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“THESE SIGNS FORERUN THE DEATH OR FALL OF KINGS”: RENEGOTIATING MASCULINITIES AND CENTRALITY IN SHAKESPEARE’S SECOND TETRALOGY THROUGH ADAPTATION, DIRECTION AND PERFORMANCE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Bath Spa University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Music and Performing Arts, Bath Spa University

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This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel on 9th May 2022. Should you have any concerns regarding ethical matters relating to this study, please contact the Research Support Office at Bath Spa University (researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk). All participants provided written informed consent prior to enrolment in the study and for any associated datasets to be utilised as presented within this thesis. Selected datasets created during this research are openly available from BathSPAdata with links within the thesis. The full underlying dataset is available on request from the author, C. J. Turner-McMullan. These datasets are not publicly available due to restrictions [e.g. they contain information that could compromise the privacy of research participants].

Abstract

‘Fall of Kings’, ‘Between the Armies’ and ‘The Breach’ were a series of adaptations that formed the practice-based elements of a project exploring and challenging contemporary representations of gendered power and repetitive narratives of hegemonic victory in post-1980’s performances of Shakespeare’s second tetralogy. ‘Fall of Kings’ is an adaptation of *Richard II*, staged at Burdall’s Yard, Bath in March 2018; ‘Between the Armies’ is adapted from *Henry IV Part 1* and *Henry IV Part 2* and performed at The Rondo Theatre, Bath in September 2018; and ‘The Breach’ is adapted from *Henry V*, performed at The Rondo Theatre, Bath in June 2019 before touring to The Cotswold Playhouse, Stroud and The Alma Tavern, Bristol in July 2019. The productions were developed by three professional companies, engaging public audiences through live performances in theatres across the South West.

The adapting and directing practices employed to stage the productions are informed by a sociological analysis of the plays, drawing on a number of theoretical studies that consider performance, gender and power from sociological or sociologically attuned perspectives. Foremost of these is Raewyn Connell’s masculinities, which informed decisions on how the texts would be cut, edited and approached in performance. In conjunction with Catherine Silvestone’s consideration of how trauma may be sustained through performance, Connell’s framework is applied in the reflection and analysis of the project’s practical elements, contributing to knowledge of how gendered power is held and enacted through practice, and the implications this may have for performance and performers. With this progression towards a trauma-informed and actor-centred approach to direction, the project later incorporates James C. Scott’s observations of hidden speech and action from and within social margins, which outline ways power might be claimed through the rejection of hegemony. In bringing together these considerations in practice, guided by the overarching framework of Connell’s masculinities, the project seeks to explore how adaptation and direction might intervene to disrupt, relocate or alter dynamics of power in rehearsal and performance processes.

Reflecting on the adaptation, direction and performance of ‘Fall of Kings’, ‘Between the Armies’ and ‘The Breach’, the study considers how these practices contributed to the disruption of narratives depicting gendered hegemony, complicity, subordination and

marginality in the performance of the second tetralogy. *Chapter 1* will introduce the approach to masculinities' practical applications in 'Fall of Kings', exploring how the introduction of a Narrator in the textual adaptation, and the use of physical performance techniques informed by Connell's concepts enabled a subversion of masculine-feminine dichotomies and gendered power. *Chapter 2* will examine the ways the re-embodiment of selected characters in 'Between the Armies' affected a displacement of the play's hegemonic masculinities and, in doing so, disrupted the representation of hegemonic victory in *Henry IV Part 1* and *2*. The chapter will discuss how Silverstone's exploration of performance as a site in which trauma can be both represented and sustained informed the reflection on white and heteropatriarchal hegemonies in 'Between the Armies', onstage and in rehearsal. Continuing with this line of enquiry in relation to Scott's concept of hidden transcripts of resistance, *Chapter 3* considers how approaches to performing class and gender in 'The Breach' contributed to disrupting working-class and feminine marginality, guided by the use of directorial understandings of gender. Referring to the productions as they are documented in the appendices, the thesis draws conclusions on how adaptation and direction might disrupt the centrality of Shakespeare's kings in the narratives and processes of working with the plays. In doing so, theatre and performance can intervene in the potentially violent functions of narrative, embodiment and performance context. Centrality may be refocused, remaining flexible and responsive to actor experiences of social power, feeling and identity.

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Introduction

In the heat of July 2019, four Queer women and non-binary actors stood onstage in the forty-eight-seat black-box auditorium of The Alma Tavern in Bristol. Drenched in sweat after two hours of quick changes and stage fights, actor Matilda Dickinson levelled her gaze at the audience and delivered a speech compiled of dialogue from the opening of *Henry VI Part 1*. 'Comets,' she urged, with a glance at the actors around her, 'importing change of times and states, / Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky / And with them scourge the bad revolting stars' (1.1.2-4). It seems strange, or perhaps strangely appropriate, that a study of masculinity should end with women, but as the following chapters will demonstrate, the intentional, critical exploration of masculinities and hegemony through the staging of the plays made possible a dramaturgical and, at times, physical decentring of Shakespeare's kings in the rehearsal room and in performance. The focus on monarchic masculine domination in these contexts made visible the public and private roles of the kings as epicentres of violence within the narratives and performance histories of the plays. Three adaptations sought to stage critical readings of the violent masculinities in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *Henry IV Part 2*, and *Henry V* by applying Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinities in the adaptation, direction and performance of the plays.

The following chapters will apply Connell's masculinities in an analysis of the second tetralogy, reflecting on how these interpretations were reached and developed through the plays' adaptation and staging in three self-contained productions with three companies of professional actors. 'Fall of Kings', an adaptation of *Richard II,* explored the gendered contradictions between representations of the characters that appeared in the text and onstage. Next, an adaptation that combined *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2*, titled 'Between the Armies', sought to interrogate the circulation of violence between male characters against a Queer pseudo-1980's backdrop. And 'The Breach', an adaptation of *Henry V*, situated the play's action in a modern-day East London apartment. Through this shift, the play's narrative, and the classism and rape culture implicated in the siege of Harfleur (3.3) and the "wooing scene" (5.2), were reframed through the gaze of its women and "common" men. Informed by Connell's concepts of hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalised masculinities, the adaptations placed the early modern plays and Medieval histories contained in them under the historical and cultural lens of contemporised settings. With this alignment, the gendered

performances, embodiments and codes of these respective time periods, locations and contexts were placed in dialogue with one another.

For each of the productions, I took on the roles of adaptor, director and producer, managing all aspects of logistical development, research and creative exploration. The actors were cast via open callouts to encourage a wide variation of backgrounds, training, identities and viewpoints within the research. Throughout the project, Apricity Theatre, the production company under which the adaptations were staged, developed a consistent following of returning audiences from LGBTQIA+ and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, many of whom were women between the ages of eighteen and thirty. Audience feedback gathered on the adaptations and other productions beyond the research suggested that the company's regular focus on themes of gender and intersectional socio-politics attracted these audiences to the shows. The gathering of audience data as part of Apricity's standard practice allowed each adaptation to respond to the last, prompting the revision or formalisation of aspects of the approach that could be seen to impact the productions or experiences of them. The relationships with audiences engaged through this extended collaboration with Apricity aided the adaptations' capacity to confidently and intentionally represent our interpretations, enabling the observation of their impacts through engagement with the individuals and groups the productions reached.

Throughout the project, masculinities allowed us to explore how performances of Shakespeare might work through issues of gender, sexuality, race and class while working to understand the dynamics and implications of these phenomena in contemporary theatre practice. Connell's theory points to the way power is constructed through practices that relate to gender and gendered power: performance and presentation (identity, sexuality, body image); political and personal responses to social pressures; the processes through which those pressures themselves are generated; the interactions and relationships between different social categories. By this mode of conceptualisation, gender is not a matter of man, woman, trans or non-binary but the activation of social control, or lack of it, through enactments of masculinity, femininity or Queerness. Such definitions have implications for the ways we might identify, analyse and represent gender or gendered power in dramatic performance. It is the work of this project to understand what these implications might be and how current practice might adjust to recognise, work with, or work beyond them.

Work with performance in theoretical as well as practical and creative terms is often loaded with tensions, involving navigating processes with artists who may not habitually engage with their practice from an academic standpoint, while building on established scholarship that often does not contain scope for comprehensive engagement with the practical implications of dramatic creation. By following the thread of these tensions rather than attempting to smooth them over, direction can be informed by theoretical research, and vice versa. In my work with masculinities, analyses of the plays through the applied lens of Connell's theory informed decisions around the themes on which the adapted playtexts would focus, providing a foundation for practical engagement with these outcomes. From this process other forms of material, practical and theoretical outputs arise in the shape of performance, practice, and reflections on the processes in which all of this plays a role. The interdisciplinary nature of this approach often jars with the accepted methodologies of isolated theoretical or practice-based work. Yet these convergences and, at times, incongruities, provoke new practices that make the working-through of complexities that arise possible.

The following reflections detail the adapting and directing practices that arose from this experimentation with masculinities and other applied sociologies, forming readings of dramatic and performative power in and into the second tetralogy. This introduction will detail the key critical underpinnings of this approach, beginning with how masculinities, as a framework for understanding social practice, is considered in relation to Judith Butler's theories of gender performativity, bodily plurality and presencing. It will explore how the plurality essential to these theories may be of use in theatre direction, observing how the project also responded practically to Catherine Silverstone's indications of how gendered trauma may be sustained, or maintained, through performance and performance practice. Linking this to how past feminist scholarship has challenged traumatic processes in the analysis of Shakespeare's women onstage, it will propose that the same might be done in approaches to staging masculinity. The work of practice-oriented theorists such as James C. Bulman, Margaret Jane Kidnie and Susan Bennett informs this discussion, linking practical issues of Shakespeare's staging, aesthetics, and text-voice performance to a wider discourse of ideological transmission.

Leading to a discussion of how sociological approaches to dramaturgy (such as those informed by masculinities) might provide the foundation for actor-centred and

trauma-informed direction, I will discuss how choosing alternative titles for the adaptations created space (literally and figuratively) for new processes of reinvention to arise in rehearsals. Bennett's contemplation of 'the gaps and excesses' formed through Shakespeare's reproduction shows how adaptation might intervene in other ways to create tensions between text, performance and reception (1996: 2). Such processes of intervention are exemplified in the practice and criticism of Bertolt Brecht, Charles Marotwitz, Djanet Sears, Max Webster, Adjoa Andoh and Lynette Linton, who's work informed my own approach to staging the adaptations. A final section will outline the contents of the chapters, including the key points of thematic and practical exploration. This final section will detail how this reflection on the project draws inspiration from empirical studies of theatre and performance by critics such as Carol Rutter and Harriet Walter to build a comprehensive set of observations of our work with the second tetralogy plays.

The second tetralogy begins chronologically with *Richard II*, following Richard's final years and deposition by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke, who will later become Henry IV. In late twentieth and early twenty-first century performance, the flaws in Richard's kingship have come to be characterised by physical and emotional weakness, juxtaposed with Bolingbroke's hypermasculine warriorhood and appearing to justify Richard's downfall as a realignment of heteronormative patriarchal power. The conflict bridges the private familial relationships and public courtly lives of both monarchs, continuing throughout *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2* with the introduction of Henry IV's rebellious son and heir, Prince Hal. In *Henry IV Part 1*, Harry 'Hotspur' Percy, the son of Bolingbroke's former ally Lord Northumberland, is the glorious warrior foil to Hal's drunken disgrace. The mirroring of the two sons establishes a dichotomy between masculine and feminine acquisitions of power, sexuality, and inherited manhood, continued through Hal's redemption arc in *Part 2*. Throughout the two parts, the necessity of violence in attaining and maintaining masculine dominance is repeatedly reinforced; Hal must kill Hotspur, defeat Northumberland's army, and reject the promiscuity of his companions in Eastcheap before he is crowned Henry V, a demonstration of physical and spiritual strength, and his commitment to the patriarchal social order. In *Henry V* these dialogues are reiterated in Henry's conquest for the lands to which he lays claim in France, and for Princess Katherine, the 'capital demand' in his negotiations following England's victory (5.2.96). The masculinisation of England and the English central to the performance of gender in *Henry V*, and their domination of a feminised foreign nation,

attach mythopoeticised notions of manhood and martial identity to these acts of violence and sexual violation, framed within a narrative of nationalistic triumph.

