treacherous aspects of women that must be contained. Her prideful retort ringing in the ears of the court, Eleanor walks out with her chin thrust into the air. Margaret's skills as a performer come to the fore when, holding her hand held over her mouth in disbelief, she looks around at the court before bursting into what O'Connor describes as "crocodile tears" (2016, p. 7), and runs out of the room, her ladies-in-waiting following behind. Despite Margaret's instigation of the confrontation, and putting the full force of her body behind the slap, she still performs the role of the victim. Margaret adds her own construction of Eleanor as the cruel attacker to the already established constructions of Eleanor by the lords in the play (as a way in which to trap Humphrey), and the cycle (as an embodiment of the ambitious wife and Humphrey's sin).

Cooke highlights Eleanor's use as a trap for Humphrey by centring him and his reaction to her trial in front of the court, where she is dragged in as a captured woman, beaten, chained, and filthy (01:17:29). The royal court has become a literal courtroom, and the voodoo doll of Henry sits on a bench in front of a jury of lords. Cooke focusses on Humphrey in a closeup as he cowers, barely able to breathe or even look up at his treacherous wife when Henry announces the due punishment is death, and is visibly relieved when Henry commutes her sentence. At the first opportunity, Humphrey runs to Eleanor who is dragged from him, screaming through the doors he will also shortly exit through, disgraced and following his wife like a fish on a line. As soon as Humphrey leaves the king's side, he is separated from him by the bank of lords who have sat trial over Eleanor in a visual representation of what has come between the Lord Protector and the king. It is the power these lords wish to have, and are beginning to assert, that have caused Humphrey's downfall, Eleanor's wont to spend money was simply a tactic by which to sow ideas of

dissent. Like Joan before her, the cycle has made Eleanor the physical embodiment of the present and current female threat posed to the crown. Whereas Joan became the embodiment of France, Eleanor is the embodiment of the ambitious wife, and the trap through which the Lancastrian lords attempt to gain more control for themselves.

As Humphrey warns Henry of the “others [who] would ambitiously receive” (2.3.36) the staff of office, Cooke shows the row of Lancastrian Lords who have sought to displace Humphrey: Winchester, Exeter, Suffolk, and Somerset. Noticeably absent from Cooke’s accusatory shot are the Yorkist Lords who have also been sitting in a row with their Lancastrian counterparts in the trial of Eleanor: Plantagenet and Warwick. In Cooke’s cycle, it is only the Lords of the House of Lancaster who have schemed against Humphrey, and have set Eleanor as a trap. Plantagenet has been notably absent from the scheming and the plotting, and from the capture of Eleanor, and instead has been shown at home with his family, the House of York being too righteous and good to resort to petty plots and entrapment. Plantagenet captured and destroyed Joan as a means of conquering France, not for self-advancement. Somerset, however, brought his French woman back to England and used the body of Margaret to lure in the king, and through it parts of France were once lost again to Alençon. In Cooke’s cycle, it is Henry’s own Lancastrian Lords who are the threat, and not the Yorkist faction. They only revolt in order to save England when Margaret, the ultimate female transgressor, attempts to gain too much control.

As Humphrey storms out of the court, following the route of his disgraced wife, he places the staff of office at Henry’s feet, and Cooke draws particular attention to Margaret disapprovingly watching Henry as he does not pick the staff up. Instead, she takes control by wrapping his fingers around it. The focus Cooke places on Margaret garnered comment from Michael Billington, who highlighted the moment as demonstrating how Okonedo “strongly registers the character’s growing sense of power: she even thrusts the regal sceptre into his hands as if she alone were aware of its mystical significance.” (2016a) Through small acts — such as her publicly humiliating Eleanor and her physically placing the sceptre into Henry’s hand — Margaret is asserting her control and power in the court, a feminine threat felt so keenly by the patriarchal English Lords that they attempt to destroy it in Eleanor. Cooke draws a final parallel between the two ambitious wives by cutting the camera to

look over Winchester's shoulder at the voodoo doll lying on the table, the pin protruding from its face. As Eleanor forced the pin into Henry's doll, Margaret forced the staff into Henry's hand. Both are acts that will ultimately cause harm to the king, and both are acts that would not have been performed by Cecily, who is absent from the court. Cecily's absence from the court room is representative of the patience she earlier advised Plantagenet to have. Where Eleanor is being condemned for her ambition, Cecily is likely where she was last seen: looking after her children at home.

Cooke highlights what is at stake in the court by cutting to show the buildings of Westminster, and the peaceful birdsong heard previously in the episode is replaced by the braying of a mob (01:22:15). The final implication of Eleanor as a trap by which to ensnare Humphrey — and therefore a tool to be used by the Lancastrian Lords and a narrative device for the cycle — is made clear as Cooke centres Humphrey in their parting. Howard and Rackin describe how "Shakespeare puts this theatrical spectacle of a proud woman tamed near the visual center of the play (II.iv), and it is an enactment of a special kind of gendered violence." (1997, p. 77) In Cooke's cycle, however, the parting sits at about three-quarter's of the way through the first episode (01:22:44), which de-centres Eleanor and the emphasis the play places on her through its structure. Instead, the moment begins the final ascent towards the end of Humphrey's story, his murder, which forms the final climax of the episode.

Eleanor, like Joan, suffers savagely public final moments which consume her body and, with it, what she represents for the cycle. Wearing a soiled tunic, her hair matted and filthy, dried blood running from her nose, and every bare inch of skin covered in dirt, the parallels with Joan are clear, and, as Howard and Rackin write, "while her rank saves Eleanor from burning, the progress through London's streets strips her of her social identity." (1997, p. 77) The manacled and caged Eleanor is a far cry from the haughty woman first seen at Margaret's wedding.

As Eleanor is dragged away from Humphrey, who has attempted to keep hold of her hands through the cart sides but is eventually heaved off by guards, Cooke's production leaves him standing bereft as his wife is pelted with rotten vegetables by the angry commons. Cooke and Power's adaptation has Eleanor taken away against her will, and her husband left dealing with the consequences, as opposed to the play, where Humphrey cannot control his

emotions — he “cannot stay to speak” (2.4.86) — and Eleanor (having thanked the sheriff who guarded her) plainly tells Stanley she is ready to leave with a defiant “Go, lead the way, I long to see my prison.” (2.4.110) The restructuring and rewriting of this moment foregrounds how Eleanor, as the embodiment of Humphrey’s sin and of transgressive female ambition, has been used to further the narrative of the cycle.

Like Joan before her, Cooke’s cycle — having established Eleanor as someone whose body needs to be contained and whose acts need to be punished — disposes of her. Her prison cart begins to be dragged away from Humphrey as she cries, screams, and wails his name. As the cart leaves the relative safety of the prison walls and enters the rabble, Eleanor is pelted with rotten food (though thankfully no tomatoes), and Cooke zooms in to a closeup of a broken and breathless woman, decaying vegetable matter cling to her, panting heavily, her body being engulfed into the angry mob. She has served her purpose to the lords of the cycle, as Humphrey is left bereft and vulnerable. But she has also served her purpose to the cycle, as the embodiment of Humphrey’s sin and female ambition, she has been contained. Like Joan being consumed by fire, Eleanor is engulfed into the commons as a way in which to assert patriarchal control. The overthrow of Humphrey as a result of Eleanor’s transgression is one step closer to control of the realm for the scheming Lancastrian Lords. Cooke concludes Eleanor’s narrative arc in his cycle by cutting to Humphrey who turns to see the servant who reported Eleanor’s actions to the Lancastrian Lords, smirking at the once great Lord Protector. Eleanor has indeed been a successful trap.

Embodied Autonomy: Margaret and Somerset

Through her relationship with Somerset, Cooke demonstrates how Margaret's power stems from her having control over her own body and her ability to both grant and refuse access to it — a control and power other women in Cooke's cycle do not have. From their first meeting during the siege of Rouen, where Somerset stumbles upon Margaret in a state of undress and both captures her and woos her for Henry, through to Somerset's death, where Margaret is confronted with his decapitated head, Cooke focusses on Margaret's body in their relationship. However, due to the combining of the textual characters of Suffolk and Somerset, Cooke and Power's adaptation places a heightened emphasis on Somerset the Lancastrian political campaigner, as well as Somerset (textually Suffolk) the lover and right hand of the queen. As such, each of the key moments — identified by Gwyn Williams (1974) as the courtship, the farewell, and the death of Suffolk — are adapted to aid Cooke's central narrative of the Wars of the Roses and Richard's rise to power.

From Margaret's first encounter with Somerset, Cooke shows that this is a relationship full of passion and fire. Cooke and Power's adaptation restructures Margaret's entrance into the cycle to take place before Joan's capture, altering the parallel the play creates between the two women. Liebler and Shea, in describing Joan and Margaret as reflections of each other, emphasise that

Margaret first appears on stage as Joan is led off as captive to the Duke of York. Like Joan, Margaret is held prisoner by an Englishman, here the Earl of Suffolk (5.3.45). Like the Dauphin before Joan, Suffolk is smitten with his prisoner.

(2009, p. 81)

In Cooke's cycle Margaret first appears before Joan is captured by Plantagenet. The other mirror Liebler and Shea refer to (the Dauphin being smitten with Joan) due to the cycle's presentation of the ready-made warrior Joan, is also cut. Margaret's first encounter with Somerset does not draw the same parallels as the play of *1 Henry VI* — though that is not to say connections are not made between the two transgressive French women.

Margaret's capture occurs during the siege of Rouen. As Joan prays to the statue of Mary, whispering Latin prayers with blood pouring from her hands in the form of stigmata, Cooke cuts to show Ben Miles as Somerset sneaking down a passageway, his sword drawn in a show of his patriarchal aggression and power (00:38:13). Miles' Somerset is presented in Cooke's cycle as a man who both is content to use women, and to work entirely for his own self-advancement. For example, when Sir William Lucy asks him for aid as the valiant Talbot fights against the unnatural Joan, Somerset denies his request as he lies on his stomach, a buxom woman massaging his oily back (00:28:11). During the siege, however, he is confronted by a woman. A dagger appears behind him from the shadows, held by a feminine hand draped in a white sleeve. In their first meeting Cooke spends a moment focussing on Margaret's hand before revealing her body. Hands are something Cooke returns to throughout Margaret and Somerset's relationship as a symbol of their sexual and loving connection, culminating in the withdrawal of Margaret's touch when she does not hold Somerset's decapitated head after his death. With a clash of their weapons, Somerset spins Margaret around placing her in view of the camera. She wears a white night dress, which has slipped off one shoulder, and her long brunette hair cascades over her shoulders and down her back, a dual symbol of her virginal innocence and her unrestrained sexuality. The sense of location, so strongly foregrounded in Cooke's cinematically realistic cycle, makes it clear that Margaret and Joan are in the same town, even possibly the same building, with Joan in the bedrooms above, and Margaret sneaking around the cellars below. Their costuming, white nightdresses, also shows a parallel between the two, and reinforces the feminisation of Joan when compared to such an overtly feminine woman such as Margaret. Cooke and Power's adaptation replaces much of the conversation between Margaret and Somerset (including the meta-theatrical asides) with lustful gazes and cunning looks, as each party assess the other to see what self-advancement could be made.

The cycle alternates between Margaret being 'captured' by Somerset, and Joan actually being captured by Plantagenet. Cooke cuts from Somerset and Margaret discussing Margaret's potential fate as the wife of Henry, to Plantagenet storming down a passageway on his way to find Joan. In their different approaches to these women (Somerset's charm, Plantagenet's

aggression) it is clear how these men will use the women. Plantagenet uses Joan to capture and conquer France for the betterment of England, Somerset uses Margaret for both his own political advancement and sexual gratification. Margaret, unlike Joan, however, decides to participate in her own fate. Cooke foregrounds Margaret as a token of exchange as Margaret's father, the Duke of Anjou, and Somerset strike a deal over her. Centred between the two men who sit as she stands, her jaw tense and her eyes hard, Margaret's body is exposed. Her nightdress has slipped further off her shoulder which is now covered with a long tendril of hair, which only seems to draw attention to its nakedness. Anjou and Somerset enact the exchange of women in marriage, what Butler describes as "a symbolic intercourse between clans of men" (2007, pp. 52-53), by passing Margaret physically between themselves, and Somerset's grip sinks into her flesh as he drags her away by the arm. However, Okonedo's Margaret does not remain passive in the exchange, and begins to demonstrate even in these first moments onscreen that she is able to perform a given role and will attempt to gain at least some semblance of control. She calls Somerset back flirtatiously, her voice higher pitched and a smile playing on her lips, and she accepts Somerset's slow and passionate kiss. Her reply to him is witty and coquettish, but as soon as he turns away from her the smile drops, tears fill her eyes, and her expression becomes one of fear and sadness. Though Somerset initially attempts to control Margaret, she is beginning to use her body to control him. Margaret allows Somerset to kiss her now, granting him access to her body. Yet inherent in the granting of access is the refusal of it, and Margaret asserts the power she has established over her own body when, back in England, she denies Somerset's kiss (01:02:23).