Read as a cycle, the violence, sexuality and hypermasculine domination central to representations of gender and leadership in the second tetralogy demonstrate a rhetoric wherein a masculine ideal that embodies and willingly participates in culturally condoned acts of brutality is hegemonised and instrumentalised for the maintenance of nationalistic, white supremacist, heteronormative patriarchy. The early modern ideologies and politics through which the Medieval chivalric traditions in the plays are interpreted and represented continue to operate through this rhetoric in contemporary performances of the texts, which the adaptations would attempt to rework. The relationships and interplays between cousins, fathers, sons and brothers in arms make the plays ready sites for the exploration of manhood, masculinities and masculine relationships that extend beyond performance, as a naturalised location of violent male expression, to the rehearsal rooms and theatre spaces through which they are staged. As the following chapters will demonstrate, adaptation and direction that connects to the relational nature of these interplays, to the contexts, bodies and narratives through which they can be framed, can deepen their subversive and disruptive power in the performance of gender and gendered power in the plays.

As an entry-point to the study of gender in the project, Connell's masculinities offers a way of conceptualising configurations of power, and terminology that enables their identification and naming in the analysis of the texts and their performance. Integrated in the adaptations' development with a range of approaches that incorporated textual analysis, performance and reception theory, exercises in voice and speech, and embodied characterisation, masculinities provoked intersectional observations of the plays, and how they might be activated through adaptation, as components in wider spheres of relation and practice. In conjunction with Connell, the project draws on other resources that can be seen to engage with performance and performative gender practice through a sociological lens. Informing the project's gradual motion toward a trauma-informed practice surrounding the representation of masculinity, violence and marginality in Shakespeare, Catherine Silverstone's *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance* (2011) offers an objective outlook on how casting practice, rehearsal activities, production design and directorial power may be (unintentionally) wielded with positive or harmful outcomes. In conjunction with one another, Silverstone considers the personally and culturally traumatic

implications of political Shakespeares. Her observations of instances in the creation and staging of past productions and adaptations offered a way of analysing how different forms of embodied and disembodied power can be passed, appropriated or withheld in dramatic processes. Posed through these analyses, Silverstone's suggestions have practical implications for theatrical approaches to Shakespeare, which the remainder of this introduction will explore.

Though an awareness of the historical, cultural and political significance of Shakespeare's canon, and within it the second tetralogy plays, remained an important underpinning of the adaptations, the project sought to focus on the social implications of working with the plays from adaptor, director and performer perspectives. Among the various directorial decisions that sought to decentralise Shakespeare's kings, the sociological approach to textual dramaturgy established this cultural awareness within the adaptations' narratives, providing a point of resistance that preceded actor engagement. The resulting focus on (socially) marginalised characters within the adaptations' structure and thematic focus premeditated a process of visually aligning the productions' casting, design and staging with this marginal locality. In doing so, the project forged a practice of re-centralisation that applied across narrative, practical exploration, staging and in the discourse surrounding our work as a company.

Practices of centralisation, however, do not exist in a vacuum and must instead form part of a wider project to make representations that may be occluded through currently accepted practice seen. In particular, adaptation that impacts narrative centrality in attempting to emphasise selected plot points, themes or perspectives often does so at the expense of subjects already present in the text; in order to make one thing central, something else must be displaced. At stake is the issue of difference produced when canonical texts are not reproduced in full. Yet, even when this is so, the former versions and histories of the texts remain intact. Adaptation cannot decisively erase what is (or once was) present but give rise to another dimension of the text that can resist but never fully escape cultural inscription. As my discussion of the "wooing scene" in *Henry V* in *Chapter 3* will examine, though the text itself may not be resistant to direction that seeks to alter it, the memory of its past versions remain an entity that must be negotiated with in order to bring its working in the present to light. James C. Scott's anthropological study of hidden transcripts among members of marginalised communities in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990) offers views of

clandestine modes of resistance to hegemonic power in individual and collective practices. Despite Scott's focus on real-world scenarios, the implications of autonomous action's capacity to undermine hierarchies may be a valuable resource in attempts to destabilise the enactment of power through performance and performance practice. In many of the instances he explores, agency is claimed through the rejection of dominance and dominant individuals. With the sociological approach to adaptation, direction and performance comes a rejection of fixed, monopolised and centralised focus or power. It is a move towards an actor-centred practice in which direction can respond to the needs of a company, instilling authority and allowing space, text and other elements of production to be shaped (preemptively and in the moment) by them, rather than the other way around.

Masculinities, authority and performance

Sociological perspectives, like Connell and Silverstone's, provide a plural and responsive view of the embodied and disembodied holders of power that may be represented, materially or semiotically, in performance. Originally published in 1995, *Masculinities* contributed to the growing field of study surrounding men and masculinity that emerged throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s 'in the wake of the Women's Liberation movement,' the history and subsequent legacy of which Connell discusses in her 'Introduction to the Second Edition' (2005: xii). Connell proposed a consideration of masculinity not as a singular characteristic, social role or viewpoint, but a plural framework of gendered practises, rejecting essentialist and positivist modes of sexual identification:

> Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of the demarcation in different societies and periods of history. Masculinity as an object of knowledge is always masculinity-in-relation.
>
> (Connell, 2005: 43-44)

With the applied lens of masculinities, performances of gender can be categorised into hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, and marginalised configurations of practice. Though non-linear, the arrangement of these categories as they are defined in *Masculinities* form a hierarchical model in which the hegemonic hold social (and often political or physical) power

over others. Through participation in the systems that sustain hegemonic ideals and ideologies, complicit masculinities are active in the subordination of others (of all genders) for whom these ideals are unattainable or undesirable. Intersecting with gender, hegemonic attitudes to sexuality, dis/ability, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity and national identity can determine the acceptance or marginalisation of individuals or groups within social frameworks, such as those formed in and represented through rehearsal and performance practice.

The plural view of embodied social meaning key to masculinities also plays an important role in performance. Judith Butler's theory of performativity, through which they posit that gender is constructed and disrupted through bodily presentation, underpinned the practical approach to staging the texts through textual adaptation, casting and aesthetic-thematic representation. First articulated in their lecture on *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Streets* (2011), Butler explores bodily presence and plurality as modes by which the freedom to exist, and to appear, can be shaped. They suggest that the creation of 'space of appearance' through which these rights are exercised requires 'the plurality that brings the space of appearance into being' (2011: 12). To appear, the body must exist alongside another subject to which it can appear. It is by these others that the body is made to mean, and it is when control is exerted by these others that this gaze may function to regulate the body's appearance, along with the meaning possible to interpret from it. The body's multiplicity, as a simultaneous vehicle for disruptive expression and a creator of meaning through which the body itself is constructed, is implicated in how meaning is made through relation to space and others. Just as Connell asserts that masculinity is 'always masculinity-in-relation,' bodies are bodies-in-relation, and where Butler's discussion deals with contexts of public demonstration, the processes of embodied presence and appearance can also apply to performance (2005: 44).

Though identity is constructed externally, it is also an internal process. Our bodies mean *to* us just as we mean through them. The body is not only a material object through which identity is read and performed, but one through which identity is experienced. Characters appear to actors in various imaginary forms through the processes of textual analysis and character development. Through this practice of relation, actors also appear to themselves, particularly when the performances that emerge contradict personal meanings of the body. It is this friction between socio-political and personal forms of appearance with which this

project is concerned. Informing an approach to the inclusion and exclusion of bodies across the productions, Butler offered a way of considering the body in relation to power and agency, simultaneously held and wielded yet subject to the continually shifting contexts, subjectivities and spaces within which it is viewed. In the context of performance, direction may uphold, disrupt or make visible what Butler terms 'the right to place and belonging' through the presencing (as opposed to a passive presence) of bodies which can be understood to possess shared identities or experiential understandings, affecting the space for appearance among characters, company and audience (2011: 12). Such presencing is most powerful when it is explicit and, as *Chapter 3* will explore, made to construct appearances in which the body has the right to define and speak for itself.

These bodies, as much as narrative, language or design, play a role in creating the dramatic logic of onstage worlds. As a director of non-traditional Shakespeares, my work with actors regularly revolves around the building of worlds in which early modern, or early modern interpretations of alternate historical paradigms, can be mapped onto contemporarily relevant discourses. Personal notions of gender inevitably impact what this mapping may include or exclude, as do issues of sexuality, race, class, nationality, religion and dis/ability. The practices employed in rehearsal spaces (activities, casting choices, how space is shaped, and how actor bodies are made to interact with narrative, dramatic circumstance or character identity) form part of the discourse that is circulated through these decisions. Through this process, performance acts upon creators as much as they act upon it. Interviewed by Jules Gleeson for *The Guardian*, Butler describes gender as 'a negotiation, a struggle, a way of dealing with historical constraints and making new realities' (Butler, 2021). In the same way, direction requires a negotiation not only in the representation of characters, narratives and histories onstage, but of theatrical convention, casting, rehearsal room politics, and the cultural discourses surrounding production. The presencing theorised by Butler is constructed in these contexts through active directorial choices, expanding, maintaining or limiting the scope of what can be explored in rehearsal and, therefore, onstage. In the navigation of character identity, actors are frequently met with the challenge of confronting their own, sometimes with the expectation that they will yield "truths" about themselves to the process of creation, just one of the many ways direction may wield power beyond the remit of performance.

Silverstone's confrontation of how trauma may be sustained through performance draws on Cathy Caruth's description of trauma as "a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (Silverstone, 2011: 13). Despite the wealth of scholarship surrounding the performance of gender in the plays, few touch on what it is to *experience* gender in the context of spectatorship or staging. It is the latter with which this project is concerned, taking into account the process by which a source text may be translated to the stage. Within these processes, gender and the various other intersecting identities that may impact its experience (race, class, nationality, religion, sexuality, dis/ability) are wounds that repeatedly demand attention in performance and performance criticism. Perhaps this is because, as Connell suggests, 'our everyday knowledge of gender is subject to conflicting claims to know, explain and judge' (2005: 5). Often missing from this framework in performance criticism is a recognition of the *feeling* that can arise only through the embodied process of engagement, which must precede knowing, explanation or judgement. In using actor interviews to inform my reflections and further practice, my direction sought ways to account for this feeling and how it is held in the exploration of a politically charged set of plays.

In *Engendering a Nation*, Phylis Rackin and Jean E. Howard explore 'the impact the plays have had on the ways we imagine gender and sexual difference, the institution of marriage, and the gulf between "public" and "private" life' (1997: 20-21). Such mechanisms, they suggest, 'are part of the legacy affecting the lives of all women who inhabit the cultures these plays helped to shape' (1997: 21). Feminist scholarship of the plays has exposed the politicism of women's domestic lives as they are represented in Shakespeare, yet this boundary is rarely crossed in the case of male characters. This is particularly so with Shakespeare's kings, whose representation in the public sphere has a private facade that is regularly overshadowed by issues of legitimacy and conquest. Even their soliloquies and monologues remain oriented around power, or its loss. Through this obfuscation, the public and political sides of masculinity become defined by visibility, and the private is embodied by repression. For many of the characters explored in the adaptations, the court is also a domestic realm (though this does not detract from its politicism). Perhaps it is the alignment of this categorisation with binary gender through which the private emotional dimensions of male characters – and the actors who play them – have long been neglected. Indeed, it is when the actions of women in the history plays disrupt this binary that they are seen to navigate a whole new set of rules.