Describing the end of the play of *2 Henry VI*, Howard and Rackin propose that Margaret is the "most sustained example of the danger which ambitious and sexual women pose to English manhood and to English monarchy." (1997, p. 82) By the end of Cooke's first episode — after the containment and destruction of both Joan and Eleanor — Cooke uses Margaret's sexuality to demonstrate her particularly female transgressive threat to the patriarchal order of England. Susan Bassnett, in writing about sexuality and power in several key moments of the first tetralogy, highlights that in the plays "disorder and chaos in state affairs is mirrored by disorder in sexual relations." (1988, p. 189) Through the relationship of Margaret and Somerset,

Cooke literalises this mirror by alternating shots of the recently deposed Lord Protector of the Realm Humphrey Duke of Gloucester's murder, and a steamy *Game of Thrones* style sex scene between Margaret and Somerset.

Once again in the court — the intrinsically public space which has been both a place of joy (Margaret and Henry's wedding) and of sorrow (the trial and conviction of Eleanor) — Margaret makes her first pronouncement against Gloucester. The lighting invokes a kind of pathetic fallacy, as if a dark cloud has descended across the court. The movement of the conflicts of the state from the public to the domestic sphere are symbolised by Henry's speech after Gloucester's arrest, which begins in court, but then Cooke cuts to show Henry inside his chamber, privately speaking to himself. From his window Henry sees Gloucester being dragged to his cell, who drops to his knees, arms spread wide in a Christlike display. Robert Adger Law, in his work on the *Henry VI* plays and the chronicle sources, highlights how

historically, Dame Eleanor was arrested, tried, and punished for treason in 1441, five years before the dismissal of her husband. The placing of his wife's tragic fall so close to his own creates greater sympathy for the 'good Duke Humphrey.'

(1954, p. 21)

Cooke has furthered sympathy for "good Duke Humphrey" by heightening Eleanor's proximity to treason (replacing the conjuring of the play with a voodoo doll of the king). Humphrey's sin having been contained in Eleanor and destroyed by her body being engulfed into the raging mob, Cooke has enabled him to become an innocent, and Henry lists Gloucester's virtues as he is dragged to his cell, his face upturned to heaven. The sequence culminates with the cross from Henry's rosary centred as he prays over Gloucester's life.

Cooke contrasts this with the nearly empty court, where Margaret and the Lancastrian Lords (Somerset, Suffolk, and Winchester) plot against Humphrey. Plantagenet is separate from the petty plots, and through this separation is able to retain the status that has been building throughout Cooke's cycle of his being a proud family man, and eventually, like Humphrey, a Christ-like martyr. Just as Henry moved from the public space of the court to the privacy of his own chamber, Cooke shows Margaret descending from her

throne (where moments ago she addressed the full court) into the duplicitous quagmire of the lords below. However, when the moment comes for the plotters to confirm their plan, Margaret is literally cut out of the picture. Cooke and Power's adaptation adds an exclusionary "my lords" to Somerset's "Say but the word *my lords*, and I will be his priest" (01:36:56), and Margaret's confirmatory "And so say I" (3.2.279) is spoken by Jason Watkins' Suffolk. Throughout the confirmation of the plot, Cooke circles the camera around the conspirators with Margaret nowhere within its lens. As the three (white) men shake hands, Okonedo is made absent, the camera centring Somerset and framing him as de facto leader of the Lancastrian side. Margaret's power at this point in Cooke's cycle resides both in her body and in her ability to grant or deny access to it, as it is only when she bids the lords farewell and gives a suggestive look to Somerset that the camera notices her again. Margaret and Somerset are next seen in bed together, her rewarding him for his actions.

Cooke once again contrasts couples with each other, though this time it is only two pairs: Margaret and Somerset, and Humphrey's murderers. Cooke cuts back and forth between the murderers making their way to Humphrey's cell, walking through the rain and the coldly lit prison passageways, and Margaret and Somerset, who enter a warmly lit chamber and begin to kiss. Margaret, asserting the only power she currently has, over and in her body, grants Somerset access to her body for the first time on screen since his stolen kiss in France. Though it is clear that the affection and sexual attraction between the two is mutual, both Cooke's contrasting of their encounter with Humphrey's murder, and its structural position immediately after Somerset has led the plot to have him killed, give the sense that Margaret is both relinquishing some of the control she has over Somerset, and rewarding him for his good work. Showing the viewer Margaret's sexual encounter with Somerset also compounds Margaret's threat to the patriarchal order of the state, as female sexuality and "sexual promiscuity" threatens "the purity of [...] blood lines" (Howard & Rackin, 1997, p. 29). The particularly female nature of this threat to the state is foregrounded with the alternating of the love-making of Margaret and Somerset, and the murder of Humphrey.

Humphrey, dressed in only a yellowed smock — not unlike that of his disgraced wife Eleanor and the executed Joan — is lying flat on his back in his cell. His arms to his side, palms upward, head turned in profile, there is

something Christlike in the image. He tosses and turns in his sleep, and as he does so it is possible to see bruising around his temples, perhaps a crown of thorns allusion (which Cooke later makes explicit with Plantagenet). Somerset, in his warmly lit chamber, lies back on a luxuriant bed, his head on a pillow. He lifts his chin as Margaret leans down to kiss him, her hair loose and flowing over her shoulder as a sign of her now “unrestrained sexuality” (Synnott, 1987, p. 31). Michael Billington highlighted the moment of “the intercutting of [Somerset’s] orgasmic love-making with Henry’s queen and the tortured cries of the strangled Duke of Gloucester [as] a good example of sharp, intelligent editing.” (2016a) After the series of distinct, separate shots, Cooke brings the sound of the two scenes together as the noises of Humphrey’s beating and murder are joined by Margaret’s gasps of pleasure, literalising Bassnett’s theorised mirror of state and sex.

Through the alternating images of her and Somerset having sex as Gloucester is murdered, the cycle uses Margaret’s sexuality as a shorthand for her villainy. A female Nero, she fiddles as Rome burns. Howard and Rackin describe how the play *2 Henry VI* “associates her outspoken strength with heightened sexuality.” (1997, p. 72) In Cooke’s cycle, the point at which Margaret and Somerset’s sexual encounter is shown implies Margaret granting access to her body as a reward for Somerset organising the murder of Humphrey. Anna Kamaralli, whilst discussing how cycles and adaptations of the first tetralogy often revert to simplified symbolic presentations of Margaret, asks that although “Margaret is definitely shown as a sexual being, [...] does she use that sexuality to achieve her ends?” (2010, p. 179) Kamaralli’s conclusion is no. However, Cooke’s inclusion of Margaret rejecting Somerset’s kiss earlier in the episode places a greater emphasis on Margaret now relinquishing her control over her body whilst rewarding him with access to it.

The cycle brings Margaret and Somerset and the murder of Gloucester together for a final jarring time when the Lancastrian lords, along with their Yorkist counterparts, are made to confront the corpse of Humphrey (01:43:52). Cooke utilises the sense of place available to him with his filmic televisual style by bringing Margaret and the lords into Humphrey’s cell where he lies strangled on the floor. The stark contrast in spaces is something only really possible on screen, and these figures previously seen in open rooms with vaulted ceilings, grand floors, and elegant tapestries, now stand in a

claustrophobic and dirty cell, the gravity of what they have done pulling them down into the palace's prison. The body remaining on the floor (rather than having been moved out of the cell) shows that Humphrey remains in his death bed, whereas Margaret and Somerset were able to leave their lovers' bed. Even Margaret, the consummate player, is unable to fully hide her fear and revulsion as she enters the squalid room.

When in the cell, the two rival factions draw swords over the body, with Exeter holding the crown as arbiter in the middle, the real focus of their contention. Having granted Somerset access to her body, the power Margaret has embodied begins to dwindle, as when she attempts to scold Warwick (who has been a staunch pillar of law throughout Cooke's production), she is stopped abruptly by Plantagenet. Whereas he captured and burned Joan as the embodiment of France and female martial transgression, Somerset brought Margaret back to England, and with her parts of France were once again lost. Her control and power over Henry concerns Plantagenet — who has been separated from the plots to overthrow Eleanor and Humphrey, denoting him as a 'good' man — and during this moment in the cell, Cooke establishes that it is between Margaret and Plantagenet that the next major conflict will arise. As he cannot control and contain her body like he did with Joan, Margaret asserting power over it herself, Plantagenet attempts to contain her language instead, cutting off her speech. Once Plantagenet ultimately fails in this task in the second episode of Cooke's cycle, his sons continue his work, until Margaret becomes speechless at the murder of her son Prince Ned (*The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Henry VI Part II* 01:45:01).

Cooke shows that Plantagenet is correct to be concerned about Margaret's transgressive feminine power, as her control over Henry and her powers of performance and persuasion are brought to the fore at the end of the first episode. After Henry banishes Somerset for his suspected involvement in the murder of Gloucester, Margaret begs on her knees — a new tactic for this young queen — for Henry to "reverse thy doom", to which he replies "I do, Meg. I do for thee." (*The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Henry VI Part I* 01:47:35) Cooke shifts the camera's focus so it does not show Margaret's reaction to the decree, but rather centres Plantagenet and Warwick as Henry reverses his order to banish Somerset. In Cooke's cycle, it is this pronouncement that motivates Plantagenet to proclaim his intent to rule and to confront Henry.

Plantagenet has not been laying the foundations of his usurpation with the Cade rebellion, which has been removed from Cooke and Power's adaptation, an excision argued by O'Connor to be "a glaring casualty" (2016, p. 1). Plantagenet has also not participated in plots involving Eleanor and Gloucester, and has heeded Cecily's advice to be patient. Rather, the renegeing on the banishment of Somerset means Henry is disturbing the natural (patriarchal) order. It is not just Henry's reversing his proclamation that motivates Plantagenet's rebellion, but his allowing himself to be manipulated by a woman. Plantagenet is the hero at the end of Cooke's first episode, provoked into action by the perception of a great wrong at the hands of Margaret, and not by his own ambition.

Alison Findlay writes that in *2 Henry VI* "real tears are shed at the banishment of Suffolk in a passionate exchange that re-casts [Margaret] as [the] victim of a political match rather than simply a strategist" (2014, p. 251). Like Levine's analysis of Eleanor's dual role as both perpetrator and victim through her own ambition leading her to become entrapped by Hume and the lords, Margaret is both victor and victim of Suffolk's banishment in the play. Politically, through the murder of Gloucester, she has gained more power for herself and her husband, but personally, through Suffolk's banishment, she loses her love and part of her identity, and it is a key moment for her character and her development in the cycle. Just as Eleanor stabbing a voodoo doll rather than seeing Jourdain and the conjurers causes her to be solely a perpetrator who commits an act of violence against the king, the revoking of Somerset's banishment means Margaret does not become the victim at this point as Findlay argues, but rather solely a victor, able to manipulate her husband into letting her lover live. Cooke's cycle establishes a definitive reason for the rivalry between Margaret and Plantagenet, as Plantagenet's fear about and anger at Margaret's control over Henry is the catalyst for him declaring civil war. The adaptation does this, however, by restructuring and re-writing a moment crucial to Margaret's character development in the cycle, and using it instead as a catalyst for Plantagenet's narrative arc, the narrative of the Wars of the Roses and ultimately, Richard.

After an episode recap, which reiterates the reason for this war and bloodshed — Plantagenet attempting to restore order when Margaret subverts it through the manipulation of Henry — the second episode of Cooke's cycle

opens with a title card that reads "Five years later" (*The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Henry VI Part II* 00:00:56), swiftly condensing years of turmoil. Cooke shows the viewer the escalation of the previous episode's events by opening with a raging battle, each side carrying a flag of a red rose or a white, mirroring the opening of the first episode of the cycle, where a white horse jumps a hedge and the camera zooms in on red and white roses. In the opening of episode two, Cooke positions the camera as a soldier, looking through his visor with the sound of his breathing scoring the scene. He sees the worst parts of war: men killing each other, women trying to rescue their children, and looters stealing gold from the wrecked houses and dead bodies. Cooke captures the class disparity as he emphasises the different spaces Margaret and Henry and the nameless soldier inhabit: the relative safety of inside the palace walls and the horror of the battlefield. Cooke contrasts the national crisis of the civil war with the domestic crisis at the centre of it. The viewer sees Henry's face in extreme closeup as he is first told of Plantagenet's approaching army, but it is Margaret that he asks after. After being told that "she is with the Duke of Somerset within" (00:02:07), he closes his eyes in exasperation. The decision to not banish Somerset is one that appears to weigh heavily on him. In the cycle, not only does the revoking of Somerset's banishment serve as a catalyst for Plantagenet's rebellion, but as Somerset has survived these five years in the court (and not been decapitated by pirates), his and Margaret's relationship has only grown stronger.

Cooke ensures that the viewers are shown the points of conflict directly. Once Henry has closed his eyes, the camera cuts to show Margaret and Somerset. No longer hidden in the candlelit solitude of Somerset's chamber, the two are not necessarily fully on display, but also are not hidden, as they sit close together in front of a castle wall. Cooke's placement of the couple, taken together with Suffolk having just told Henry of their location, shows the viewer that their relationship, though still illicit, is certainly not secret. Not just sexual attraction, but love has blossomed between the two as Cooke centres the scene around their hands which they tenderly touch and kiss, repeating the focus on hands from their first encounter, and also foregrounding their now uninhibited access to each other's bodies.

Cooke crosses the barrier he has established in the opening shots of the domestic drama and the civil battles by cutting from the lovers' encounter on

the bench to Somerset now in battle. After being wounded by a literal stab to the back during “a street-to-street, guerilla-style skirmish” (O’Connor, 2016, p. 7), he is decapitated by Vernon, who, in Cooke’s cycle, is motivated to murder Somerset because of his affair with Margaret, which Vernon perceives to have had a detrimental effect on England. Vernon spits:

Thou kennel, puddle, sink, whose filth and dirt
Trouble the silver spring where England drinks;
Thy lips that kissed the Queen shall sweep the ground;

(00:06:18)

To Vernon, this illicit affair is the source of the civil strife. For Vernon, killing Somerset — and then confronting Margaret with the head to see the consequences of her actions — is a way to help quell the civil unrest whilst also enacting his revenge. In a subversion of the trope that has been established in the cycle so far, Vernon hopes to control Margaret through the containment and destruction of Somerset’s body.

Actively following Somerset, Margaret then also crosses the boundary from the safe inner domestic world to the battlefield (00:08:55). Yet Margaret’s appearance on the battlefield does not just evoke the same sense of the domestic and the national blending, but is reminiscent of the previous female warrior: Joan. Joan who also walked across battlegrounds after the battle was finished, and on finding who she was looking for, slew Talbot as he held the corpse of his dead son. In Cooke’s cycle, Margaret exiting the relative safety of inside the palace walls into the entrails of a battle shows her fulfilling her role as female warrior of France, and embodying the transgressive power of Joan.

Appearing in the hazy smoke of the battlefield, armour over her luxuriant dress, Cooke repeats the first person perspective shot of the soldier, but this time it is Margaret’s perspective the viewer is shown. Margaret’s crossing into the battlefield encapsulates how the two worlds are now irreversibly entangled. As Margaret, exhausted by her search, sits down, Cooke shows Vernon lying in wait behind a wall. As the camera moves into a closeup of Margaret’s face, tears welling in her eyes, suddenly a hand appears her above her, and the severed head of Somerset is dropped into her lap. Margaret has crossed the boundary that separates life inside the court, to life (and death) on

the battlefield by following Somerset, and she is punished for that transgression by Vernon who shows her what she was looking for. The dropping of the head also inverts Cooke's use of women as vessels of male sin and female transgression as Vernon attempts to contain Margaret's sexuality through his destruction of her male lover's body. The head rolls to the ground and Margaret gets on her hands and knees before it. Vernon's attempt to subdue Margaret's sexuality appears to work as she withholds her touch from her lover's head, Cooke continuing the focus on hands and touch (both granted and refused) that he has used for the lovers since their first meeting. The palms she kissed, the body she embraced now gone, there is only the untouched head remaining. Margaret does not connect her body to Somerset by holding his head, and she does not display her grief to the court. Rather Cooke shows a bereaved and frightened woman alone in the mud having left the safety of the court and trespassed irreversibly into the masculine realm of the battlefield.

Cooke's version of the head cradling scene (*2HVI*, 4.4) fits the narrative of his cycle, and furthers the story of the Wars of the Roses presented in it. Somerset is killed actively in battle by an angry Yorkist follower, and Margaret is punished both for her affair (which is symbolic of her control over her own body), and for her crossing the boundary from the domestic safety of the palace, to the masculine public sphere of the battlefield (like Joan before her). However, both the cutting of the scene and its new placement in the adaptation's restructure means that some of the ways in which the moment forms a vital part of Margaret's character development are altered. The moment in which Margaret cradles Suffolk's head — not just sees it, but holds it, loves it, cares for it for a significant amount of time — is one that many actors who play Margaret highlight as of great importance. As analysed in the first and second chapter of this study, both Peggy Ashcroft and Julia Foster have written or discussed in interviews how the moment in which Margaret enters a public space with the head of her lover was one of the most difficult and most important scenes for them to develop their character. Though the presence of Somerset's head is retained in Cooke's cycle, the differing contextual circumstances alters the impact of the moment for Margaret.

As Henry revoked Somerset's banishment, the romantic relationship between the queen and Somerset has been continuing throughout the five years specified in the title card, rather than their being torn apart by his banishment.

The affair is seemingly known by the court and even by Vernon, who has been relegated from a minor noble to a “jaded groom” (4.1.53). Making Margaret’s sexual impropriety public knowledge, Cooke places Margaret’s body, the one thing she had control over, at the centre of public discourse. The head being dropped into her lap by Vernon means there is no sense of her having been carrying it around for a long time with her grief propelling her onward. In the play of *2 Henry VI*, Henry asks Margaret “Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk’s death?” (4.4.20), the implication being that this is not the first time she has appeared carrying his head with her in a public display of her grief. However, Okonedo’s Margaret does not even touch it after it falls to the ground. The idea of the head is retained, and it is a dramatic and visually interesting moment, but it is one to further the narrative of Cooke and Power’s adaptation of the Wars of the Roses, which needs Somerset dead, and not one that fully allows Margaret to experience the grief that propels her forward in her own story. The reveal of Somerset’s head, though impactful in its own way, is played as a jump scare rather than a moment of mind bending grief for Margaret, as Vernon drops it into her lap with a loud musical sting.

Margaret’s moment of private grief is interrupted in Cooke’s cycle by the entrance of Henry. Margaret, like Eleanor, lures her husband to cross a boundary which will lead to his downfall, as Henry for the first time finds himself on the battlefield. He attempts to replace Somerset and his physical connection with Margaret by stepping over the head and kneeling down with her, stroking her cheek as Somerset did, and looking intently into her eyes. Cooke mirrors both the physical interaction of the married couple and the way in which it is captured by the camera, with the previous interactions of Margaret and Somerset. Sturridge’s Henry seems to be aware of the parallels as he tells her, almost embarrassedly, that “I fear me, love, if that I had been dead, / Thou wouldst not have mourn’d so much for me.” (2*HVI* 4.4.22-23) Yet Margaret does not reply. Her textual reply to Henry’s statement — “No, my love, I should not mourn, but die for thee” (24) — is another key moment highlighted by actors who have played Margaret, and directors and adaptors alike. It has even caused some to alter the text of Margaret’s reply and to question its veracity (such as John Barton’s additional dialogue in 1963). In Cooke’s cycle, the issue about whether or not Margaret is telling the truth in her reply to Henry is avoided by its complete excision rather than adding

additional dialogue or rewriting. Cooke has not foregrounded a duality of feeling in Okonedo's Margaret of loving both her husband and her lover, and for his narrative purpose, Margaret's love of Henry does not matter. What does, however, is that she decides resolutely to follow him off the battlefield, the two now wholly existent within the space of war.

As they leave for London, the camera drops to their feet, showing that they have just walked past the head of Somerset, still lying in the mud. Instead of exiting with the head in her arms, Margaret leaves it on the filthy ground. Though Okonedo's Margaret still moves forward through the production with a sense of grief driven revenge, by leaving the head on the ground she enacts the separation she now feels from both her lover's body, and the power she is losing over her own. The head being left also has the convenient practical implication that Vernon can pick it up again and take it back to the rest of the Yorkists, who throw it between themselves in order to humiliate Somerset further. Even in death, the parts of Somerset and Suffolk are conflated in Cooke and Power's adaptation.

Anna Kamaralli highlights a key issue of adapting the first tetralogy and restructuring the four plays into three.

The 'cycle' approach has a particularly significant impact on Margaret, who has a very different relationships to the characters around her in her second play from those in her third. For example, if the three *Henry VI* plays are reshaped into two then Margaret's adultery with Suffolk and grief at his death can occur in the same play as her defence of her husband's title and their son's birthright.

(2010, p. 174)

Kamaralli argues that adaptation is an issue almost unique to Margaret, as she is the only character who spans all four plays. By structurally placing the lovers' parting and Margaret's finding of Somerset's head at the beginning of Cooke's second episode, it means that these events occur in the same episode as Margaret's defence of her husband, defence of her son's birthright, and her leading of the Lancastrian army. Here the inconsistencies in Margaret's character begin to appear, like they did for Joan and Eleanor, as Cooke does not prioritise showing Margaret's change in attitude and relationships onscreen.

In this final moment between (the head of) Somerset and Margaret, Cooke effectively shows Margaret crossing the boundary from the domestic to the political, and becoming personally embroiled with the civil conflict, causing Henry to transgress this boundary after her. Throughout their onscreen relationship, Cooke shows Margaret both denying Somerset access to her body (their thwarted kiss after her marriage to Henry), and granting him access in exchange for his actions (their having sex after the plot to murder Humphrey is decided). Through their relationship the idea of women as vessels for both sin and transgression which must be contained and destroyed is inverted, as Vernon localises Margaret's sexuality in Somerset's body in the hopes that destroying it will save England from Margaret's sexual transgression. The last moments of their relationship show Margaret withdrawing her touch entirely, as after the head has been dropped in her lap she does not touch it again. Margaret's power over her body changes after this moment, and it becomes an instrument of violence as she tortures Plantagenet and leads armies. She then loses her autonomy when she is captured and defeated by the Yorkists at the end of the second episode.

Embodying Grief: Margaret and the Plantagenets

At the end of his first episode, Cooke foregrounds the fractured relationship between Margaret and Plantagenet, and how it is Margaret's sexual transgression and manipulation of Henry that causes civil war. Appalled by Henry's decision to revoke Somerset's banishment, Plantagenet leaves the palace, and Cooke reinforces the sense of his family unit being a strong and just counter to the House of Lancaster and its manipulating queen by showing Plantagenet retuning home. He calls to "Cecily" and "boys" (01:49:55) and once again Lucy Robinson's Cecily is there to greet and support her husband, who asks her "where are they?", "in there" (01:50:03) she replies. There is, in this closing sequence of the first episode, a female presence, yet Cecily exists as a tool by which to pass on the location of the sons, and a tool by which to have born sons to Plantagenet. Cecily, like Joan and Eleanor before her, is not just a device for Plantagenet (and other characters in the play). Her presence earlier in the cycle enables the House of York to be presented as a strong, united, and cohesive family when compared to the fractured Lancastrians, whose decay is

brought about by Margaret, whilst the cycle also defines Margaret and Cecily in opposition to each other.

Yet, as Howard and Rackin comment, in the earlier plays of the tetralogy “significantly, York is never represented as having either a mistress or a wife, but he does have sons, who support and underwrite his growing authority.” (1997, p. 78) In the early plays of the tetralogy, the gendered contrast is between the patriarchal Yorkists and the female led Lancastrians. Whereas Margaret suffers from the sin of female ambition, York too is ambitious. However, in Cooke’s cycle, Cecily and the cohesive family unit — in conjunction with excising Plantagenet from the plots of entrapment and murder — make Plantagenet not an ambitious man, but a righteous one. The introduction of Cecily Neville to the first episode of Cooke’s cycle, and in such a way that deemphasises her individuality, and emphasises her relationship to Plantagenet and paints him as a loving husband and father, may add another female presence to the cycle, but one that is there to serve the purpose of defining Plantagenet’s character, not her own.

At the end of the first episode of his cycle, Cooke begins to look forward. He shows Plantagenet interacting with each of his sons, both presenting him as the good father (young Edmund grins as his father playfully ruffles his hair), and emphasising what many viewers will have been looking forward to: Benedict Cumberbatch’s star turn as Richard. Whereas three of his sons are present in the house when he says their names, Richard is not. Plantagenet pauses (dramatically), the camera turning to look down a passageway as he calls “Richard!” (01:50:16) Richard looms into view, but the camera cannot see his face (though it has shown the faces of all the other sons), only his shadowy figure, hunched and limping in from the light. Rycroft analyses the use of light and shadow in Cooke’s cycle, and highlights that it often “equates dark deeds with darkness.” (Rycroft, 2020, p. 11) The boy Richard’s looming in from the darkness foreshadows Richard’s later dark deeds. At the same time, being shown the body but not the face, the shape but not the actor, demonstrates that this display is not about the boy Richard at all. This final shot is about the shadow of Richard, the expectation of him and the Shakespearean star who will play him in the next episode. Reviewer Peter Davies explicitly lamented the lack of Benedict Cumberbatch in the first episode, writing that by the end of it, “we were still awaiting the entrance of the superstar Benedict Cumberbatch”

(2016, pp. 39-40). In giving the episode's final shot to Richard, Cooke both looks forward to the development of the cycle and the next generation, and also gives the viewers reassurance that Cumberbatch is, in fact, coming.

In keeping with the filmic televisual style of the epic television drama, Cooke opens the second episode of his cycle with a recap of the major plot points of the first episode. The key players highlighted include Plantagenet, Henry, and Margaret. Plantagenet's honesty is contrasted with Margaret's duplicity, as shots of the wedding cut to Margaret and Somerset's sex scene. Margaret is contrasted to her own pious husband, whom she is leading astray, as she is shown dressed lavishly on the throne, whilst Henry is kneeling at the cross. Notably absent from this recap section are Joan and Eleanor, who each were at the centre of major plot points in the first episode. Their excision only highlights how, in the context of Cooke's cycle, they have fulfilled their purpose, and have been safely contained, not just in the context of the narrative, but structurally within Cooke's first episode. Cooke concludes the recap with the same shot of Plantagenet and his sons that closed the first episode, reinforcing the portrayal of Plantagenet as a righteous family man, reassuring the viewer that Cumberbatch will appear in this episode, and emphasising the growing presence of Richard, whose young figure lurches towards the camera as it fades to black.