As a director who is not a man, an anxiety often underlies my work with masculine-centric plays and male-dominated companies, both of which are a common occurrence when staging Shakespeare. The questioning of my authority in handling such subject matter is sometimes internal, and sometimes it is written on the faces or in the behaviours of the actors themselves. This distrust emerges as much from a culturally conditioned need to guard our experiences as it does from misunderstanding one anothers' motivations for breaking down, or maintaining, the boundaries that divide us along binary lines of gender. Many of the male actors I have worked with, including those in this project, are drawn to the history plays because their bodies, skills or performance styles sit comfortably within the contexts of violent representation. When our work together reaches points that require vulnerability, their lack of trust in the emotional side of themselves impacts their ability to lean into discomfort, unfamiliarity or intimacy. Yet this ability to trust is not the actor's responsibility alone; it is a tool that can be modelled, nurtured and wielded in the rehearsal room through direction. Alongside the political pressure passed from father to son in the second tetralogy plays, an intense sense of loss and disconnection emerged in the work of various actors throughout the project, which eventually came to define our exploration of masculine feeling and experience.

As Howard and Rackin observe, the history plays reinforce the connection of femininity, emotionality and privacy. There is a spatial element to this binary, which through narrative becomes part of dramatic production. Rehearsal rooms, where the majority of the deep emotional work that constructs the performances eventually seen on public stages occurs, are occluded spaces. The expansive emotional nature of characters are explored in all their vastness before that emotionality is hidden once again, packaged in whatever form most satisfies the need of directors, producers or target audiences. In the past, as *Chapter 1* will explore in the context of *Richard II*, this has taken the form of hysterical femininity and rational masculinity. But what if we did not repackage those emotional worlds and instead allowed them space on our stages? Or committed to a form that upholds and uplifts the masculine emotionality that has come to be (enforcedly) characterised primarily by shows of physical strength, sexual desire, rationality and rage? As *Chapter 2* will delve into, the field of trauma studies teaches us that such expression is as much an expression of societal as personal pain. In defying binary conventions of gender and politicism in the rehearsal room, might it be possible to re-characterise expressions of masculinity and disrupt the boundaries

of permissible representation? The practical and reflective aspects of this project function together to demonstrate how the adaptation and direction practices employed to develop 'Fall of Kings', 'Between the Armies' and 'The Breach' intervened to root performance of gender in the productions in this (sometimes deeply personal) emotional work, focusing on male actors' process of engagement with their characters.

In *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, James C. Bulman introduces a collection of essays that consider the often conflicting criticism surrounding Shakespeare and performance. Among them, W. B. Worthen explores rhetorics of authority and bodily resistance in the performance practice and criticism of Shakespeare, discussing 'how our acts of representation are implicated in the dynamics of contemporary culture' through the conflation and iconographic status of author and text (Bulman, 1996: 1). And Richard Paul Knowles considers the imperialist implications of universalist discourses and the concept of the actor's "natural" voice. Bulman's introduction situates the collection as a response to an essentialist critical tradition that emerged from John Styan's *The Shakespeare Revolution* (1983). Styan's criticism attempted to 'recover the authenticity of the original "Shakespeare experience" by a study of modern performance practices,' giving rise to a generation who endorsed the notion that 'meaning is immanent in [the text] and that actors and directors are therefore interpreters rather than makers of meaning' (Bulman, 1996: 1). Bulman problematises the product-focused lens that Shakespeare criticism has inherited from literary analysis as it evolved throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries into new historicist and cultural materialist forms. The universalising assumption that performance may be "read" risks the same cultural inscription that feminist theorists (including those like Connell and Butler in fields beyond performance studies) have attempted to define.

Bulman and Knowles observe an emergence of essentialist and universalist rhetorics in the 'training manuals of the past two decades [...] that have gained legitimacy by recording the techniques employed by major British and North American theatre companies,' serving to further entrench perspectives like Styan's in actor training, processes of dramatic development, criticism and reception (1996: 6). Alongside the approaches advocated by companies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe, in which performance is led by the text, twenty-first century theatre has seen a rise in the popularity of realism-based techniques such as Sanford Meisner's Meisner Technique and Lee Strasberg's Method. With this comes an increasing marketisation of lived and embodied experience in

creative industrial economies, leading actors to take greater and greater emotional risks in the name of "truth" or "authenticity." Undertaken as acts of personal agency, empirical exploration via the objective lenses potentiated by character or narrative development can be a generative process of self-understanding, empowerment, and healing. In hierarchical environments, however, including creative spaces, personal agency can be complicated by a lack of appropriate means by which to address issues of consent, or imbalances in institutional or interpersonal power. Directorial practices can uphold, create or withdraw agency, affecting readings of power in performance while also serving to *enact* power.

As a theatre-maker with training rooted in the same realism-based traditions that yielded techniques like Meisner and Strasberg's, who's work generally brings them into contact with actors that share similar backgrounds, my approach to directing the adaptations sought to acknowledge and address the potentially traumatic nature of processes which can require immense psychological and often physical labour from actors. Bulman considers contemporary theatre's tendency to 'essentialise' Shakespeare, noting the ways its rooting in British and North American dramatic traditions 'reify the controlling agency of the playwright' through processes of characterisation (1996: 7). Bulman, and later Worthen in his chapter on 'Staging "Shakespeare,"' interrogate the 'modern theories of acting, and modern actor training and practice,' which tend 'to define the contestatory relation between Actor and Author' (1996: 19). The cultures of critical reception that have emerged throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries elicit a repeated summoning of 'the Author' from actors in order to 'justify an "interpretation" of the play' (1996: 19). In performance, Worthen states, 'we might expect the actor's body – so local, so immediate – to provide a final point of resistance, the zero degree of the Author. And yet the Author is frequently summoned to substantiate not only a conception of "character," but its bodily enactment as well' (1996: 22). Through practice that maintains the text's (and playwright's) fixity, around which all other elements must be determined, the actor's body is divested of the authority to create itself; the space for appearance becomes space for the appearance of Shakespeare's authorship. We (directors, casting directors, producers, audiences, teachers) routinely require that actors cede their bodies and therein contained experiences to the project of materialising Shakespeare, only to then place them in the firing line of critics who may rule the resulting representation to be "not Shakespeare."

In *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, Margaret Jane Kidnie regards this ‘ongoing process’ of ‘reciprocal relation’ between Shakespearean ‘works’ and the politics of their reception as one in which adaptation may intercede (2009: 5-6). Kidnie defines these ‘works’ as ‘play as process,’ a process by which textual fixity is destabilised through the ‘tension between text and performance’ (2009: 5-6). Through her exploration, adaptation is deciphered ‘as an evolving category [which] is closely tied to how the work modifies over time and from one reception space to another’ (2009: 5-6). Adaptation, therefore, can be seen as a process of intervention through which textual authority (what Worthen terms the authority of the Author) might be disrupted and reinvested in the actor’s body. Bulman is also drawn to the idea of ‘text as process, as an interweaving of variable elements, [reflecting] a postmodern desire to replace the logocentric idea of theatre with one in which performance becomes a site of cultural and aesthetic contestation’ (Bulman, 1996: 2). He posits this desire as a reaction to Styan and other essentialist readers of Shakespeare, for whom to make meaning is to create the text, while interpretation is drawn from it. Within this essentialist mode of thinking, a hierarchy is formed between Shakespeare ‘as author and text’ and those who are simply vessels for its dissemination (Bulman, 1996: 1). How, then, might adaptation and direction intervene to preserve actor agency and ward against the body’s sacrifice in the making of someone else’s meaning? As Susan Bennett asks in *Performing Nostalgia*:

> can a new text, by way of dislocating and contradicting the authority of tradition, produce a “transgressive knowledge” which would disarticulate the terms under which tradition gains its authority? And what bodies have the capacity to re-member that which is already sedimented in them? To attest to the contingent and fractured performance of “tradition,” there is a need to locate a canon of the “past” and to position against it those texts apparently claiming for themselves the possibility of the “new.”
>
> (Bennett, 1996: 12)

Bennett’s seminal work in theorising Shakespeare’s production through the audience’s role as ‘co-creator’ explores the processes by which ‘the many components of theatre – director, actor, theatre building, lighting, seating, and so on – intercede’ in the relationship between ‘text and reader’ (1997: 21). Through interventions in the processes of performance’s consumption and reception the parameters of meaning in embodied playtexts are shaped and reshaped. Bennett examines contemporary performance’s tendency to appropriate the

authority of ‘the past [and] its selves,’ questioning ‘how particular vested interests project their desires for the present (and, indeed, the future) through a multiplicity of representations of past texts as well as through the attempt to trespass into already-(over)coded traditions’ (1996: 3). She suggests that Shakespeare criticism’s prioritisation of the cultural and ideological in the late twentieth century has precluded a focus on practice, branding performance as a site in which Shakespeare is “lost” (1996: 3).

Like Bennett, in ‘Shakespeare and Ideology’ James Kavanagh considers Shakespeare’s displacement (as ideology, material text and producer) in a homogenous and commonly unidentified ‘culture’ through which Shakespeare itself is produced, ‘an historical and discursive subject [which] is implicated – indeed, constituted – in the history of an ideological practice’ (Kavanagh, 1985: 145). The wide cultural and historical scope of discussions that explore how meaning is created through Shakespeare’s transmission to geographically, historically, politically and socially located groups can fail to address the individualist implications of its function in the processes through which transmission occurs. Criticism that views Shakespeare as lost through dramatic performance divests the authority actors and actor bodies hold over themselves and their positions in the process of (re)creating Shakespeare. It is, as Kavanagh states, that ‘Shakespearean criticism is often less interested in analysing an historically specific practice [...] than in presenting the products of that practice’ (1985: 144-145). Shakespeare, rather than the meanings, ideologies and power that surrounds, informs and is exercised through practice, becomes centralised. Actors and directors are indeed interpreters of Shakespeare, but the definition of this interpretation does not detract from the very real meanings made present as the texts are filtered through the lens of our bodies; Shakespeare’s language, rhythm and symbolism are felt in the body, by actor and audience alike, as they act upon it in performance.

Bennett states that ‘how we construct and engage memories cannot be seen as an individualized act but, instead, something prepared by the dissemination of a collective history and lodged in the physical selves of its subjects’ (1996: 9). For actors, however, the bodily meanings of a playtext precede those that are depicted on stage, and it is this process with which my direction aimed to engage: with the personal, relational accounts of how collective histories are lodged in the bodies of actors, and how adaptation or direction might intervene to release, reinscribe or reinvigorate the performances that arise from this process. With the project’s practice-based exploration, in which Shakespeare functioned as one of

various sources from which performance was generated, attention could be focused on the process of actor and director engagement with the texts.