The antagonistic relationship between Margaret and Plantagenet emphasised in Cooke's cycle comes to a climax when Margaret murders Plantagenet in the grounds of his own home. Cooke and Power's adaptation restructures the sequence of events surrounding Plantagenet's murder in a way that makes Margaret unequivocally the aggressor, and as such absolves Plantagenet of any wrong doing. Levine writes that, after he gives his oath "in Shakespeare's version of the events, York perjures himself in the very next scene by deciding to take the Crown by force before he learns of Margaret's military offensive." (1998, p. 91) In the play it is York's decision to renege on his oath that causes him to enter into the battle with Margaret both willingly and as an equal aggressor. In Cooke's cycle, however, Plantagenet resolutely refuses to break his oath.

Cooke shows Plantagenet and his family sitting down to dinner. In stark contrast to the House of Lancaster, where Henry has just usurped his own son's birthright, the House of York is presented as a cohesive family unit, led by a

man who has a strong sense of moral good. Despite Richard's attempts to convince Plantagenet to break his oath, he remains resolute. Adrian Dunbar's Plantagenet has no intention to go against his word, he is a true and honest man who follows the laws of the land, unlike Henry, whose decision to rescind his banishment of Somerset caused the outbreak of civil war. It is Margaret who transgresses patriarchal law by arriving at Plantagenet's house with an army and prepared to fight: she is the one who flies in the face of what is right and just. There is no doubt that Margaret is the aggressor in Cooke's cycle, and any sense of Plantagenet as equally responsible for the battle is excised, leaving Margaret as the sole perpetrator. The battle that ensues, the death of Edmund, the torture of Plantagenet and how, in Cooke's cycle, this is all the origin of Richard's later atrocities (where he reenacts his trauma by playing out the heinous acts he has witnessed), are all due to Margaret's female transgression. Plantagenet, however, is a man desperate to save his family — which Cooke frames all together in a window, looking out at the soldiers about to ransack their home — rather than a man who has just declared he will break his oath and commit treason of the highest order. Due to the control she has exerted over her own body, Margaret has not been contained or controlled by the men of the cycle, and as such her transgression has gone unchecked. The destruction of the good man Plantagenet is the result.

Cooke emphasises that Margaret's attack on Plantagenet is an act deplorable for her sex by having her invade a family dinner. In order to protect his sons, Plantagenet orders "Edward and George you both will stay with me, Richard and Edmund with thy mother fly" (00:28:11). Interestingly, Cooke and Power's adaptation alters which sons Plantagenet wants by his side (in the play of *3 Henry VI*, York requests that Richard and Edward stay with him to fight). By associating Richard with Edmund and Cecily, as opposed to Edward and George (whom the viewer has seen practicing their swordsmanship as young boys in the first episode), there is an implication of his fragility and youthfulness causing Plantagenet to think of him as needing protection. The change in the second person singular pronoun from the formal and respectful "you" for Edward and George, to the informal and intimate "thy", also demonstrates Plantagenet's attitude to Richard as both more deserving of affection and less deserving of respect. Ultimately, it shows Richard as vulnerable, and therefore feeds into the developmental narrative the adaptation

writes for Richard, and is the start of what is, essentially, his origin story, in which Cooke's cycle presents reasons for how and why Richard becomes a Machiavellian dictator. This occurs, however, in the same cycle where the female characters seem almost otherworldly due to the lack of any origin or contextual narrative provided for them.

Cooke localises the beginnings of Richard's backstory during the siege of his father's house (00:30:07). Hidden behind a wheel, Richard sees Clifford cruelly slit his younger brother Edmund's throat despite his desperate pleas. The camera centres Richard's reaction rather than Edmund's death throes, as he clasps his hand over his mouth to stop himself from crying out, his eyes bulge and fill with tears. The centring of Richard in Edmund's death does two things. Firstly, it provides a basis for Richard's later actions where he relives the trauma of his brother's death by killing Prince Ned in the same way. Secondly, it removes much of the actual bodily violence from the murder of Edmund itself, which enables it to be transplanted onto Margaret's later interaction with the corpse of the young boy, demonising her further.

Cooke associating Richard with Cecily as they flee from Margaret's invasion gives Cecily inconsistencies to her character for the sake of Richard's origin story and character development. In *Richard III*, the Duchess of York is a woman who tells Richard she wishes she had "strangl[ed] thee in her accursed womb" (4.4.138), and Richard blames her for his deformity, believing it to be because "love forswore me in my mother's womb" (3*HVI*, 3.2.153). However, the young Cecily (played by Lucy Robinson) is desperate to save her sons, and longs to protect them. A far cry from the woman who wishes she had murdered Richard in her womb, and from the cruel unloving woman Richard portrays her as. The inconsistencies for Cecily perhaps also arise because instead of the elderly Duchess of York appearing in the cycle for the first time in *Richard III* as the mirror for the old crone Margaret, and becoming "a crone-in-training [who] takes on Margaret's position" (Liebler & Shea, 2009, p. 94), the young Cecily of Cooke's early cycle is presented not as Margaret's "counterpart" (p. 79) but her opposite. She is the model of the perfect wife and mother, who flees from danger rather than creates it.

As Margaret charges into the scene on her black armoured horse, roaring "Plantagenet" (00:28:19) and then stalking through Plantagenet's grounds with a flaming torch in her hand, Cecily softly says "come son, Edmund"(00:28:21)

whilst pulling her youngest child by the hand, and flees. The contrast between Margaret and the good wife Cecily Neville is evident in their costuming. Cecily, last seen fleeing the battle on horseback, is dressed in Marian blue, her head covered in a white scarf with gold accents. Margaret, not running from war but actively pursuing it, is dressed all in black. Her hair is covered by a black headscarf that is held in place by her gold circlet crown. As opposed to the play of *3 Henry VI*, which, as Barbara Hodgdon highlights, “represents England’s civil war as a conflict between patrilineal and matrilineal power” (1991, p. 69), the introduction of Cecily Neville means Cooke’s cycle presents the conflict of the two houses as the law-abiding family versus the transgressive one. Similarly, this earlier, younger Cecily may contribute to a greater female presence in the extra-text of Cooke’s cycle, but this presence is not the interesting and complex mother who despises her own son due to both his actions and his physical deformity. Rather, she is a conduit by which to represent Plantagenet’s righteousness, and a signifier of the things Margaret should be, but is not. With Cecily having fled, the valiant men can now take on the army of an unnatural woman. Cooke emphasises Margaret disrupting the natural balance of the family through her un-feminine aggression. She walks into the room where the family of Plantagenet were just having dinner and sweeps the still warm food off the table, sending it crashing to the floor. Shots of soldiers clashing, a nameless woman being dragged screaming into a doorway (though she is being attacked, at least she is behaving as a woman should be rather than leading an army), and Clifford single mindedly looking for Plantagenet to enact his revenge, are intercut with Margaret finding an embroidered wall hanging of the York Rose, setting it alight, and watching it burn.

In Cooke’s cycle, Margaret’s transgressions of the rules of war are far greater than in the play of *3 Henry VI*. Her humiliation, and emasculation, of Plantagenet before his death is heightened by her forcing him to kneel in dung in front of his own burning house (00:34:47). It is not just a napkin stained with blood she confronts Plantagenet with, but the open necked corpse of his youngest boy Edmund, whom the viewers have previously seen smiling and playing with his brothers. A close up of Plantagenet becomes obscured by the slit throat and pallid face of Edmund’s corpse, less a *memento mori* than a *videbit mortem*.

In critical responses to *3 Henry VI*, Margaret's reaction to the death of Rutland is often considered a greater crime than the torture and killing of York, to the point where some write as if it is Margaret who murdered the child. Janet Adelman, in an endnote to her introduction to *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest*, writes that "given that Margaret wasn't even present at Rutland's death, the degree to which she is retroactively made responsible for that murder is astonishing." (1992, p. 240) Adelman is writing in reference to the characters of the play holding Margaret responsible for Rutland's death, but her point can be extended to include some critics writing about the tetralogy. For example, Kristin M. Smith and Marilyn L. Williamson, both of whom analyse the role of women in the first tetralogy, assign the blame for Rutland's murder to Margaret, either literally or figuratively. When analysing Margaret within the context of maternity and witchcraft, Smith discusses how Margaret's "murder of children" (2007, p. 152) aligns her with the satanic, and only has one reference to Clifford (the actual murderer) in her article: a quotation of Margaret's line "That valiant Clifford with his rapier's point" (1.4.81). Williamson argues that Margaret's taunting of York is morally worse (and more impactful on the audience) than Clifford's actions, as "the mother who exults in child killing dwarfs the son who kills a son to avenge a father." (1987, p. 52) According to Smith and Williamson, it is Margaret's womanhood and motherhood that makes her torture of York so cruel, and her womanhood that means that, even though she herself did not kill Rutland, the blame lies at her feet.

Nina S. Levine writes about how, in *Richard III*, the Yorkists revise history to portray Margaret as responsible for Rutland's death. Levine argues that

with their position now secure, the Yorkists fully engage in the legitimating politics of revisionist history, boldly rewriting the events Shakespeare staged in *3 Henry VI* to make Margaret, and not the avenging Clifford, bear responsibility for the death of Rutland, the schoolboy who is now remembered as a 'babe'.

(1998, p. 103)

It is this Yorkist revisionism that possibly drives the conclusions drawn by Smith and Williamson. Even when they write that Margaret did not kill Rutland

herself, there is still the sense in their arguments that she is the one responsible, due to her subversion of the roles of woman and mother. Cooke's cycle also seems to actively participate in this Yorkist revision of history.

The violence of the murder of Edmund occurs not when Clifford does the deed (as the camera is focussed on Richard's reaction), but when Margaret interacts with the corpse of the young boy. She does not produce a napkin pre-stained with blood, but, with a strange childlike action, rubs the clean white napkin in the slash of Edmund's open throat to soak it in his blood. When contemplating the impact of the scene in the play of *3 Henry VI*, Levine asks

why should the death of York, who has brought on his own fate in attempting to seize the Crown, seem more violent than Clifford's brutal stabbing of the innocent schoolboy Rutland in the previous scene? The effect depends in part, surely, on the contradiction between Margaret's actions and cultural expectations about women.

(1998, p. 90)

In Cooke's cycle, it is clear why the moment of Plantagenet's torture seems more violent than the killing of Edmund. Plantagenet himself has not "brought on his own fate" as he never reneged on his oath, therefore the sense that he is deserving of such a humiliating punishment is lessened, if not completely excised. Edmund's own death is not focussed on the stabbing (or throat slitting) of the young boy, but on the reaction of his older brother Richard who watches on in horror. Yet when Edmund's body is brought in front of Plantagenet, the camera lingers on the gaping wound, and Margaret worsens it with the daubing of the napkin. The violence of Edmund's death exists in Plantagenet's torture, and is enacted by Margaret herself.

Cooke's Margaret is a contradiction between the actions and expectations of women. Cooke makes this explicit by showing the viewers how women should behave, not just in the fleeing mother Cecily, but also in the captured, screaming, nameless woman who is briefly shown at the height of the fighting. There is a great deal of violence present in the moment when Margaret tortures Plantagenet on the dungheap, and even the violence committed against Edmund's body has been reserved for Margaret's desecration of his corpse with her napkin. The mock coronation of Plantagenet by Margaret is also violent.

Kate Aughterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson highlight Margaret's call for the crown as a way in she "draw[s] attention to her status as a performer and power-broker in calling for a crown to mock coronate Richard of York [...], a self-consciousness about the rhetorical performance of physical and cultural power" (Aughterson & Ferguson, 2020, p. 235) In Cooke's cycle, however, there is a different layer to Margaret's performance of power, as Plantagenet is already openly grieving. Okonedo's Margaret calling for the crown to perform the mock coronation is less a humiliating tactic to elicit a reaction, or even to assert her dominance over the weeping man kneeling in dung, but seems truly twisted and maniacal. She is irrational, emotionally driven, and is enacting these cruelties for their own sake rather than to punish Plantagenet for breaking his oath. In Cooke's cycle, this is the end result of autonomous female power.

The righteous man Plantagenet — who did not go back on his word, and who led his family both in peace and war with honour and dignity — is deified by Cooke when Margaret places a literal crown of thorns on his head. His arms outstretched as in the crucifixion, Margaret pushes the crown of thorns into Plantagenet's temples and blood pours down his face. Though not the literal stigmata of Joan, the allusions to Christ are clear, and Cooke physicalises the image of (the textual) Somerset's threats (*1HVI*, 2.4.61) as the red of his blood dyes the white roses of the House of York red. Like Humphrey before him — who was granted the status of Christlike innocent as his sins were contained and then destroyed in the body of his wife Eleanor — Cooke figures Plantagenet as Jesus, and Margaret, with her cackling henchmen, as the Roman soldiers who mocked him with the title King of the Jews on the way to his crucifixion. Margaret's position as the enemy to Christ is furthered by the camera viewing her from below with the fire (hell fire?) licking over the top of Plantagenet's burning house, her face determined, her jaw tense and her lips snarled as she pushes the crown further onto his head and thrusts the napkin stained with Edmund's fresh blood into his mouth. Rycroft identifies how the

black head covering, divest[s] her of what early moderns thought of as the 'ornament' of femininity, and arguably duplicating her skin tone through fabric in ways suggestive of Ian Smith's work on the production of race in early modern performance.

(2020, p. 11)

The image is both suggestive of early modern performance practices, and reminiscent of the First Crusade, with Margaret figured as the infidel Muslim Turk, and therefore the enemy to the white Christ-like figure of Plantagenet. His blood streams from his thorn-crowned head and meets the blood of his son daubed on his cheeks and stuffed into his mouth. It is on this image that Margaret declares “now looks he like a king!” (3HVI, 1.4.96) He does look like a king: the King of Kings, and Margaret has been figured in opposition to him.

The Christian allusions of Plantagenet’s torture in Cooke’s cycle do not just align him with Humphrey, but with Joan. The figuring of Plantagenet as Christ recalls Joan, who prayed to the Virgin and stigmata appeared on her hands. It is Plantagenet himself who captured her as she proffered the stigmata towards him as a sign of her own innocence. Cooke also links the two figures through an all consuming fire. For Joan it engulfed her body, which was figured as France itself. For Plantagenet, he watches his house burn in front of his very eyes, his house which represents patriarchal law in England. Levine writes that there is

a certain justice in York’s meeting his death at the hands of an aggressive woman. In both *1 and 2 Henry VI*, it is York who brings under control the subversive females who supposedly threaten England, first with his capture of Joan of Arc, and then with his arrest of the Duchess of Gloucester.

(1998, p. 91)

In Cooke’s cycle, there is not this sense of “justice” in Plantagenet’s death. His capture of Joan is presented as lawful, and he is pained to do it, and the adaptation actively excises his involvement in the entrapment of Eleanor. Instead, he is aligned both with the innocent Humphrey, and with Joan herself. Margaret’s gender subversion places Plantagenet in the feminine subject position similar to Joan’s, as she abuses his body as a representation of lawful patriarchal order. Her disregard of the laws of the land and rules of war place her outside of the social order, and as such Margaret subverts her and Plantagenet’s roles.

Through Plantagenet's cursing of Margaret, Cooke foregrounds Margaret's ability to corrupt the men who surround her. Somerset dies due to their affair, and Henry follows her out onto the battlefield. In front of his burning house, the corpse of his son before him, Plantagenet is unable to control his own rage and grief. Uncharacteristically, he does not adhere to the Christian position of "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34), and rather responds to Margaret's attacks with a vicious verbal curse of his own. He violently shakes off his crown of thorns, gasping in pain as more blood pours from his head. Plantagenet's shedding of the crown and the imparting of his curse signifies a shift in his family. If this is what happens when a "woman's general" (3HVI, 1.2.67), and in Cooke's cycle Margaret's actions are more perverse, twisted, and unjustifiably motivated than in the play, then he and his own sons will not adhere to the rule of law they abided by until Margaret (and her body) is under male control.

In the play of *3 Henry VI*, Margaret performs the torture of York with a "young prince standing silently beside the queen throughout this scene [which] further underscores the fact that the woman who takes pleasure from destroying another's family is herself a mother." (Levine, 1998, p. 91) Cooke, however, does not make Prince Ned a witness to his mother's actions. Perhaps facilitated by the relative ease of casting a child actor for a one off television appearance, as opposed to a long running theatre show, at this point in Cooke's cycle, Prince Ned is little more than a child. There is an implication that once Margaret storms out of her confrontation with Henry (00:25:54), she gathers the army and runs straight to the House of York, the young prince being left behind in the safety of Westminster. Cooke's decision to excise Prince Ned from the scene removes the clear visual reminder both, as Levine highlights, that Margaret is herself a mother as she enacts this torture, but also that she is doing this to protect her son's birthright. Cooke throughout his cycle has included visual markers, often extra-textual additions, to draw distinct connections between different political players. Here, however, the excision of Prince Ned acts in the opposite way, his absence evidence of Cooke drawing a greater distinction between Margaret's actions and her protection of her son's birthright.

That Prince Ned is not at the forefront of Margaret's mind as she executes Plantagenet becomes explicit in Cooke and Power's adaptation, as her

killing blow is accompanied by her spitting “and here’s to avenge beloved Somerset” (00:38:28). Whilst holding his chin, her face so close that she could kiss him, with a flash of determination Margaret plunges her sword into Plantagenet. She releases almost a sexually satisfied groan as she leans her body weight into him, and the gruesome sound of the sword being removed rings loudly over the scene. Again Cooke literalises Bassnett’s mirror of “disorder and chaos in state affairs [and] disorder in sexual relations” (1988, p. 189), as the murder of the righteous Plantagenet is born out of Margaret’s sexual transgression with Somerset and her lover’s vengeance. The rewriting of Margaret’s final line to Plantagenet alters her motivation from love and loyalty (tinged with perhaps self-preservation) to selfishly motivated revenge. The scene is not fraught with the passion of a mother protecting the rights of her child, but of a maddened and bitter lover.

Cooke’s version of the torture and murder of Plantagenet furthers the anger and the bitterness of Margaret in the play of *3 Henry VI*, and the scene itself is incredibly cruel and gruesome. The figuring of Plantagenet as Jesus and his connections to both Humphrey and Joan, the violence enacted on Edmund’s body, the excision of Prince Ned, and the altering of Margaret’s final line to Plantagenet, show the viewer the consequences of female bodily autonomy (and a refusal to be used as a device for men) in Cooke’s cycle. Instead, Margaret rejects the expectations of how women should behave in the world of Cooke’s cycle, both destroying Plantagenet’s house as a representation of patriarchal order, and causing Plantagenet to stray from the path of righteousness in his final cursing moments. Margaret’s actions set off a chain reaction throughout the rest of Cooke’s second episode that causes the sons of the House of York to attempt to regain control through their defeat, not of Henry, but of her. As they cannot control her body, they attempt to control her voice, and this is done both by the characters and the cycle itself.

Cooke utilised the public desire for big, realistic battle scenes — as demonstrated by the popularity of *Game of Thrones* — to produce a very visually impressive series of battles between the houses of York and Lancaster. The length and gruesome detail of these battle scenes led to Michael Billington lamenting that “the medical realism was impressive but, ultimately, a bit wearing.” (2016b) Margaret, unlike the deified Joan, fought alongside her soldiers, leading from the front. However, her rallying speech before the battle

Tewkesbury (5.4.1), which was filmed and is available on the DVD extras of the cycle, was cut from the broadcast version of Cooke's second episode. It creates a real life mirror with the scene after the battle where Margaret and Prince Ned are captured and Prince Ned is murdered, as the adaptation also removes Margaret's speech and language. It is her rejection of the patriarchal order, her control over her own body, and her ability and wont to speak that has caused the civil strife. The sons of Plantagenet have slowly been regaining control over both the country and Margaret, and her silencing is a tool by which they (and the cycle) demonstrate the returning rule of law, continuing the work Plantagenet began in the chamber after Humphrey's murder. Similarly to the murder of Edmund, Cooke focusses on Richard throughout the brothers' confrontation with Margaret and the murder of Prince Ned. Cooke's intention to show the overall arc of what makes Richard the Machiavellian dictator he later becomes causes moments that other cycles use to focus on Margaret (or even on other men), to become almost fixated on Richard.

Cooke emphasises Margaret's loss of control over her army, England, and her own fate, by having her captured in what is essentially a dumb show, the only sound that of men yelling (01:43:50). Cooke repeats the image of a woman walking through the dregs of a battle, first seen in Joan before the murder of Talbot, and then Margaret as she looks for Somerset, as Margaret staggers through the smoke, sword still drawn, before being dragged away by the Yorkist faction. Cooke visually represents the reassertion of patriarchal control through the foregrounding of a sense of place (as he has done throughout his cycle) with a closeup of King Edward sat at a desk in the middle of a woodland clearing. The court has been brought to the forest as, by winning the battle and the war, the House of York is able to restore order to an England that has been ravaged by a French woman moving outside of the law. There is a sense of retribution in the symbolic decapitation of Margaret in the presentation of her crown to King Edward by Richard, as it is a poetic mirror of Margaret's own mock crowning and then beheading of their father Plantagenet. Margaret, no longer in battle armour, her hair pulled back but loose and wild, is dragged in by common soldiers, reminiscent of the arrest of Eleanor. She looks up at bodies hanging from a tree, (a particularly uncomfortable image as Sophie Okonedo is the only black actor so far in the cycle), and is brought before Edward, who looks delighted with the finally captured woman.

Unable to control Margaret's body directly (even in her capture), King Edward asserts his newly won power by sentencing a soldier to death by hanging in front of Margaret. Yet when the soldier proclaims "God save King Henry" and "God save Queen Margaret" (01:45:17), it is Richard whose reaction is centred in the camera's frame. He spits out his wine and throws his goblet, outraged at the soldier's proclamation of loyalty. Richard's unpredictability means that even with the Yorkists back in power and a form of patriarchal order restored through their reassembling of the court in the woods, there is still a sense of unease precipitated by Cooke's focus on Richard. However, the Yorkists have been successful in their attempt to silence Margaret. Like Eleanor, she has moved to the other side of the courtroom table, and she is silent on the muddy ground rather than vocal on her ornate throne. The cycle furthers the silencing of Margaret both literally in the excision of the lines she has in the play, and the altering of her reaction to the murder of her son. In fact Margaret in this scene barely speaks at all. Having successfully stopped her voice, the murder of Prince Ned is an attempt to exert control over a proxy for Margaret's body, this time through the destruction of the son born of her body.

The insults directed at the sons of York, that in Jane Howell's BBC cycle (1983) riled up King Edward so greatly that he lost control and stabbed the Prince, in Cooke's cycle are focussed on Richard. Whilst Margaret has stood silent throughout the Prince's interaction with the Yorkists, it is after he insults Richard that fearfully she cries "Ned!" (01:46:37). It is only Richard who stabs Prince Ned in Cooke's version of the scene, as opposed to the play, where all three of the York brothers stab Margaret's son. The line "Take that, thou likeness of this railer here" (5.5.38) becomes just "Take thaaaaaaat" (01:46:55), Margaret's silence having made the insult of the "railer here" irrelevant, as Prince Ned's body is pierced with a squelch. Richard directs the murder of Prince Ned to Margaret, next to whom the camera is placed. The viewer therefore does not see her reaction, but is focussed on Richard, who performs the brutal murder with a manic glee. Finally, he slowly drags his dagger gruesomely across Prince Ned's throat, and this time (unlike with Edmund) the camera captures everything. In contrast to Howell, who centred Margaret in the camera lens, the action happening around her, Cooke removes Margaret from the moment itself, instead aligning the camera with her, and focusing its lens on Richard who performs the murder to her. The moment of Prince Ned's death is about Richard

reenacting his own trauma, and not about Margaret's reaction to the death of her son.

By having Richard slit Prince Ned's throat, Cooke mirrors Edmund's murder, where Cumberbatch's Richard witnessed his own brother's throat being cut. In doing so he gives Richard an origin story where his first grizzly murder is a replaying of his own trauma, intensified by Cooke's use of close-ups of both Richard's actions and reactions. Whereas Richard is granted this story, the women of Cooke's cycle are not. Both Joan and Eleanor have their narratives rewritten so that much of their own 'backstories' are excised, and their parts are altered (even throughout the first episode) to suit the Wars of the Roses narrative. The imbalance is shown through the prioritisation of the psychological origins of Benedict Cumberbatch's Richard over others figures in the play, especially Margaret. The performance of the throat slitting by Richard also establishes the approach of the cycle to adopting the Yorkist "revisionist history" (Levine, 1998, p. 103) that Margaret was Edmund's killer, rather than Clifford. Richard's slitting of Prince Ned's throat with direct eye contact with the off camera Margaret is an act of revenge with the mirrored action of who he views as responsible. Cooke prioritises Richard's trauma in this moment over Margaret's. Cooke, creating moments of intimacy and stillness within the chaotic action in a way that can be afforded on television, zooms in on Richard who tries to calm himself. The focus on Richard over everyone else is exemplified in Michael Billington's review of the second episode of Cooke's cycle, as he wrote, "chiefly what part two did was to whet the appetite for the next episode – in which we will see Cumberbatch's Richard reaching for the glorious gold." (2016b) During the murder of Prince Ned, though Margaret can be heard crying throughout, the camera centres Richard and foregrounds his trauma replaying the murder of his brother.