Drawing on Graham Holderness (1992), Bennett considers the "radical cultural intervention" of clearly distinguished "reactionary" and "progressive" Shakespeares that utilise a 'framework for the production of historical materials (and not just Shakespeare) which will take account of the diversities of demographics and geographies,' creating a capacity for representing the 'complexities of social formations' provided by the histories (1996: 33). The adaptations responded to hegemonic representations of masculinity and gender that repeatedly arise in post-1980's performances of the second tetralogy, which appear grounded in what it is possible to interpret from the texts. Of these performances, the majority of which were performed between 2012 and 2022, Kenneth Branagh's 1989 *Henry V* film is the first in a line of prominent Shakespeares in which contemporary masculinities and contexts can be seen to interact with the texts. As *Chapter 1* will explore in relation to Russell Eccleston's performance of Bolingbroke and Toby Underwood's performance of Richard II, such representations are a reflection of the phenomenological parameters of gender, race and class at the time of performance. The project's most "radical" interventions arose from the simple provocation of confronting masculinity, hegemony and violence directly, in the adaptations' textual and visual dramaturgy, in conversations with the actors, and in the shows' public representation. As Bennett suggests, 'unlike history, the history play can perform the discourses of the past as fantasies, posing characters and events in the realm of "what if?"' (1996: 33) The plays' recontextualisation to various alternative (historically rooted or ambiguous) settings reconfigured these parameters; within the frameworks of contemporised playworlds that more closely resemble our own, the question of "what if?" can also apply to a current moment through the creative conflation of twenty-first century characters, events and discourses with Shakespeare.

Henry IV Part 1 and *2*'s recontextualisation to the 1980s in 'Between the Armies' contradicts the historical records of both Henry IV and Thatcher's Englands. In drawing this parallel, however, the production can bring attention to misuses of monarchic or governmental power that exist in both contexts, placing them in dialogue with one another. Though the violence that permeated the playworld now existed in a different form, its acting on the versions of Hal, Falstaff and Hotspur that were brought to light affected a commentary on the characters' victimisation under feudal conflict, and the experiences of gay and Black

men under Thatcher's government. Through this representative plurality, Shakespeare becomes an instrument with which to examine the present in relation to alternate historical moments. Against the cultural backdrops of Shakespeare's plays, the present appears to us as Other, shaping space for critical engagements with contemporary discourse. But rather than drawing a blank parallel between the cultural paradigms of Henry and Thatcher's Englands, characters and events in the plays become points of contact in which these dialogues are made present. As *Chapter 2* will examine in the depiction of Hotspur's death in 'Between the Armies', representations of historic English conflict and modern anti-Black racial violence converge in Hal's killing of Hotspur, activating a discourse surrounding the whiteness at play in Hal's ascent to the throne, which within the given circumstances of the source text alone can remain absent. In these instances, the reimagined circumstances, identities and themes created from the intersection of bodies, settings and narrative onstage establish new dramatic complexities to replace what may be lost from the original organising structure.

This comparative mechanism, however, can preclude adaptation's capacity to reconcile the narrative and dramatic dimensions of its source texts with re-imagined texts in performance. Though the plots of each adaptation deviated, to varying levels of extremity, from their sources, the different circumstances, character identities and themes established by the plays' embodied and aesthetic recontextualisation were significantly more active in their transformation. The dramatic work, like Kidnie states, is an 'interpretive *consequence*, rather than origin, of textual and theatrical production' since performance

> prompts one either to find a place for it within an already-existing conception of dramatic work (or to *make* a place for it, if necessary, by adjusting one's expectation of the work), or to identify it as a first encounter with what seems, in one's own experience and according to one's own historically and culturally contingent criteria, a new work.
>
> (Kidnie, 2009: 32)

The adapted work's disruption of what may be perceived as normal, drawing attention (at least in the context of this project) to the tensions between "original" and performed text, resists the fixity that may be achieved through dramatic reconciliation. As Kidnie demonstrates, this resistance is an inevitable part of the process of performance's reciprocal relation with Shakespeare, a '*consequence*' of any dramatic engagement with canonical texts

whose past versions haunt each new rendition (2009: 32). The dramatic contrast in 'Between the Armies' and, as *Chapter 3* will explore, 'The Breach' provided an opportunity to explore the practical possibilities of acknowledging this break from the texts. The plays' recontextualisation multiplied the dimensions through which the bodies and characters could be understood, engaging actors in the process of creating 'a place' for these interpretations alongside their past versions (Kidnie, 2009: 32).

In 'How Brecht read Shakespeare,' Margot Heinemann explores Brecht's consideration of Shakespeare as "a theatre full of alienation effects" (1985: 232). Heinemann observes parallels between the intended impacts of Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt* and the alienation effect of pre-illusory dramatic movement between settings on the 'unlocalised' Shakespearean stage, through which 'remote as well as immediate causes could be represented and distant opponents brought into confrontation' (1985: 232). As Bennett discusses, this unlocalised form is also at play in the temporal settings of Shakespeare performance as onstage events or ideologies chafe against the conflicting notions of contemporary audience consciousness. With the transgression of temporal boundaries in contemporised Shakespeares, the historical specificity of in-relation representation is also destabilised. By giving a location to unlocalised settings, as in 'Between the Armies' and 'The Breach', Shakespearean and other historically or contemporarily identifiable cultures are brought into dialogue, foregrounding the repetition and contradictions at play among them. The 'gaps and the excesses of the Shakespearean corpus,' as Bennett frames them, 'become the foundation for a performance of the present' (1996: 2). Excesses of sexual violence, as in *Henry V*, or class violence as in *Henry IV Part 1* and *2*, become modes by which issues of the present day can be pointed to, critiqued and put to use for the imagining of alternative futures.

Through this process, Shakespeare can function to isolate aspects of contemporary culture from the frameworks in and through which they are normalised. The feeling of difference in these instances is non-linear, encouraging, as Bennett suggests, the recognition of nostalgic tradition through a relational dramaturgy. In addition to this experimentation in the adaptations' textual and visual arrangements, the project also turned the question of "what if?" on the spaces and practices through which the productions developed, as sites in which hegemony, complicity, subordination and marginalisation are enacted. In scrutinising how power is constructed in such spaces and projected onto performance through practice, we

reveal the processes through which certain forms of masculinity are imposed, through their normalisation and expectation, onto actors whose bodies or social roles match a preconceived set of notions.

The approach sought to place the actors, and their responsiveness to other actors, at the centre of the development process. As Bulman notes, although the promptbooks, quartos and folios continue to be treated as stable objects of Shakespearean authority, they are essentially documentations of collaboration between the writers, directors, actors and audiences who's 'material conditions, social contexts and reception' shaped them (1996: 1). Contrary to Styan's outlook, for many early twenty-first century actors (particularly actors who have recently emerged from training), interpretation and meaning are interchangeable or irrelevant concepts. With much of contemporary actor training's emphasis on "truth" and "authenticity," meaning is lodged in the body, rather than the text. In the practice of Meisner and Method, actors respond to each other first and foremost. The notions of premeditated meaning in text-based approaches conflict with the requirement that they interpret the choices made by other actors (proxemics, posture, gesture, voice) live in performance. Meaning is created through interpretation's embodiment, and it is the bodies of other actors that serve as its primary sources. Yet, analysing the text, scanning its rhythms, and mining its details remain an integral part of mainstream approaches to Shakespeare.

Such approaches are catalogued in detail across the canon of actors' guides to text, voice and performance by practitioners associated with major UK organisations (such as the Royal Shakespeare Company or Shakespeare's Globe) such as Cicely Berry, Kristien Linklater, Patsy Rodenburg, Peter Hall and Giles Block. In Western theatre, it is rare to find one of these handbooks that does not refer to the text as a primary source of meaning, or one in which "the text" is actually just Shakespeare. For Berry, the former Head of Voice at the RSC, 'meanings come from a precise choice of words and their associations,' which an actor may arrive at through a 'sensibility to words, and rhythms and meanings which come to [an actor] from sound' (1973: 101). Building on this in *The Actor and the Text*, she poses the actor's desire to 'fill the text' as one of the 'many things [that] get in the way' of meaning's 'direct' release (1993: 14). An actor's desire to imagine meaning for themselves or impose their own thoughts through their performance will only obstruct the "truth" that lies in the text. Even Patsy Rodenburg, who grounds actorly processes of exploration in breathing and the release of tension from the body, warns that 'the work on feelings must be in tune with

the word' (2019: 141). Actors' 'physical and emotional transformations are reflected in transformations of breath,' yet different texts 'have varying lengths of thought and consequently will demand different lengths of breath' (2019, 160). Of course, this makes sense. The emotion expressed in a performance cannot become so untethered from the sense of the line that it disrupts an actor's ability to communicate either thought or feeling. Is there not, however, a place in the process of textual exploration where actors' emotion, and their autonomous use of it, may – and should – take precedence over Shakespeare?

In twenty-first century theatre, the associations of many words or phrases that may spring from the text are different than in Shakespearean England and as such they are felt differently, held in different locations within the body, and may be identified using different language. As Worthen states, 'although sight, pain, cold have probably not changed [since Shakespeare's time], our ways both of understanding the body and of mapping it into the signifying web of our culture are radically altered, and so the experience of the body has been altered as well' (1996: 23). Though masculinities have also shifted since the early modern period, the bodily sensations of anxiety and social pressure that actors repeatedly turn to as a means of describing their gendered experiences (as their characters and themselves) appear set apart from Shakespeare only by the available language we now use to describe them. For actors, the *feeling* of a word or weighted pause may be easier to arrive at than its "correct" meaning. The practice of holding and allowing direction to be informed by this sense of feeling, in whatever form it may take, would eventually come to characterise the project's engagement with actor-director dynamics in the process of rehearsal and performance.

The rehearsal process drew on a combination of text- and realism-based approaches to stage the adaptations, attempting to provide various channels by which interpretations of the plays and their rendering onstage could be reached. While it is important to acknowledge the essentialising effects of post-1980's approaches to text and voice that have arisen from the work of practitioners such as Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg, the use of these interpretive tools may reject aspirations that actor voices and bodies become 'neutral conduits through which "Shakespeare" can speak' (Knowles, 1996: 92). Though actors were encouraged to research the plays, the adapted scripts formed the basis for our early text work, which drew on approaches laid out by Hall in *Playing Shakespeare* (1984) and Block in *Speaking the Speech* (2013). One-to-one actor-director meetings alongside scene-by-scene table work (translating the dialogue into contemporary English terms, exploring the flow and shifts of

rhythm, discussing the range of possible meanings elicited by Shakespeare's language) integrated the early development of actors' initial reactions and research on character, playworld and concept with this process of interpretation. During this stage, masculinities was introduced, connecting the gendered practices exemplified in Connell's theory to gendered language and hierarchies in the plays or archetypal images portrayed in past performance. In doing so, gaps in the company's collective understandings or meditations could be addressed and engaged with, while still-developing notions of their characters contributed to a flexible framework of dramatic logic that would inform our practical exploration.

When it came to staging, the actors were given free reign to explore what their interpretations meant practically before any blocking was locked in. Repeatedly running and re-running scenes with the guidance of minor director's notes allowed a test-driving of different interpretations, intentions and subtexts, underpinned by the character perspectives, motivations and relationships established in table-work discussions. Through this process, staging could develop concurrently with body language and vocal tone, encouraging actors to follow instincts to move or react in certain ways, before interrogating the source, nature and positioning of feeling within the body that drove their urges. As this study will confront in various capacities, it seems that this work with emotion could not avoid connecting with actors' personal experience and feeling of masculinity. In line with (and led by) the project's focus, many of these impulses were overwhelmingly gendered, either prompted by bodily feelings of discomfort (evoking sudden moves to repel or draw close to others, or to dispel anxious energy from the body), or desperation (driven by the sensation of control or close relationships slipping away). Many of the conclusions that arose from these explorations have more to say about the nature of masculinity than they do about the plays, yet it is in this practical work with gender and gendered feeling that the project's actor-centred approach finds its grounding.