Margaret's language gone, she now only has her body through which to express her grief. In the entry on 'mother' in *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, Findlay writes that in the scene where Prince Edward is murdered in front of her, "Queen Margaret gives what is perhaps the most emotionally raw expression of maternal loss in Shakespeare." (2014, p. 287) The speeches in this scene not only allow Margaret a linguistic cathartic release over the death of her child, they also foreground her skill with language as she establishes some of the curses that come to fruition in *Richard III*. Howard and Rackin write that

“the denouement of Margaret’s stage existence is the transformation of her powerful sexuality and her Amazonian strength into the anger of an embittered, desexualised crone.” (1997, p. 98) In Cooke’s cycle, however, there is no anger, no bitterness in this moment. Kelly Newman O’Connor reviewed it as when Margaret “comes closest to breaking [as] Richard kills her son before her eyes; the loss of Edward pushes her toward madness.” (2016, pp. 7-8) This is madness and insanity, the stereotype of Mad Madge, rather than the anger and strength of Howard and Rackin’s feminist interpretation. Margaret’s inability to speak and mourn the murder of her son, caused both by the reinstatement of patriarchal control by the House of York, and by the cycle itself, transforms the outcome of this moment for her. The Yorkists and the cycle unable to control her body, ultimately control Margaret’s speech through driving her to a grief so extreme it steals her language, and it is this embodied grief that is often silent, that Margaret takes forward into the next episode: *Richard III*.

The moment of Prince Edward’s death is one that previous cycles have used to foreground the vocal female grief that becomes all-encompassing in *Richard III*. For example, Adrian Noble’s *The Plantagenets* (1989) for the Royal Shakespeare Company emphasised female voices in the scene, as well as foregrounding Margaret’s pain over the York boys’ ambition. At the moment of Prince Edward’s death, Penny Downie ripped the chainmail from her head, her hair exploding in a messy tangle of grief. Hampton-Reeves and Rutter highlight explicitly how

the pain of losing her child interrupted the ambitions of the Yorkists. In a stage picture that recalled Talbot cradling his son, Margaret clung to her Edward and had to be dragged offstage. As the scene ended, the lights dimmed on the dead bodies of Tewkesbury, which started to chatter in indecipherable female voices.

(2009, p. 165)

Even after the grieving maternal figure of Margaret is gone, Noble ended the scene with the voices of women. Noble universalised Margaret’s grief and, her voice still ringing in the heads of the Yorkists, it became the dominating sound and emphasised the language of bereaved women. In the woodland clearing, Cooke shows a woman who has been silenced by the men who want to restore

(patriarchal) order. For Okonedo's Margaret in Cooke's cycle there is a quiet, seething insanity, not a curse or strength derived from language. Where Margaret's curses once lay, are the slow, focussed closeups of Richard, for whom the narrative has been restructured. Cooke foregrounds Richard's trauma in the reliving of his brother's murder through his murder of Prince Ned, and continues to centre him in the final episode of the cycle, *Richard III*.

Throughout Cooke's *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Richard III*, Margaret is used as a point of reflection for the other characters, and nobody more so than Richard. Rycroft argues that Cooke and Power's adaption, "foregrounds the role of Margaret, and hence the performance of Okonedo, even further than the original plays." (Rycroft, 2020, p. 11) Yet in the final episode of Cooke's cycle Okonedo's physical presence onscreen does not necessarily equate with an accentuation of Margaret's role. In the transformation of Margaret as a device and tool for the cycle, she becomes fragmented into two Margarets. One is herself, grieving mother and widow, and one is a mirror, a reflection of those who look at her, and this reflection ultimately becomes an extension of Richard himself. She is first seen in the recap at the start of the episode, where shots of her captured and then caged are interspersed with the progression of Richard's narrative. Her appearance in the episode proper comes later, however, and her body and physical presence are foregrounded as she is shown as a hiding, hunched, silent figure. A hood over her head, and dark hair hanging down, she would not look out of place in Japanese supernatural horror films *Ringu* (1998) or *Ju-On* (2002). It is a terrifying image, and quite an unexpected tonal shift from the, so far, highly realistic cycle.

The third episode of Cooke's cycle contrasts the claustrophobic confines of inside the castle walls to the freedom of the woods and the outdoors. Margaret's first appearance in the episode fits initially into the small, dark room next to the dying King Edward's chamber (00:21:33). Her presence hidden under clothes seems almost unnatural, and even more so when she actually reveals herself. Her hair is wild and grey, her face slightly lined, yet she has not aged in the same way that the Duchess of York has, where the 40 year old Lucy Robinson has become the 82 year old Judi Dench. Nor has she aged in the same way as Keeley Hawes' Queen Elizabeth, with the colour of her clothing becoming more muted, her face slightly more lined, her demeanour calmer and

more mature. Instead Margaret wears the same clothes she wore when she was captured, and a portrait of Prince Ned hangs from a string around her neck. Her unchanging costume and her being covered in a fine layer of dust suggests she has been present on the fringes of these domestic arguments for some time. In her performance, Okonedo's Margaret still has great control and command over her body, and during her interaction with the gathered Yorkists in her first appearance in the third episode of the cycle, she seems to be almost both ancient and newborn.

Cooke literalises Margaret as a mirror for both Richard and Elizabeth by having her don King Edward's crown and then find a small silver mirror in the corner of the chamber. As soon as she picks it up and marvels at her re-crowned reflection, it becomes part of her very being. She directs the word "curses" (1.3.195) into the mirror, and it seems to enact them for her. Margaret and the mirror are entwined, it becoming part of her body and her identity in this last episode of Cooke's cycle.

As she condemns the fate of Elizabeth's sons, Margaret holds the mirror up in Elizabeth's face, and Cooke cuts to show her reflection. Through Elizabeth's eyes, there are shown a few flashes of events to come: Prince Edward in the tower; a boat; Clarence being drowned; Prince Edward being smothered. These images are not just for the viewer, but for Elizabeth, for as the images cease, her reflected face is hard and her eyes cold. Similarly, when Margaret confronts Richard with the mirror, there is a shot of his face reflected which then becomes horses frothing at the mouth; his own body hewn down in battle; his beloved chess board toppling to the ground; a confrontational look to camera; corpses in a field; the young Henry Tudor; bodies hanging from a tree; the burning of the white rose; and finally, Richmond in battle armour. Margaret replaces the mirror with the portrait of Prince Ned that is hanging from her neck by a piece of string, performing the dual action of confronting the Yorkists with what they have done, and once again reflecting their fate back to them in a visual replacement of Margaret's textual parting curse from *3 Henry VI*: "So come to you and yours as to this prince." (5.5.82)

As if the action will set her curses in motion, Margaret places the mirror carefully on the floor and dashes her heel upon it. The mirror smashed, the tension is broken, and Margaret places the crown, handling it without much reverence, next to the mirror, and simply walks out of the door. Her mundane

exit from the scene contrasts with her unnatural entrance. The mirror seems both magical in the prophecies it shows, and yet is a physical thing that can be broken. Margaret herself is youthful and spritely, but her clothes are old and dust covered. She plays a dual role: both bitter old crone and ageless witch. Yet both of these roles are in service of Richard's narrative development. O'Conner writes of the moment Margaret uses Ned's portrait to confront the Yorkists, that it is "unnerving even Richard with her cackling prophecies" (2016, pp. 7-8), but Richard's ego is so fragile in Cooke's cycle that it is words and language that have consistently unnerved him. It is Prince Ned's insults that prompted Richard to slaughter him, and it is Margaret's curses in the mirror that haunt him — literally — throughout the rest of Cooke's *Richard III*. Through her use of a seemingly magical prop, Cooke draws further connections between Margaret and the two previously vanquished women: Joan and Eleanor. Yet Margaret, unlike those women, will live on, not just to see her enemy die, but to reflect his death back at him.

During the big events of Richard's rise to power and his demise, Margaret is present. Whether in reality, or just in Richard's mind, Cooke plays with the ambiguity of Margaret as both real old woman, and unnatural ageless witch. The mirror trope is repeated for the first time after Richard's coronation, as Cooke pans from Richard on the throne, to him sitting alone in his underground chamber (01:13:58). It is an image that the viewer has seen several times before, and as Michael Billington described, "the dominant image of the production is of Cumberbatch's index finger tapping a chessboard, as he works out how to remove the pieces that stand between him and the crown." (2016c) Yet this time, having reached the throne, Richard stops tapping, and instead picks up a dagger which gleams in the light from the grate above his head. As he lifts it up and his face comes into focus, so does another: Margaret's. She whispers his name, which echoes in the chamber, and he jumps, dropping the dagger to the table. Cooke pulls the camera back as Richard looks behind himself. There is no one else there, Margaret is now literally haunting him.

Margaret appears to Richard once more in his chamber (01:25:29), only moments before the "scene of mothers." (Loraux, 1998, p. 1) In this moment, the mirror that had been smashed on the ground after exacting her curses to the gathered Yorkists (00:26:36) has been magically reassembled, and it seems to have replaced Margaret herself in Richard's consciousness. The mirror and

Margaret are now interchangeable symbols of each other to Richard, both reflect his past crimes and traumas back to him. As he rifles through pieces of parchment in a state of panic, the mirror appears behind him, clutched in Margaret's hand. The camera moves to behind Richard, and the viewer is shown the panic on his face as he turns with a shout to look behind him — but of course Margaret is not there. Margaret has worked her way into Richard's consciousness, as an embodiment both of the wrong he has done, and the wrong that was done to him. It was Margaret who began to destroy his family, and her haunting presence in Richard's psyche seems to draw a connection between her attack on the House of York, and his continued destruction of his own family.

The women of Cooke's *Richard III* find their release, emotional and physical, in the woods outside of the castle walls. The Duchess of York and Elizabeth make their way to the graveside of their loved ones (01:25:48), hidden deep within a woodland enclave. However, the Duchess of York and Elizabeth are accompanied by a male attendant, a sign of Richard's unstoppable patriarchal grasp. Both women have their hair covered, the Duchess of York in a dark grey wool-like material, and Elizabeth in a lightweight dark veil Elizabeth's veiling is especially effective in showing her transformation from hopeful bride to grieving widow, the white of the bridal veil seen in the second episode of the cycle being replaced here by a dark and mournful grey. The graves the women approach are marked with two little wooden crosses, and on top of them lie palm fronds, the biblical allusions of both the crosses and the palm fronds emphasising the innocence of the two slaughtered children, and linking them to their grandfather, the Christlike Plantagenet.

Elizabeth and the Duchess of York mourn at the graveside, their grief causing both pain and rage as they hold each other. Elizabeth clings to the Duchess of York who growls "O, who hath any cause to mourn but we?" (4.4.34), and that question is answered when suddenly, a twig snaps, and the camera cuts to show a figure looming out of the woods. As Elizabeth conjured Margaret as King Edward lay dying, the Duchess of York seems to conjure her now as an agent of revenge. Okonedo's Margaret was defined in the early episodes of Cooke's cycle by her refusal to be controlled or contained by the men who want to maintain the patriarchal order, and here she allows herself to be conjured by the women who need her help. This sense of conjuration is

heightened by her appearance next to the graves of the young princes occurring moments after her apparition in Richard's chamber. Her clothes are tattered and torn, her hair is big, tangled, grey, and tied ineffectually over one shoulder. She looks sad and defeated, not angry or embittered — but certainly mad. The Margaret of Cooke's *Richard III* is so distinct and separate from the Margaret of the rest of his cycle that there is a sense of insanity connected to the part that does not stem from her earlier character. In this scene of mothers, Margaret's entrance reads as that of a disheveled and potentially mad witch woman emerging from the woods, with the majority of her language replaced with these coded signifiers, especially her wild hair.

Cooke foregrounds the unnaturalness of Margaret, both in the sense of being otherworldly and in the sense of her actions, through showing her not just with the mourning mothers, but alongside the graves of children. Elizabeth Harper writes that Margaret's

lingering presence, like an angel of death, is symptomatic of the aura of vengeance and bloody ambition that characterizes the tetralogy as a whole, an aura most powerfully expressed through the killing of children.

(2017, p. 200)

By placing the scene of mothers at the site of the princes' graves, and by having Margaret appear out of the woods as if conjured, Margaret's otherworldly presence and "collusion in child-killing" (2017, p. 200) is foregrounded. Similarly Cooke and Power's adaptation alters the Duchess of York's line "I had a Rutland too; thou holp'st to kill him" (4.4.45), to "I had an Edmund too, and thou didst kill him" (01:28:42), furthering the Yorkist "revisionist history" (Levine, 1998, p. 103) established through the literal demonising of Margaret during the torture of Plantagenet. The violence committed to Edmund's corpse was transposed onto Margaret, and now the Duchess of York has the opportunity to accuse her directly. The Duchess of York, in the adaptation's, restructuring, has been repeatedly shown as a the model of the good wife and mother in the earlier parts of the cycle, in this last episode is played by national treasure Dame Judi Dench. It is also the powerful Judi Dench as the Duchess of York who begins to bridge the gap between the three women. She is the one to

both physically close their distance as well as the emotional gap. Her first olive branch hangs in the air as she plainly tells Margaret “God witness with me I have wept for thee” (01:28:59). Another slight alteration from the play’s line (“God witness with me, I have wept for thine” (4.4.60), referring to Margaret’s ‘woes’) affords the Duchess of York a particular level of compassion that is not wholly evident in the play. However, it demonstrates that in Cooke’s cycle, it is Dench’s Duchess of York — wife of the Christlike Plantagenet; grandmother of the slaughtered innocent children; and model of the good wife and mother — who is offering compassion, perhaps even forgiveness. The women of the House of York begin to effect Margaret, whose reason for both revenge becomes “Clarence, Hastings, Rivers, Grey, and Anne / Untimely smother’d in their dusky graves.” (01:29:23) This refiguring of Margaret’s speech places a further emphasis on the plight of the Yorkists, and makes it seem that Margaret does not want revenge against them all, but rather Richard is her sole focus. Elizabeth and the Duchess of York’s almost conjuring of Margaret out of the woods shows how Margaret has ultimately become a device herself: to help end the Yorkist scourge.

The narrative thread of women as otherworldly and witchlike that the cycle has drawn comes to a climax at the end of the scene of mothers, as the three women come together and hold each others’ hands in an image that could easily be the witches on the heath in *Macbeth*. When female characters transgress, there is a sense that these transgressions and powerful women are more acceptable to an audience when presented as witches, their power being derived from something otherworldly rather than from themselves. The tetralogy itself acknowledges this when Joan says to the English nobles in *1 Henry VI* “You judge it straight a thing impossible / To compass wonders but by help of devils.” (5.3.47-48) The image of an acceptable form of female power, combined with the adaptation’s restructuring causing inconsistencies in female characters which renders them otherworldly, culminates with Margaret closing her eyes, and lifting her head up to the heavens: relieved and grateful to be now in the company of women.

In Cooke’s cycle, it is the female characters who are inherently linked to the body, both as a means of representation and containment, and, as Susan Bordo writes, “the body is located [...] on the nature side of a nature/culture divide.” (2003, p. 33) It is a logical, then, for the three united women to intercept

Richard as he attempts to cross that divide, and to stop his train in the woods (01:35:51). While the play has Margaret exit before Richard arrives, Cooke keeps her with the women, an added presence in the scene that is an amalgamation of her authoritative role in the scene of mothers, and her literal haunting of Richard's psyche. She stands silently behind Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, her eyes locked on Richard throughout the confrontation. Her silent presence again raises the question of whether or not she is actually there, and yet the sense of who has conjured up her presence is also called into question. For Richard she is the dreaded mirror of his misdeeds, for the Duchess of York and Elizabeth, she is Nemesis enacting revenge.

Margaret continues to be an embodied (but silent) representation of Richard's psyche and the female House of York's revenge throughout the rest of Cooke's *Richard III*, and her role as both is most apparent when the cycle uses her as a device through which to figure Richard's nightmare before the Battle of Bosworth Field (01:49:30). In staged productions of *Richard III*, there is less of a question as to whether or not the ghosts that appear to Richard are imagined than in Cooke's televised film. Partially this is due to the actors who played the characters returning to the stage in front of the audience, their physical presence implying something more than an individual's dream. Similarly, if the second part of the ghost visitation scene is retained, it is not just Richard who receives a ghostly visitation, but Richmond as well, at which point the idea of a shared lucid dream is as improbable as a haunting. However, in Cooke's cycle, it is only Richard who is visited, and the filmic effects create a dreamlike quality that does cause the viewer to question whether the ghosts are a guilt-induced nightmare. This is also heightened through the strong sense of place, not just in the relocation from Richard's tent to various locations within the castle (which television as a medium lends itself to), but also the sense of being inside Richard's head.

This duality of place presented by Cooke begins with Richard in bed, where he suddenly wakes to see Margaret's figure appear out of the darkness with the mirror in her hand. As she stands silently, Richard looks into the mirror: but it is not his own face he sees there. Rather it is the ghostly green floating head of Henry. Margaret proceeds to lead Richard through the castle of his conscience, at every turn there is a new walking corpse. Margaret then stands in front of an army of ghosts, again holding up her mirror to him.

Richard realises he can't see his reflection, there is nothing but a dark void. The ghosts begin to laugh as he flails and panics before waking up in his tent. There is a duality to Margaret's presence in Richard's mind. As she leads him through the castle to face the ghostly figures, Margaret is both an avenging witch who has forced herself into Richard's psyche, and is an embodied representation for Richard of his own misdeeds.

Unlike the claustrophobic domestic-scale battles of the second episode of Cooke's cycle, the Battle of Bosworth Field in the third episode shows the extent to which the familial argument has brought national destruction. The camera swoops across rain soaked fields, soldiers covered in equal parts mud and blood. Cooke — again utilising the capabilities of television — shows a Richard who is bereft when he falls from his horse, his physical reliance on his mount being greatly pronounced. Once stuck down in the mud, he is physically of no real match for Luke Treadaway's Richmond. Psychologically however, Richard meets his final match in Margaret who appears, mirror in hand, over Richmond's shoulder (02:01:21). Richard begins to die on the ground, the spear pinning him down like an entomologist's specimen. The camera shot suddenly reverses, and it becomes clear that the viewers are watching Richard's final moments through Margaret's mirror, and perhaps they always were. Cooke cuts to show the scene from above, and the viewer sees a circle of soldiers around the corpse of Richard and the victorious Richmond. Margaret is not there. The version of Margaret that has been holding the mirror to Richard throughout Cooke's *Richard III* has died with him.

With the eponymous villain dead, and the cycle not just of the second series but of the entire BBC *Hollow Crown* project drawing to a close, Cooke returns to the pomp and circumstance of a wedding and coronation (02:04:30), first seen in the wedding of Henry and Margaret in the opening episode. The colours are a luxurious combination of gold, red, and cream silks which greatly contrast with the black and greys that have dominated Cooke's *Richard III*. Richmond's "O, now, let Richmond and Elizabeth, / The true succeeders of each royal house," (5.5.30) is embodied, as the camera pans to show the crown sitting on the (very) young Elizabeth's head, and when Richmond holds out his hand to her, she rises and takes it. Keeley Hawes' now old Queen Elizabeth stands next to the new queen Elizabeth's throne. Hawes' Elizabeth does not look particularly happy, though it is impossible to tell whether this is fear for

her young daughter, or anger *at* her as she becomes usurped, learning from Margaret's "I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune" (4.4.82). As Richmond and the new Queen Elizabeth, who like a frightened little girl is on the verge of tears, walk forward towards the camera, the solemn figure of the Old Queen Elizabeth becomes blurred in the background, engulfed into the crowd of onlookers in the court, she too becomes contained and controlled by the cycle as a representation of the time before peace, and she too has served her purpose.

Richmond and the young Elizabeth turn out toward the camera, staring down its lens and directly at the viewer. Kelly Newman O'Connor captures the richness of the image, describing how it is a "bright but solemn occasion, with the young couple posing like Van Eyck's 'Arnolfini' portrait" (2016, p. 9). Suddenly, this scene of medieval opulence cuts to the black chamber, Richard's war rooms where he planned his rise to power with his chess set, and where Margaret haunted his psyche. As the camera glides through, for a moment it settles on the chess king that is now lying on its side, defeated. The camera continues its trajectory, and seems to move through the wall of the chamber and up onto the battlefield. It comes into focus again on a man's back who, with others, is carrying bodies to a mass grave. The camera moves through the grave and climbs up the other side to see the back of an old woman (02:06:52). As she turns, the viewers can see it is Margaret, "seemingly lacking energy even to gloat over her fallen foe standing amid the mass graves." (O'Connor, 2016, p. 9) Her eyes tired and full of tears, she looks to the sky until they connect with the camera, which continues to fly up to reveal hundreds, if not thousands of corpses on the battle field as the haunting music plays again. Rycroft demonstrates that this closing shot reinforces the racial barriers that have been drawn in Cooke's cycle.

Okonedo may be given the final shot in *The Wars of the Roses*, but this only reinforces the white uniformity of Henry VII's inauguration in the preceding scene, and the final images of an all-white court and a solitary Okonedo function as an unfortunate microcosm of the relationship between white and black actors in the production as a whole.

(Rycroft, 2020, p. 17)

Though Margaret is given this final moment of focussed screen time, the sweeping camera shot serves to exclude Margaret from the now peaceful, and white, court.

Tomas Elliot — discussing *The Hollow Crown* project as a whole and Shakespearean seriality — comments on the contrast of the court and the battlefield and what they represent, writing that

in direct contrast to the line of succession which has crowned King Henry VII, then, and which would mark the climactic moment in the linear progress of history, the final sequence of *The Wars of the Roses* closes up the series with our English dead.

(2018, p. 85)

Like the final shot of Julia Foster's Margaret atop a pile of corpses in Jane Howell's 1983 BBC cycle, Cooke uses the final moments of his cycle to place the emphasis on the human cost of war. This late change in focus seems out of keeping with the rest of Cooke's cycle, which both cuts and restructures the moments of the plays where the impact of war on the commoners is shown, such as the Cade rebellion (*2HVI*). However, Cooke's closing shot draws parallels in his cinematic piece of television, with classic films of civil war such as Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* and Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, which show dead and injured soldiers lying in rows on dusty ground. Margaret's presence at the end of Cooke's cycle does not feel triumphant like Foster in Howell's. Instead Okonedo is out in the cold with tears in her eyes whilst the new king and queen are being crowned, and she eventually becomes engulfed into the sea of corpses belonging to the other victims of this decades-long war. Despite her acting as the spirit of revenge, there is no room for transgressive women in the newly crowned Henry VII's court, and Margaret and what she represents, like the other women of Cooke's cycle, has been contained and engulfed.

Embodied Devices: Women in Cooke's Cycle

Throughout Cooke's cycle, female characters are used as devices, both by other characters and the adaptation. From Joan as the literal embodiment of France; to Eleanor as the transgressive and ambitious 'bad' wife and vessel of Humphrey's sin; Cecily the supportive and patient 'good' wife; and old and young Queen Elizabeth as the representation of the old and new regimes. Even Margaret, who throughout Cooke's cycle resisted being used as a tool or device by men due to her bodily autonomy, who even at points had male bodies destroyed as proxies for hers, ultimately also becomes a device in Cooke's cycle. In the third episode of his cycle, Margaret becomes the embodiment of Richard's psyche, reflecting his actions back at him, haunting him, and becoming the vessel by which the audience view him. As Rutter argues, Shakespeare on screen provides an opportunity to fill the cinematic world with a female extra-text (2007, p. 247). And yet, the female figures in Cooke's cycle are devices, tools to be used both by the characters and the adaptation to further the narrative of the Wars of the Roses, and specifically, Richard's rise to power.

Female characters in Cooke's cycle have some dramatic and cinematic moments, and yet Cooke and Power's adaptation often excises any form of contextual backstory, causing the women to appear almost supernatural or otherworldly. When these women have fulfilled their purpose, they are contained and engulfed by the cycle. Joan in fire; Eleanor in the mob; the Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth into the faceless nobles; and Margaret into the corpses on the battlefield. There may be a stronger presence of women in Cooke's cycle than in other cycles of the first tetralogy, but it is clear that in the world of Cooke's cycle, transgressive women must be contained.

This chapter explored how a Wars of the Roses narrative, driving towards and centred around a star player (Benedict Cumberbatch as Richard), marginalises Margaret and her theatrical mirrors, making their bodies something to be used by both characters in the cycle, and the adaptation itself. It explored how the cycle's adherence to the fashion for visually impactful, high intensity and realistic televisual fashions impacted the female characters in Cooke's cycle, who became representatives or embodiments of

something other than themselves (for example, Joan as France, or Eleanor as a vessel for Humphrey's sin), and then once they had served their purpose for the cycle they were engulfed (for Joan into fire, for Eleanor into the mob). Though Margaret's control over her body meant that she initially defied this fate, by Cooke's third episode, the narrative focus on Richard meant that Margaret too became a device: the embodiment of Richard's misdeeds and a reflection of his psyche. As such, she too was engulfed, this time into a field of corpses.

A key finding of the third chapter of this study is that a cycle which follows televisual fashions for heightened realism and bombastic visuals through a star driven narrative, marginalises Margaret and her theatrical mirrors, making their female bodies something to be used by both characters and the adaptation itself. The chapter built on the previous two chapters of this study by focussing its analysis of the body of Margaret through an interrogation of the televisual fashions Cooke's cycle adhered to, the mode of production and the form of Cooke and Power's adaptation, and the cultural moment the cycle was produced in (specifically the political unease of the Brexit referendum). The chapter draws these complex factors together to explore how they all impacted and shaped the body of Margaret in performance. The conclusion of this study, which follows this chapter, draws together these critical and analytical threads, outlining the way in which the three chapters of this study contribute to a wider analysis of the body of Margaret in performance of cycles of the first tetralogy.

Conclusion

This thesis is a critical examination of how Margaret's body is directly impacted by the cultural context, the televisual or theatrical contexts, and the mode of production of the cycle in which she exists. This analysis can also be extended to the bodies of her theatrical mirrors (Joan, Eleanor, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York) which, in the context of each cycle, reflects the way in which Margaret is presented. Each of the three chapters of this study contribute to the critical examination of the body of Margaret in performance in selected cycles by analysing how the cultural and theatrical or televisual contexts have affected the performance of Margaret; and exploring how these cycles, with differing cultural contexts and modes of production, have presented Margaret and her narrative development.