While the productions' staging continued to adjust up until (and in some cases during) live performances, once the majority of scenes had taken shape we returned to the text- and voice-based methods of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg, attempting to connect the emotional elements already at play with physical and vocal projections that would heighten their appearance onstage. One such exercise follows the logic of Michael Chekhov's psychological gesture, in which physical gestures can be used to embed the energy of bodily motion

associated with character intentions in vocal performance. In *The Actor and the Text*, Berry details a rehearsal with a group of young actors in which she 'made them get in a circle, entwining arms firmly, then got one half to pull one way and one half to pull the other, speaking the words of [a speech from *Othello*] while they did this' (1993: 113). Berry's exercise aimed to replicate the character's feeling of "drowning" in the force of being pulled in multiple directions and the need to fight against it so that the speech might be delivered with this same sense of emotional intensity (Berry, 1992: 113). In an exercise we called "Push, Pull, Deflect, Seek," actors would work in pairs to explore a section of dialogue between them, deciding on the intention behind each new phrase or thought and exerting (gentle) physical force on their partner in order to experience the sensation of needing, succeeding or failing to get what they wanted. These approaches root processes of imagination in the flow of dialogue through the body, a physical metaphor for how the text may exert psychological force on actors via performance. Yet in them, the actor's body may pose a resistance to textual meanings that go against their own instincts. A line that may mean one thing according to former editors and interpreters may jar with the emotional sense of the actor's hammering heart or tingling fingers. Returning to this practical text work at a late stage, after many decisions surrounding the characters, their world and their relationships were in place, the emotion lodged within these details preceded and, at times, contradicted the additional meaning that might be found.

With many of the meanings in the plays realigned with the paradigms of their recontextualised settings, the nature of the emotion it felt possible, and appropriate, to explore also expanded. Bolingbroke's lashing out was no longer a result of rage at Richard's betrayal but panic under the pressures of leadership. Rather than cowardice, as a Queer, working-class soldier Falstaff's unwillingness to participate in battle arose from his political opposition to the cultures of violence fostered by Henry IV. And rather than succumbing to Henry V's sexual conquest in the play's "wooing scene," the full range of emotion the scene generated for Matilda Dickinson, who played Princess Katherine, was made available to her, giving her permission to make her resistance felt through the use of her body. At points, or across the overarching scope of the plays, these central threads, structures and plotlines contradict the dramatic logic of Shakespeare's texts. When such logic (given circumstances, character identities, narratives, themes, dramatic complexities) are absent or disrupted, clarity may be lost in the historic sense of England's political fluctuation, or in the continuity of the Elizabethan questions posed by the plays. But these pockets of murkiness are active in

provoking questions from actors that may guide or evoke new ideas in their practical approach. Bennett, drawing on Michel de Certeau (1988), notes that "the lapses in syntax constructed by the law of a place [...] symbolize a return of the repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment, has *become* unthinkable in order for a new identity to *become* thinkable" (1996: 2). By the same comparative mechanism, adaptations – or indeed any performances – that situate past and present side by side may also enable a confrontation of what might at present be unthinkable.

As concepts of gender have altered over time, representations that were unthinkable in early modern England, or indeed in previous generations of Shakespeare producers and critics, now present themselves as possible interpretations. In *Shakespeare and Gender*, Kate Aughterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson consider the implication of Richard II's regendering in Adjoa Andoh and Lynette Linton's *Richard II* (2019) at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. They observe that 're-/de-gendering the king, too, destabilises the monarchy; and indeed, many critical readings and productions present Richard II as an "effeminate" king. Across Shakespeare's Histories, the male body of the King is a site of conflict and anxiety, sometimes fragile, sometimes terrifyingly mortal' (2020: 40). Richard's regendering in Adjoa Andoh, who performed the role, not only destabilises the body of the King and the monarchy, but the stable points of contact on which the critical reception and performance of Richard's gender has historically been built. Yet, while critics may be preoccupied with this disruption, the actor is freed from the constraints and pressures of negotiating gender in rehearsal and onstage. In an interview with Aughterson and Grant Ferguson, Andoh states that this freedom meant that she 'just needed to think about who this human being is: who are they scared of, who do they love, what power do they need, what power do they fight against, where to they decide to put their allegiances, what will make them betray or remain loyal,' questions that, ironically, cisgender male actors can often explore without the burden of considering themselves in gendered terms (2020: 70-71).

In placing the masculinities of different times and contexts in dialogue with one another, performance throws into question the very nature of social norms, progression and possibility. Lapses in 'the law of [...] place' create space for a practical working-through that may either seek answers so performance might make sense of what adaptation has thrown into non-sense, or aim to transpose these questions to performance so that the work of making sense might be done by audiences (de Certeau in Bennett, 1996: 2). Working *with* the

syntactical tensions generated through adaptation encourages actors themselves to question (be this character, text, practice, or realities beyond the creative process) and new practices to develop from attempts to think the unthinkable. The following chapters detail just some of the questions generated through our work with the plays throughout the project, and the process of their attempted translation to performance. What do the concepts of natural and unnatural mean for contemporary experiencers, performers or spectators of gendered power? If not a contentment with violence, what other forms of masculine experience might account for the rhythmic irregularities of Bolingbroke's speech? How is the discomfort evoked by racial, gendered, sexual or class-based violence onstage navigated by actors and directors, and how might we find alternative ways of doing this? Sometimes these questions cannot be answered in the immediate sense, or do not emerge until a production is performed before an audience, but through the obstacles posed by thematic, structural or historical discontinuity new practices can emerge to aid in their confrontation.

Applied in and to performance as a way of considering how power operates through rehearsal space, activities and outcomes, masculinities provided a definitive framework for identifying relational dynamics and practices in the second tetralogy plays, in the discourses surrounding them, and in the methods through which they can be staged. While employing the text-based approaches popularised by Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg in rehearsing the adaptations, the incongruities that arose from these directorial approaches pointed to tensions between theoretical and practical "readings" of the plays. Though masculinities can be mapped onto semiotic operations of power as other theoretical modes of analysis can, the practices involved in their embodiment and performance often defy the neat categorisation implied in Connell's framework. As the discussion of masculinities' dramaturgical applications in the following section will explore, the fragmentary effect of this sociological approach played an active role in disrupting the patriarchal gaze at work in the plays. This can prove challenging for direction, perhaps owing to the equal power it instils in contradictory concepts, such as semiotic representation and dramatic effect, that emerge from theory. Yet, as Bulman and Worthen's discussions demonstrate, it is through the convergence of different theoretical approaches in practice, and practice's capacity to resist 'historically fixed' schools of thought, that the rifts created out of these incongruities may be filled with new ideas (Bennett, 1997: 24).

The patterns of social process catalogued by Connell are pluralised through their fragmentation in different contexts. The image of hegemonic masculinity under one set of circumstances may be marginalised in another; thus, an actor, character or institution may embody multiple masculinities at once, causing further inconsistencies to arise. Though several of the actors involved in the adaptations fit the typical Western image of hegemony in terms of bodily presentation, on entering a rehearsal room in which our very aim was to challenge such power, the nature of this hegemony was disrupted. The practice of confrontation itself transforms the body's meaning. With the introduction of actor bodies to the interplays among characters, archetypal images of the masculinities represented in the text can be embraced or rejected through casting, costume, characterisation or staging, complicating the dynamics of what is present and the function of this presence – or presencing – in processes of representation.

As Bennett and other reception theorists have attempted to dissect, the power of bodily transformation is complicated yet again beyond the rehearsal room – a continual process of re-embodiment, which the project sought to explore. Practice, like the actor's body, 'cannot be bound by the neat encodings of materialist theory' (Bulman, 1996: 6). Yet materially implicated aspects of production such as casting, costume, posture, gesture and other encoded modes of gender performance are not merely objects but practices of embodiment. Casting and characterisation are not one-off decisions but ongoing processes of interaction with and alteration of the text, to which direction must continue to respond as a production progresses. The project of disrupting hegemonic patterns of representation was as much a process of convincing actors to simply allow their bodies to coexist with the roles assigned them, without the continual need to justify their interpretations or positions through their performance. At times the work with masculinities involved reckoning with the feelings of unfamiliarity generated by attempts to perform beyond the boundaries of the body, or the discomfort of roles into which actors are routinely forced as a result of bodily aesthetics. At times, these feelings were generative, informing – and, across the duration of the project, transforming – the dramatic logic of the adaptations. As *Chapter 3* will consider, direction's ability to respond to discomfort, being willing to surrender or renegotiate the narrative or dramatic logic of the text, rather than requiring actors to persevere with a performance that may harm them, arose from this focus on embodied feeling and meaning. Masculinities aided the harnessing of this feeling in the direction of gendered power onstage, providing a set of trauma-informed practices that came to guide respective attempts to provoke, channel,

disentangle, release and hold space for the personal and wider issues that arose in our staging of the plays. The sociological dramaturgies outlined in the following section provided a foundation for this approach, in which the centrality of Shakespeare's kings was disrupted and refocused through the practice of centring actors in the rehearsal room.

With greater focus on the power of decisions and deciders in the wake of ongoing movements such as MeToo and Black Lives Matter, systemic issues of who is afforded a voice and who may embody that voice on stage or screen are gradually becoming more possible to address. While Western theatre has never denied (certain types of) men the right to represent themselves or see themselves represented, the performances through which they are able to do so continue to limit the image of acceptable masculinity. When directorial decisions surrounding even the physical placement of actors onstage can affect how the body is allowed to appear, we must pay meaningful attention to the outcomes of those decisions, and to the impact of the processes through which they are arrived at. How, then, might directing practices that incorporate actor agency, consent, and the consideration of bodies that are rhetorically presented as being worthy or unworthy of holding power embrace the changing cultural understandings the industry requires of us? What could the application of Connell's masculinities contribute to an analysis and performance of the second tetralogy plays, and what might this process reveal about the nature of masculinities in performance upon reflection?

Adapting (to) hegemony

The following chapters will explore the three respective adaptations that comprised the practical part of this project. Condensing the four tetralogy plays into three productions, these adaptations were performed before public audiences in venues throughout the South West, UK. The various stagings and tours provided opportunities for engagement with audiences through post-show discussions, interactive marketing campaigns, and verbal feedback that contributed to reflections on the productions and informed creative decisions as the study progressed. 'Fall of Kings', adapted from *Richard II*, was performed at Burdall's Yard, Bath in March 2018; 'Between the Armies', a combined adaptation of *Henry IV Part 1* and *Henry IV Part 2*, was performed at The Rondo Theatre, Bath in September 2018; and the final

adaptation of *Henry V*, 'The Breach', opened at The Rondo Theatre in June 2019 before touring to Stroud and Bristol.

The adaptations aimed to challenge the cultural inherency of violence in portrayals of masculinity, which is formed, in part, from patriarchal depictions of maleness and manhood. Most men are not intentionally violent, but Western cultural definitions of masculinity by way of the capacity for violent domination lodges many firmly within this perpetual set of practices. While feminist performance has posed successful challenges to patriarchal storytelling traditions, there is danger in reacting to a universalised notion of masculinity rather than accounting for the contextual specificity of hegemony. Many of the arguments against the growing representation for marginalised identities in twenty-first century entertainment and media position this progress in direct opposition to masculinity. Such discourse fails to account for the damage inflicted through the overrepresentation of unattainable bodies or forms of gendered practice on all genders. The central position of Shakespeare's kings in the second tetralogy also has a centralising effect on the specific form of monarchic power they embody. Through the plays' depiction of England's political conflict, portrayals of masculinity are figured in relation to this hostility and the characters' social value becomes based on their ability to enact, react and withstand violence. Where centrality exists, marginality inevitably forms as a result. As Worthen's discussion of actor subordination to 'the Author' suggests, where a single entity remains fixed, all other elements of a process or production must orient themselves around it (1996: 22). The project sought to establish an 'interactive relationship' with the historically and culturally specific masculinities that would be staged throughout the project (Bennett, 1997: 29). Challenging the central position of the hegemonic masculinities figured in Shakespeare's kings was therefore key to the project of challenging hegemony, informing approaches to textual and visual dramaturgies in the adaptations' development.

Giving the adaptations their own titles, taken from lines of dialogue in the plays, helped differentiate them for the purpose of discussion with companies and audiences but also signalled their deviation from Shakespeare's texts. In *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance*, Silverstone offers a reading of performance texts, productions and performances as archives of trauma, which can be 'co-opted as part of a narrative of healing and reconciliation,' producing more violence in their elision and obfuscation of violent histories, events and cultural documentation (2011: 5). She urges adaptors and critics

of Shakespeare, in particular those who deal with histories or themes of trauma, to examine the politics of these 'adaptations and appropriations' (2011: 3). Scholars across various fields have challenged the neutrality that distorts practices of replicating Shakespeare in all its material formats. In 'Mediators of the wor(l)d: editors, Shakespeare, and inclusion,' Brandi K. Adams confronts the practice of editing Shakespeare as one which shapes dramatic and scholarly interactions with language, character, history and philosophy in the plays. She states that editing 'exercises power, and it can only be understood by an analysis of power' (Adams, 2019). Leading with the consciousness urged by Silverstone and Adams in the rehearsal room was vital for not only the integrity and appropriate conduction of the project but also the safeguarding of others involved.

Addressing my own positionality as a white, British, Queer, non-Disabled, non-religious, working-class artist was, therefore, key in beginning to challenge issues of universality, neutrality and power imbalance that might arise in processes of direction. In creating this visibility, it was possible to address the rehearsal and performance contexts through which the productions themselves were staged, including the socio-politics of the spaces and roles participants would be required to undertake in the plays, rehearsal rooms and onstage. Explicitly acknowledging the adaptations' deviation from their source texts aided an examination of their function in disrupting or perpetuating the dialogues at work in the plays, establishing expectations for the public audiences who would experience the productions while marking the consequences of our interventions. This approach intended to mitigate what Silverstone observes as the mechanisms by which adaptation and criticism of Shakespeare's plays can function as a mode of violence:

> performances of Shakespeare's texts and their documentary traces work variously to memorialise, remember and witness violent events and histories, but that these processes are never neutral. Performances offer a way of remembering violent events and histories and invite spectators to witness these events.
>
> (Silverstone, 2011: 2-3)

In responding to the historically and culturally specific representations of masculinity in post-1980's Shakespeare, the adaptations invited audiences to witness a version of the discourses presented in Shakespeare's plays altered by this intention. The productions, their scripts, recordings and the reflections on them are all historic instances of engagement with

the plays from specific cultural standpoints. In making this intention visible, along with the prominent themes of each production, the altered titles generated an expectation of difference and contradiction, predetermining the nature of audiences' engagement with the text.

As an adapter, director and artistic director whose learning and practice were shaped by the editions Adams describes, renaming the adaptations was an initial step toward the 'deep examination' she poses as necessary to break from traditionalist approaches to Shakespeare performance and reception (2019). This approach put in place a mechanism of accountability that would facilitate the productions' documentation. Each title drew on the intended interrogations of the production, forming bases for their dissemination by summarising their thematic and narrative considerations. 'Fall of Kings' took its title from the Welsh Captain's premonition about the fate of England should Richard be overthrown in *Richard II*: 'These signs forefun the death or fall of kings' (2.4.15). In the adaptation the lines were reattributed to the Narrator, whose presence was woven throughout the show. The speech that featured this line, positioned as a prologue to the play, foreshadowed the violent disruption that began with the conflict between Richard and Bolingbroke, and which would span the three adaptations.

The second title, 'Between the Armies', was taken from John of Lancaster's speech following the climactic Battle of Shrewsbury in *Henry IV Part 2* (4.1), allocated to Prince Hal in the adaptation: 'Discharge your powers unto their several counties, / As we will ours; and here, between the armies, / Let's drink together friendly and embrace' (4.1.289-291). As I will explore in *Chapter 2*, the symbolic 'between' depicted in this title prefigured the conflict between Henry IV and the once loyal Earl of Northumberland that contextualised the main action of the play. Caught between these warring patriarchs, their sons Hotspur and Hal were the main focus of the textual editing, direction and collaborative exploration.

The third and final adaptation, 'The Breach', was named from Henry V's famous lines before England's victory at the Siege of Harfleur (3.1). The line was foregrounded through its repetition in the adaptation, emphasising the dualism between the conventional heroism associated with Henry's rousing 'Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more' speech (3.1.1), and the fearful reluctance of the conscripted soldiers to join the battle:

BARDOLPH

On, on, on, on, on, to the breach, to the breach!

NYM

Pray thee, Corporal, stay; the knocks are too hot,
and for mine own part I have not a case of lives. The
humour of it is too hot, that is the very plain-song of it.

PISTOL

The plain-song is most just, for humours do abound.
Knocks go and come, God's vassals drop and die.

And sword and shield
In bloody field
Doth win immortal fame.

BOY

Would I were in an alehouse in London! I would
give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety.

(3.2.1-13)

The reference to this dualism in the show's title aimed to emphasise the often-obscured victimisation of the play's non-noble soldiers at the centre of its critique. The revised titles were one of many interventions, which included cuts, editing, reallocated lines and added stage directions, across the three adaptations that sought to rework the perspectives and frameworks through which the plays could be read and performed.

The approach established, as Silverstone suggests, 'a *way* of remembering the violent events and histories' represented in them, but also an adjusted attitude and understanding of how and by whom violence, and the power to challenge it, is held in the rehearsal room (Silverstone, 2011: 4). For the actors, labelling our practice "adaptation" with the explicit intention to deviate and disrupt helped negate preconceived notions of the textual puritanism and authorial omnipotence discussed by Bulman and Worthen. Quite literally removing Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V from the plays' titles created a vacuum into which other subjects of exploration could be placed, a starting point for our *process* of adaptation. With this reframing came an active consideration of how objects and discourses are arranged, and might be rearranged, through similar forms of intervention.

In *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004), bell hooks interrogates film, television and media as sites in which violent practices are represented and enacted. She posits that the intensification and popularisation of masculinised conflict in depictions of war contributes to a 'patriarchal pedagogy,' sanctioning male violence through its contextualisation within grand narratives of heroism and patriotism (2004: 71). hooks discusses how the media to which boys and men are exposed glorifies and shapes their understandings of violence, exemplified in popular films from the late 1990s to early 2000s such as '*Saving Private Ryan, Independence Day, Men in Black, Blackhawk Down, Pearl Harbour*,' which continue to propagate the myth that it is 'heroic to die alone, away from home, fighting for a cause you may or may not understand' (2004: 71).

Much in the same way, performances of Shakespeare are frequent vehicles for preserving or grappling with the influence of and participation in systems of belief and action. The political and cultural conflicts at the centre of Shakespeare's histories are ready sites for mimetic reproductions, amplifications or interrogations of contemporary issues. The first and second tetralogy cycles in particular frequently receive major productions at times of national or global upheaval. Prevalent among these is Laurence Olivier's cinematic adaptation of *Henry V* (1944), produced during the Second World War. The film, as Rackin and Howard explore in *Engendering a Nation*, reflected an England 'when leadership at home rested securely in the hands of men, but also when the country was confronted by the terrifying prospect of conquest by a foreign enemy, [...] a prophecy of England's longed-for victory over the Nazis on French soil' (1997: 6-7). The play's legacy as a vehicle for exploration and representation of sociopolitical ideologies can be seen in many succeeding screen and stage productions, including Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film adaptation, released during a period when British relations with Northern Ireland were under strain. Most recently, the action of Max Webster's modern-day-setting production of *Henry V* at the Donmar Warehouse (2022), starring Kit Harrington, was likened by Harrington himself to the newly begun Russian invasion of Ukraine. Olivier, Branagh and Webster's productions exemplify how performance – and gender performance – is continually in dialogue with the contexts of its production. Yet those that arise in prominent Shakespeares of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries propagate the same set of myths that hooks observes in popular film and media. As in Branagh's production, masculinity's relationship to war and conflict is placed at the centre of the history plays' narrative and visual framing, embedding a set of notions that escalate from the late 1980s onwards.

The history plays and their performance have often been the focus of interrogations of power. Rackin and Howard's (1997) is one of several prominent studies since the late 1980s and early 90s that examine representations of sexual, imperial and patriarchal violence in performance of the first and second tetralogies. Before them, Barbara Hodgdon applied a theoretical lens to representations of closure and monarchic legitimacy in the plays in *The End Crowns All* (1991). Bruce R. Smith's *Shakespeare and Masculinity* touches on Bolingbroke's banishment in *Richard II* as a deviation from the 'chivalric tradition,' by which his pursuit of 'honour, aggression, and his personal rights' is sanctioned (2000: 46). And in their chapter on the second tetralogy in *Shakespeare and Gender*, Kate Augterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson discuss the repetitive imagery of 'the land as a dangerous and/or an endangered female body that contrasts starkly with the masculinised body politic embodied in the onstage king' (2020: 50). Beyond this, analyses of the plays' male characters in contemporary performance tend toward a false neutrality under which men are frequently scrutinised as enactors of violence but rarely discussed in explicitly gendered terms. Many of the male actors involved in the adaptations expressed that, while their female or gender nonconforming counterparts are often required to think of themselves as gendered subjects, the consideration of violence as an ubiquitous feature of masculinity has obstructed their ability to recognise their own roles in upholding or disrupting patriarchal hegemony. hooks' exploration of men and love is rooted in her argument that

> to simply label [men] as oppressors and dismiss them meant we never had to give voice to the gaps in our understanding or to talk about maleness in complex ways. We did not have to talk about the ways our fear of men distorted our perspectives and blocked our understanding.
>
> (hooks, 2004: xiv)

Connell's masculinities provided a lens through which the semiotics, relationships and transformations of gendered performances could be understood and discussed in objective but also personal terms. The framework could be used to identify archetypal masculine roles and patriarchal practices, offering male actors the kind of language and social consciousness that has long been expected of women and Queer people in feminist discourse, giving them agency in the disruption of repetitive narratives of domination and marginalisation.

The most prevalent of the narratives that emerged in analysing the plays presents a pattern in which hegemonic masculine characters repeatedly triumph over those presented as feminine or Other. Their dominance, almost always attained by violent means, is justified through the assertion of their corporeal, militaristic, moral, or paternal strength; Shakespeare's kings emerge victorious through the performance of manhood acts and masculinities that assert these identities. As I will discuss in *Chapter 1*, one of the starkest examples of this hegemonic victory narrative can be seen in Richard's deposition by Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, commonly portrayed as the downfall of an effeminate, ineffectual king by a more adequate hypermasculine successor. This hegemonic-versus-subordinate narrative is continued in *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2* in the discourse between noble and "common" characters, where the moral degradation of characters such as Falstaff or Bardolph is represented in their drunkenness, dim-wittedness and ineptitude. Foregrounded in their dramatic and dramaturgical roles in the plays, the incapacity for violence among these characters is used as a form of ridicule that establishes them as Other to the hegemonic militarism embodied in Henry IV and the other nobles.