The three chapters of this study contribute to the central argument of the thesis by examining how the body of Margaret was presented in performance in the four selected cycles. Though each chapter explores all of the three key analytical threads of this study, each has a predominant emphasis on one. The first chapter examined two stage cycles produced either side of the sexual revolution in order to analyse the impact that a shift in cultural and performative conceptions of femininity and understanding of female sexuality had on the body of Margaret in performance. The second chapter explored how the mode of production of Jane Howell's full text BBC/Time-Life cycle and its hybrid television and theatre approach shaped the relationship between Margaret's body and the camera lens. The third chapter analysed the way in which the fashion for heightened realism, star players, and bombastic television caused Dominic Cooke's BBC cycle to marginalise, fragment, and, ultimately, silence Margaret. As a whole, the three chapters of this study form a detailed critical examination of how the body of Margaret is impacted by the complex external factors of the cultural contexts, the televisual or theatrical contexts, and the mode of production of each cycle in which she exists.

Both Dominic Cooke's (2016) and Jane Howell's (1983) BBC cycles culminated with shots of Margaret. Whereas Cooke showed Margaret exhausted and defeated, engulfed into the mass of faceless corpses strewn across the battlefield, Howell showed Margaret triumphant, sitting atop a pile of corpses, the camera lingering on their faces. To return to the analysis of photographs

from the first chapter, this conclusion examines three still images taken from the two BBC cycles analysed. Though Carol Chillington Rutter, in critiquing the use of performance photographs, argues a negative aspect is that “it freezes single moments as if they were frames edited out of film footage, uncannily [...] capturing theatre’s moving images and holding them in stasis” (2001, pp. 57-58), the analysis of still images — even taken from film — enables a close reading of suspended moments of action. Stills of the final shots of Cooke’s and Howell’s cycles can be examined as representative of how each cycle presents Margaret, and what she embodied for the productions. However they also serve as an example of how when Margaret is onstage in these final moments, she is an embodiment of four plays’ worth of character development. The position in which Margaret ends a cycle is the result of her journey within it, how she has been centred or marginalised, her relationships with other characters, and the extent to which she has had control over her own body and sexuality. All of these factors are influenced by cultural understandings of gender and female sexuality, and by theatrical and televisual conventions and innovations. Margaret’s role as widow and grieving mother at the end of *Richard III* is set in motion when she enters as the young maid at the end of *1 Henry VI*. That both BBC cycles chose to finish on an additional image of Margaret provides an opportunity to look back at performance interpretations of Margaret’s development.



9 *Richard III* (2016) Queen Margaret (Sophie Okonedo) on the battlefield



10 *Richard III* (2016) Queen Margaret engulfed into the corpses seen from high above the battlefield

After the camera deftly glides from the throne room, to Richard's (now empty) chamber, and out onto the battlefield, it settles on Sophie Okonedo as the old and tired Queen Margaret. She takes the camera into her confidence and makes direct eye contact with it and with the audience. Whereas the cycle denied her the many asides and direct addresses from earlier in the cycle, here she is afforded a silent, sad moment of connection (Figure 9). Cooke centres her in the camera lens, and her connection to the audience feels long overdue. Her hair grey, matted, and windswept, her clothes tattered and torn, Margaret's eternal witch-like youthfulness is gone. This is a woman who has lived throughout the horrors of the cycle, defying being used as a device or tool of the patriarchal English lords or the cycle itself until *Richard III*, which she moved through as both a grieving widow and mother, and an avenging witch-like representation of Richard's psyche. It is through her mirror that the viewers have watched Richard die, and it is through her haunting presence that Richard's atrocities have been recorded. In this moment on the battlefield, however, Margaret's body is no longer representative of Richard or reflective of the other women in the cycle who have each been contained. Yet even now, exhausted and weakened, Margaret's potential threat to the reconciled English court means she too must be contained. She stands outside on the battlefield and her moment of connection to the viewer is fleeting as the camera never stops moving and continues to fly upwards into the sky. As it does so, it reveals hundreds, if not thousands of corpses (Figure 10). Though for the first few seconds of the drone shot Margaret remains centred in the battlefield, there are soon too many bodies, too many dead for her to stand out. She is engulfed into the field of death, to be contained and controlled once and for all.



11 *Richard III* (1983) Queen Margaret (Julia Foster) holding the corpse of Richard (Ron Cooke)

Julia Foster as Margaret is also centred in the final shot of Jane Howell's 1983 BBC cycle. The camera fades from the triumphant Richmond's face, to a heap of corpses, and begins to move swiftly but with focus on the details of bodies and faces, around the heap. Actors from Howell's cycle can be seen in closeup, and are both individual bodies and part of this deathly pile. Only Margaret remains alive. But instead of being engulfed into the corpses with her body contained and controlled, she sits atop them, laughing maniacally as she cradles the shirtless corpse of Richard. Howell centres Margaret in the frame, but she does not make eye contact with the camera, as she has done throughout the cycle. Rather she is transfixed on Richard, alternating between looking at his face and throwing her head back with laughter. She revels in her triumph, and it is clear that she has won. Howell cuts from the closeup of Margaret to a wide shot, showing the entire heap of bodies and her on top of it. Light cascades on her, equal parts theatrical spotlight and divine glory crowning her.

Howell uses this last moment of her cycle to centre Margaret and show her as triumphant, as a victor after the decades of war and the loss of her lover, son, and husband. Cooke on the other hand, shows a Margaret defeated, almost a victim like the many other faceless corpses amongst which she stands. By examining these final lingering shots of Margaret, it is possible to see how each production presented Margaret, and the role she played in the narrative progression of the cycle. The final tableau of each cycle (Margaret on top of the heap, Margaret engulfed into the corpses) freezes a defining image of Margaret and the cycle as whole. Like production photographs (though, of course, the means of capturing a photograph and extracting a still moment from a film are different processes), stills from broadcast television provide a suspended moment in which the body can be read closely and analysed as to whether the body is foregrounded and centred, or contained and engulfed. As with the photographs of Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Dame Helen Mirren in the first chapter of this study, these still images from the two examined BBC cycles enable a close reading of the body of Margaret and the cycle as a whole. It is possible to see from the final shot of each cycle, which centred Margaret, and which marginalised her, in which she finished as the body on top, and in which her body was engulfed.

Through a detailed examination of the body of Margaret in performance, both onstage and onscreen, this critical study is a new performance history of

the plays of the first tetralogy. The close examination of four selected cycles with a focussed and detailed study of Margaret through the theoretical lens of the body has enabled an approach that foregrounds the presentation and representation of female characters in performance, both in the context of their cycle, and in the context of a wider performance history. This critical study of Margaret — and the other female characters of the first tetralogy who serve as her theatrical mirrors — through the lens of the body has enabled a female centred performance history that utilises the different types of theatrical and televisual evidence available to reconstruct and analyse performance, including archive photographs, first hand accounts, and broadcast film. As Rutter argues, “the body in play bears continuous meaning onstage, and always exceeds the playtext it inhabits” and the body becomes the “‘excessive’ performance text” (2001, p. xiii). Through analysing the body even when it is not speaking, it is possible to read and understand both the characters and the cycle, including when a performance has to be reconstructed from the archival remains (such as Terry Hands’ 1977 RSC cycle), or when characters have been adapted in such a way as to say little (as in Cooke’s 2016 BBC cycle).

Each of the three chapters of this project examined Margaret’s body in performance, and used it as a lens through which to analyse her character, the representation of other female characters in the cycle, and place that cycle within a wider context, both theatrical or televisual, and socio-political. Hair is an embodied representation of culture and femininity, and conveys meaning both in contemporary theatre and in early modern theatrical practice where certain styles of hair were used to denote grief, madness, and to symbolise being ravished. Through the study of hair as a representation of culture, femininity, and theatre in the first chapter, it was possible to produce a new performance history that focussed on the performances of Dame Peggy Ashcroft (1963) and Dame Helen Mirren (1977), their development through the cycles, and how their distinct performances were representative of changing attitudes to female sexuality in the twentieth century. Jane Howell, in her 1983 BBC cycle, centred Julia Foster as Margaret, both figuratively (in terms of allowing Margaret as a character to drive the narrative) and literally in the camera lens. The second chapter of this study explored how by centring Margaret’s body in key moments of the production, Howell created a cycle that allowed Margaret’s development to become a driving force of the narrative, and

resulted with her ending up, literally, as the body on top of the heap. In analysing Margaret and her mirrors (Joan, Eleanor, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York) through the lens of the body, the second chapter demonstrated how, in a cycle that necessitated (due to its part in the wider BBC/Time-Life project) use of the full text of the plays, it is the women of the first tetralogy who drive the narrative. Conversely Dominic Cooke's three part BBC cycle (2016), adapted by Cooke and Ben Power, marginalised Margaret and her mirrors. In the third chapter, the framework of reading the body of Margaret in performance revealed the impact of the adaptation on the women of the first tetralogy and how, in Cooke's cycle, women's bodies are used as representations of something else, often embodying negative aspects of women, men, and (in one case) a nation, that must be contained and destroyed. The nature of Cooke and Power's adaptation, the current trends in television, and the driving force of casting star actors, created a cycle in which Margaret's body — in stark contrast to Jane Howell's earlier BBC cycle — became engulfed into a field of corpses. Analysing Margaret and her theatrical mirrors in Cooke's cycle through the lens of the body enabled a close examination of the impact of adaptation on the female characters of the first tetralogy. This examination was not just an exploration of the loss of the women's language, but how their bodies become representative of things other than themselves, and how they are used by the cycle itself.

Though each taking a different approach to Margaret and her development through the different cycles, all three chapters are unified in their methodological framework of using the body as a site of analysis. This critical study explored how the body of a female actor on stage or screen can be read as a representation of gender, culture, and theatre history, and specifically, as a representation of narrative development. As such, this approach could further be applied to different cycles of history plays, such as the plays of the second tetralogy, or to theatrical seasons. For example, using hair as the lens through which to examine the Royal Shakespeare Company's 'Rome' season in 2017, which included an *Antony and Cleopatra* where Cleopatra (played by Josette Simon) wore multiple wigs throughout the production before finally removing her wig along with all of her costume to prepare herself for death. The study of centring or marginalising female bodies on film can be extended, both to other produced for film or television cycles and stand alone plays, but also to filmed live performance, utilising the work being done on the 'live' Shakespeare

broadcast currently being undertaken by scholars such as Pascale Aebischer (2020).

Through the study of the body of Margaret in four different cycles of the first tetralogy by two national institutions over a 50 year period, this critical study explored Margaret's development both through cycles and through history. It has examined how different cycles have presented her, and how this reflects prevailing ideas of femininity, how she is centred within a cycle's narrative development, or whether she is marginalised. Though focussed on Margaret, the project also has expanded to look at Margaret's theatrical mirrors, those figures who either reflect part of her identity back at her, or who are defined in opposition to her. The body onstage is a site of analysis which can be read to understand how a production presents and represents gender, culture, and, in the case of Margaret's four play character arc, narrative development. In this way, this critical study offers a feminist performance analysis of the embodiment of Margaret in selected British cycles of the first tetralogy.

Appendix

This appendix contains cast lists for the four cycles studied. These are not complete cast lists, but rather contain the names of the characters discussed in the study.

The format, particularly the distinguishing between adaptation or full text, is borrowed from Hampton-Reeves & Rutter (2009).

The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon and London, 1963-64

The Wars of the Roses: Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III

Director: Peter Hall, John Barton, and Clifford Williams

Adaptation: John Barton

Margaret Peggy Ashcroft

Henry VI David Warner

Suffolk William Squire

Joan / Anne Janet Suzman

The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon and London, 1977-78

Henry VI Parts One, Two, and Three

Director: Terry Hands

Full Text

Margaret Helen Mirren

Henry VI Alan Howard

Suffolk Peter McEnery

York Emrys James

Gloucester Graham Crowden

The British Broadcasting Company, 1983

Henry VI Parts I, II, III, and Richard III

Director: Jane Howell

Full Text

Margaret Julia Foster

Henry VI Peter Benson

Suffolk Paul Chapman

Joan Brenda Blethyn

Eleanor/Mistress Shore Anne Carrol

Elizabeth Rowena Cooper

The Duchess of York Annette Crosbie

York Bernard Hill

Richard Ron Cooke

Margery Jourdain Pat Kean

Gloucester David Burke

Edward Brian Protheroe

Clarence Paul Jessen

Prince Edward Nick Reding

The British Broadcasting Company, 2016

The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses: Henry VI Part 1, 2, and Richard III

Director: Dominic Cooke

Adaptation: Ben Power and Dominic Cooke

Margaret Sophie Okonedo
Henry VI Tom Sturridge
Somerset Ben Miles
Joan Laura Morgan
Eleanor Sally Hawkins
Elizabeth Keeley Hawes
Young Cecily Neville Lucy Robinson
The Duchess of York Judi Dench
Plantagenet Adrian Dunbar
Richard Benedict Cumberbatch
Gloucester Hugh Bonneville
Edward Geoffrey Streatfield
Clarence Sam Troughton
Ned Barney Harris

Bibliography

Bibliographical note

The bibliography is split into two sections. The first section is a list of the recordings or films of three of the key cycles studied. The second is a works cited.

All references to Shakespeare's plays are to the Arden Third Series edition, and these are listed under the respective editors.

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