Hegemonic masculine qualities are also enforced through the affirmation of religious or nationalistic status. As I will explore in *Chapter 3*, the sense of nationhood forged through Henry V's militaristic victories in *Henry V* dispels the tenuousness of his claim to the throne after his father's deposition of Richard, overshadowing the violence by which this claim is made. In *Henry V* issues of gender, class and nationalism conjoin within the grand historical narrative of English conquest and male chivalry. This narrative's repetition within a closely connected set of plays, in particular a tetralogy commonly performed in canon, embeds rhetorics of patriarchal dominance in the storytelling traditions of English histories onstage. Reiterations of this narrative in prominent post-1980's productions, even when the intention is to challenge it, form a pattern in which hegemonic victories are repeatedly embodied and affirmed in performance. These patterns are pre-dated by earlier performances like Olivier's, which also responded to the historical contexts of their production. Yet the momentum of their distribution and traction is accelerated in the early twenty-first century with the development of modern digital media.

Although images of hegemony have changed since early modern England, its operation remains the same. In his exploration of sexual violence in *Henry V*, '"Maiden walls that man hath never entered": Rape and Post-Chivalric Military Culture in Shakespeare's Henry V,'

Jordi Coral explores the play's projection of Elizabethan masculinity and sexuality onto the Medieval militarism of Henry and the English soldiers. Coral depicts the historic progression through which a contemporary Western image of hegemony began to emerge; through the socio-economic advancement it was possible for Elizabethan men to attain via military employment. He observes hegemonic masculinity's progression throughout the early modern period from the 'knightly codes with their emphasis on self-restraint' to a form based on sexual dominance and 'the new kind of impersonal military strategy associated [in the play] with Henry' (2017: 406-407). Now commonly depicted in relation to the action-hero bodily aesthetics of male protagonists in popular film and media, the social power wielded through these qualities is totalised through their association with physical strength – and narrative centrality.

In the play cycles discussed throughout this study, the supposedly masculine qualities of rationalism, heroism and charisma (linked to whiteness, Christianity, heteronormativity and non-disability) that have come to appear requisite for embodied power in contemporary neo-liberal societies are affirmed in the characterisation of Henry IV and Henry V. Though these qualities may be rebelled against, they are inherited – or perhaps imposed – from father to son with the wielding of public and personal forms of expectation. In *Henry IV Part 1* and *2*, Hal's avoidance of his royal responsibilities is entwined with his avoidance of Henry; their relationship occupies central ground within the plays' dramaturgy, yet the violence that plays out between them is obfuscated by its entanglement with England's political conflict. Carried out in the name of the crown's victory, Henry's abuse is constituted as a masculinising force, necessary in the protection of the country's future. Though trends in the bodily depiction of Shakepeare's kings vary throughout the plays' performance history, the violence performed by these bodies does not; violence remains unquestioned – celebrated, even – and inherent to the performance of masculine power. Through aesthetic associations of hegemony with specific forms of bodily representation in performance, twenty-first century notions of gender are mapped onto the early modern depictions in the plays, as they have been at various points in history.

Just as the medium of Olivier and Branagh's iterations gave them prevalence on the global cinematic stage, the stage productions discussed in this study were also recorded, available to transnational audiences via television and live cinema broadcasts, streaming services, and DVD releases that continue to enshrine Shakespeare's cultural – and ideological – influence.

In *Shakespeare and Game of Thrones* (2021), Jeffrey R. Wilson touches on the ways the contemporary modes of entertainment have influenced engagement with English literary traditions and histories in what has been characterised as an era of Shakespeare for the *Game of Thrones* audience. He discusses how 'a demand for [the] kind of spectacle' made possible by technological advances in special effects and CGI in modern film has impacted audience expectations 'from the thrust stage of the Elizabethan age to the proscenium theater of the Restoration era to the film screen, the television screen, and the mobile phone screen' (2021: 54). The detail afforded by the use of close-up camera framing that is increasingly used to record theatre responds to a need to recreate the intimacy between character and audience that can be found in screen performance.

Wilson's discussion articulates the ways visual presentations of performance may respond to a need to provide expansive, wide-shot style views of onstage action, or hone in on minute expressions or motions. The recordings of stage productions explored throughout this study enabled close-up views of aspects of their performance that might otherwise be lost from the back seats of commercial venues such as the Royal Shakespeare Theatre or Shakespeare's Globe, making direct comparisons between them and screen productions like *The Hollow Crown* (2012) possible. The adaptations made use of the pre-established intimacy of the small-scale theatre venues in which they were performed to explore how visual dramaturgy, movement and character can impact, or be impacted by, the details that are made available to audiences. This approach extended to ideas of how narrative can also draw attention to such details through the editing, cutting or rearrangement of the texts, seeking to hone in on themes of gender and power in the plays to intensify their visibility onstage. Just as sparse sets or non-naturalistic aesthetics can draw attention to what *is* present, the strategic omission or recontextualisation of lines, scenes, characters, settings or given circumstances can bring seemingly disconnected elements into alignment, diverting attention to repetitions or contrasts that were before sporadically dispersed.

As Kidnie notes, in Matthew Warchus' RSC production of *Hamlet* (1997), the decision to begin Hamlet's 'well-known ["O that this too too solid flesh would melt" (1.2.129)] speech at an unexpected point' creates a 'jarring effect that captures the attention of even seasoned spectators, encouraging them to hear Hamlet's words as though for the first time' (2009: 39). Omission may not create meaning but can signal what is present in such a way that the recognition of what was previously buried or reinterpretation of something rendered invisible

by familiarity is made possible. In their 'Statements' in *On Dramaturgy*, Andrea Bozic et al conceptualise the textual dramaturgy that 'anchors' the elements of a production as a 'red thread' that is relatable to audiences and must never be lost sight of. In addition to connecting 'all the individual projects' of a production 'into one ongoing exploration,' the thread extends beyond performance into a network of 'other people's projects, art history, politics, daily news, weather' (2009: 12). This web of relation exists internally as well as beyond the text, with multiple dramaturgies existing simultaneously. Various threads of relation formed through the empirical consciousness of audiences can deviate from one another, become entangled or be severed in the process of their realisation onstage. Through omission, a segment of one or several of these threads may be cut and reassembled into one which is more succinctly or precisely aligned, or else recontextualisation may lift an entire web from one setting to another, reattaching its outer edges to an entirely different set of principles or codes, while the web itself remains in tact.

The knots formed through these structural shifts are part of a retexturing through which a '*feeling* of the differences' of a text may be created for direction to build on practically in later stages (Kidnie, 2009: 79). While textual interventions, as in productions like Olivier's *Henry V*, can function to smooth over incongruities that arise between ideological or other aspects of Shakespeare's plays and those of the present day, adaptation may also raise new tensions. Kidnie draws on James Williams' *Lyotard and the Political* (2000) to consider how the affect of dramaturgical retexturing

> "halts our drives to understand, to judge and to overcome. It does not so much cancel them as leave them in suspense by welding them to feelings that indicate that a difference is impassable" [...], unsettling efforts to ignore or falsely patch over [the lack of shared ground]. However one chooses to account for these fragments, the activity of arranging or trying to make sense of them as parts of (a perhaps logically impossible whole) produces a self-conscious awareness of the writing of history as another form of storytelling.
>
> (Kidnie, 2009: 79)

Kidnie explores a similar effect in the context of Djanet Sears' 1997 *Harlem Duet*, an adaptation of *Othello* originally performed at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto. In *Harlem Duet*, the action jumped disorientingly between three distinct historical settings in which the

anti-Black racial tensions specific to each time period could be read in stark comparison to the politics of Shakespeare's play. Sears' dramaturgy explored 'competing views within a shared conceptual framework' of engagement with African-American political history and perspective, underscoring the challenge of 'trying to speak across incompatible paradigms of race relations' and reinforcing 'the sensation of a single story repeating itself across time' (2009: 75-76). While drawing attention to the repetition of anti-Black discourse across time, Sears points to the historical contexts that continue to give rise to its different forms, "welding" an unfamiliar framework of feeling to the text as a means of disrupting its (white) gaze.

In this project, Connell's masculinities functions as a comparable framework to underpin the plays' adaptation and staging, through which embodied responses to social formations of power could be explored in the context of performance. Beyond issues of character or narrative, conversations that arose with the actors during our explorations pointed to the different forms of violence enacted through the plays and practices employed in their staging, from the physical sensation of responding to other performers during scene work, to the emotional toll of embodying violence onstage. The discussions, which occurred in various forms across the adaptations and the interviews in which actors reflected on their experiences, served to highlight what may be overlooked when the texts are read in isolation from practice. Narrative retexturing can instigate a retexturing of practice, exposing a web of entangled paradigms reaching through and beyond the text. Like Sears' dramaturgy, this approach exposes the discontinuities among the objects, bodies, contexts and discourses at play, affecting a multidimensionality that can counter the hegemonic gaze.

In *Recycling Shakespeare*, Charles Marowitz explores the various possibilities activated through restructuring and revising '*classic*' plays, drawing on his practice as the director of numerous critically divisive Shakespeares, including *The Marowitz Hamlet* (1965) and *A Macbeth* (1969). He describes his approach in these productions as 'theatrical collage,' which encompasses his various uses of 'speed, discontinuity and dramatic juxtaposition' (1991: 32). For Marowitz,

> discontinuity permits [the collage] to express interior meanings that in more conventional structures are revealed through the more plodding movements of unfolding psychology. Dramatic juxtapositions enable it to convey contrast and

> contradiction in such a way as to provide more dramatic information than is possible through sequential development. The effect of this swift, fragmentary method is to generate a surreal style that communicates experience from a subjective standpoint, thereby shifting the focus of events from an exterior to an interior reality.
>
> (Marowitz, 1991: 32).

Marowitz's metatheatrical dramaturgy challenges notions of textual and narrative continuity, working against the grain of *Hamlet*'s structure. This loss of dramatic continuity may also emerge as an unintended outcome of adaptation, in which disruptions to pace, narrative or dramatic effect do more to obstruct than reveal the 'interior meanings' of a text (Marowitz, 1991: 32). Kidnie notes that this unstable division between motivated and accidental affect 'poses a difficulty for acts of intervention in terms of gaining a purchase on the changing and impermeable boundaries between work and adaptation' (2009: 9). Though "productions are necessarily adaptations in the sense that they adapt to the stage a specific interpretation of the text – always a disruption," adaptations that seek to alter the text make the 'gap between text and performance [...] legible' (Kidnie, 2009: 22). It is the affect of *what* can be glimpsed through these gaps that is of importance to this project.

Unlike *Harlem Duet*, in Marowitz's *Hamlet* and *A Macbeth* 'the action was visualised through the eyes of the central protagonist' (Marowitz, 1991: 20). His nonlinear collaging of scenes reinforces the protagonist's singular standpoint, limiting the perspective through which the action can be viewed. The conflation of this one-dimensional gaze with subjectivity can serve to replicate hegemony in a form that is difficult to distinguish, in which 'interior reality' is constituted by a single moving part among many (1991: 32). In choosing to fragment her protagonists' viewpoints across multiple settings, Sears achieves a fragmentation of this singular standpoint alongside her re-sequencing of the play. She 'escaped the stranglehold of [*Othello*'s racist] narrative' (Marowitz, 1991: 33). Or rather, her characters did not, but that was precisely the point.

Heinemann, in 'How Brecht read Shakespeare,' explores Brecht's confrontation of the 'excessive concentration of interest and causation on the central character's mind and motives alone, and the magnetisation of the audience so that its own powers of judgement are paralysed' (1985: 239). She suggests that contemporary drama's focus on 'making us share the inner life of the characters' undermines Shakespearan theatre's concern 'with telling

stories' (1985: 238). Indeed, the postmodern preoccupation with interiority and empathy now dominates many critical and creative approaches to narrative. Zeynep Tufekci theorises this shift in relation to the infamous final series of *Game of Thrones* in her article on 'The Real Reason Fans Hate the Last Season of *Game of Thrones*' (2019). Tufekci attributes the show's downfall to a form of psychological storytelling popular in Hollywood media and entertainment, which depends on 'a single charismatic and/or powerful individual, along with [their] internal dynamics' to carry the narrative, relying on 'viewers identifying with the characters and becoming invested' (Tufekci, 2019). Sociological storytelling, however, allows characters to develop 'in response to the broader institutional settings, incentives and norms that surround them' (Tufekci, 2019). Audiences are given the opportunity to empathise and view themselves in relation to multiple characters rather than a single protagonist around whom the narrative is centred.

Both Tufekci and Heinemann confront the moral implications of this difference, recognising that the contexts of narrative construction and consumption cannot be detached from cultural process. The 'overly personal mode of storytelling or analysis leaves us bereft of deeper comprehension of events and history' and 'has great consequences for how [performances and audiences] deal with our world and the problems we encounter' (Tufekci, 2019). Over-investment in a singular protagonist like Hamlet or Henry V positions this image of masculinity at a narrative's centre, establishing a gaze that is projected across it. Audience empathy and identification becomes limited by the protagonist's capacity for empathising or identifying with other characters or situations. The issue, therefore, is not necessarily the nature of this feeling but through whom it is channelled, and it is through dramaturgy that these components of emotional connectivity are created, severed or rearranged. Though the adaptations aimed to alienate audiences from the violent masculinities encountered in the plays, they did not intend to preclude their empathy or identification with the protagonists, merely to distribute this investment more evenly. In fact, emotional investment and its relocation (for actors and audience) would play a vital role in the adaptations' decentring project. It is simply an issue of for *whom* audience investment is fostered and how its concentration in a single central protagonist might be avoided: an alternative (sociological) framework of feeling activated through adaptation.

Perhaps owing to the already prominent position of Shakespeare's kings in the first and second tetralogies, psychological modes of storytelling can creep into adaptations and

performances of the plays through the narrowed dramatic focus affected through their cutting or rearrangement. While audiences are encouraged to engage with the ambiguities of Richard II, Falstaff, Pistol or Henry V, such processes are made possible through a selective focus on the subjects adaptors choose to place under scrutiny. In a review of Max Webster's *Henry V*, Katherine Hipkiss problematises the centralising effect of Kit Harrington's casting and his remarks in a 'leading man' interview with Tina Daheley, which aired at the opening of the National Theatre Live cinema streaming:

> [Harrington] addressed how Henry can be a hero or a villain, and especially how his kiss with Katherine is non-consensual. Yet there is tension in an actor saying that a character (who is often glorified) is complex and is potentially even villainous, but then still playing that character as a leading man and emphasising personal connections. If this was a production created around Harrington, whose star power was a large part of the draw, and the viewers were [...] having the production framed by him, how did this affect the way the audience viewed Henry and his actions?
>
> (Hipkiss, 2022: 415)

In the NT livestream, the cameras' prioritisation of Harrington during key moments, such as the staged scene of Bardolph's hanging in which they 'focused on Henry's reaction, with just Bardolph's feet twitching in the foreground,' continued to reinforce his central position in the narratives within and beyond the play (Hipkiss, 2022: 417). With the time limitations of televisual and cinematic mediums, significant textual cuts have become common practice and mainstream drama's reliance on star power has resulted in a textual emphasis of the roles played by actors like Harrington, extending to the practice of their staging, recording and reception. Though Webster's *Henry V* may not have gone as far in adapting the play as other productions, Harrington's marketisation points to the centralising effect of the production's 'reciprocal relation' to the play (Kidnie, 2011: 5). Multiple elements of the show's production, recording and reception are dictated by a single actor and character, including the choice of play and the lived experience around which Henry's depiction is oriented. Notably, the personal experience explored in Harrington's performance is linked through his referencing of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to contexts of global trauma and neo-colonial violence. As Kipkiss observes, in doing so the production stakes a claim to atrocities that lie beyond the remit of the play, turning them into marketing tools for the purpose of reiterating yet another powerful white man's story.

Rather than maintain multidimensional narratives that give 'the sense of a whole historical world' beyond "the hero" and the play itself, adaptation can serve to narrow the field of vision for audiences and theatre-makers alike (Heinemann, 1994: 247). At worst, it is as much a practice of centralisation as editing, casting or staging, a dramatic approach that 'leaves [performance] unable to understand and react to social change' beyond the gaze of these centralised figures (Tufekci, 2019). Sociological dramaturgies can therefore disrupt psychological storytelling practices; through the web-like model of analysis centrality itself is disrupted and space created for the recognition of multiple epicentres, catalysts and effects, which are themselves fragmentary. Characters become part of a map of relation to one another, the socio-political issues at stake in the play, and the wider contexts of their production, not merely to the central figure of the King.

Such dramaturgies form part of a process by which performance may delimit the available representations and interpretations of gender or other social phenomena, contributing to the disruption of wider socio-political structures. The narratives within and through which bodies are presented have the potential to influence their signification and the meanings ascribed to the acts or systems they represent. As is becoming increasingly accepted in antiracist and anticolonial scholarship, Shakespeare's influence and status within the cultural canon of colonial and imperial history remains embedded in global political, literary, pedagogical, architectural, and dramatic discourses. Shakespeare's central positioning in the social organisation of British national presentation perpetuates this hegemony, operating, in part, through and within theatrical practice. Creating discontinuity in narratives of hegemony can, therefore, interrupt the continuity of these political or social organisations, marking what might otherwise remain undisrupted or "unthinkable" (de Certeau in Bennett, 1996: 2). The sociological approaches to narrative, analysis and performance discussed by Tufecki, which potentiate multidimensional and multidirectional views of individuals, institutions and cultures, are applicable in other areas of theatre and performance.

As Aughterson and Grant Ferguson observe in their discussion of design and performance in Andoh and Linton's *Richard II* (2019), as well as textual intervention, production practices form part of the process by which Shakespeare can be adapted. In Andoh and Linton's *Richard II*, aesthetic decisions, such as cladding the Sam Wannamaker's black-painted walls in Bamboo, were also political commentaries: 'first, because Bamboo is a material you would

find in East Asia, South East Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the West Indies – mirroring the geographical histories of the bodies onstage; secondly because Bamboo is light in colour, and light bounces off Bamboo' to ensure full visibility for the women of colour onstage (Aughterson and Grant Ferguson, 2020: 68-69). Through such processes, they state, 'contemporary performance can challenge the 400-year-old texts, find strange commonalities across the centuries and, through performance, play out both our prejudices and stereotypes of gender and sexuality, inviting us to confront them' (2020: 1). Through Andoh and Linton's adaptation of the space the text is also altered in the sense of what and who is made visible, what dialogues are made present, and what actors are given permission to explore within their performance.

Reflecting on the process of staging *Richard II* with a company who were all women of colour, Andoh notes that it created space for a collective recognition of their shared experiences as 'women from African, West Indian, South East Asian, East Asian, Middle Eastern heritage, suddenly all being in a room together not having to represent all women, or all people of colour' (2020: 66). Andoh links this escape from the exhaustion of having to be that 'performative, representative person' to their work on the play and how they 'took the performative king and looked at the way *we* are all obliged to be performative in our lives' (2002: 67). Aesthetic and political aspects of performance have the capacity to dictate not only audiences' 'social relations' to the play but performers' as well (Bennett, 1997: 28). The *Richard II* company's collective recognition changes the nature of how the play is channelled through their bodies; the process becomes one of visibility, which adaptation and direction help to enact. The identities of the company were not just represented in the bodies onstage but in the set, lighting, sound, space, marketing, and very breath – liberated from exhaustion – of the production.

In rehearsing a familiar play with a company of people commonly marginalised within the scope of Shakespearean performance, in a production staged through creative and critical explorations of gender, race and alienation, Andoh and Linton's *Richard II* demonstrates how Shakespeare can expose and confront oppressive practices within systems of creation and consumption. Andoh describes the experience of, for once, working and existing beyond the white supremacist gaze in the rehearsal room. The space made available by the rare absence of white spectatorship in the construction of performance enabled not only a decolonised view of the play and an expansion of its figurative possibilities, but also revealed the potential

for self-reflection, cross-cultural dialogues, and a holding of space for collective and individual consciousness in the production process.

Adaptation presents an opportunity to critically explore and reflect on the processes of creation through which they developed alongside reimagining the plays themselves. While applying Connell's masculinities as a lens through which to conduct an analysis of the second tetralogy, the same may be done for the rehearsal room as a site of practice in which intersecting masculine, feminine and Queer identities are enacted. How are gendered configurations embedded in performance through dramatic narrative, embodiment and production? And to what extent do these practices limit, liberate or distort the products that arise from them? Perhaps the time for inquiry, disruption or reclamation has passed, and we should instead be exploring and creating beyond the canons of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, moving on from the exclusionary institutions that have formed in their wake. Yet how might sociological approaches to textual and visual dramaturgy avoid further replicating the marginalisation that emerges as an inevitable effect of centrality?

Reflections on performance

My reflection on the adaptations is guided by personal observations and insights offered by the actors throughout the project, helping provide a comprehensive view of the process from multiple perspectives. The following chapters, introduced in more detail below, offer a chronological account of the productions, drawing comparisons between them and the work of previous Shakespeare productions and adaptations. In *Clamorous Voices* (1988), Carol Rutter's exploration of Shakespeare's women in prominent 1970's and 80's performances draws on interviews with actors whose reflections on playing the characters contribute to a view of the interconnected on- and offstage contexts in which they occurred. Touching on specific moments in the productions, backstage politics, and how decisions by directors, designers or other actors affected their portrayals, the interviews incorporate the multilayered standpoints, interpretations and intentions that contributed to their performances. In my work with the three different companies of professional actors and creatives across the three productions, the company members contributed their own reflections and documentations of their work with the texts, applied theories, and creative concepts. After the productions, I held

interviews with the actors, inviting them to volunteer their thoughts on the shows and offer insights into their processes.

Alongside Rutter, Silverstone offered a model for considering theatre and performance practice in relation to the social and cultural landscapes in which they occur. During rehearsals, I documented the process with personal director's notes, considering the actors' engagement with the ideas and performance techniques explored; I encouraged input through one-to-one meetings at the start of each rehearsal process, then further individual and group discussions throughout. I provided each actor with a non-compulsory rehearsal journal to use as they saw fit, collecting them again when the shows were over. Several chose to fill their journals with character research, diary entries, diagrams and sketches, while others volunteered their annotated scripts as a way of observing their personal processes through the analysis of notes or highlighting. This documentation helped provide a more objective view of the project, informing the consideration of directorial practice from an outward perspective.

Chapter 1 will focus on the first adaptation in the series, 'Fall of Kings', which aimed to subvert the masculine-feminine dichotomy prevalently figured in the passive, physically weak Richard II and his hypermasculine warrior cousin Bolingbroke in *Richard II*. The casting of actors Toby Underwood as Richard and Russell Eccleston as Bolingbroke played into traditional embodiments of this pairing, visible in late twentieth and early twenty-first century productions with the application of Connell's framework, before the gender performance techniques employed in rehearsals sought to disrupt this convention. The chapter will reflect on our attempts to decode the gender performance and presentation of these characters through our analysis and reinterpretation of linguistic or performative tropes in the playtext through the lens of Connell's masculinities. The approach informed Underwood and Eccleston's performances of gender, which explored the use of vocal tone, posture, gestus, and costume as a means of undermining gendered readings of their physical bodies onstage. This reinterpretation of the character dynamic positioned Richard as a hypermasculine king, whose hegemony was maintained through the emotional policing of those around him, including Bolingbroke. Eccleston's portrayal, utilising an analysis of hypermetric and catalectic lines in the playtext, drew on the frequency of Bolingbroke's violent outbursts, attempting to ground these reactions in a stereotypically feminine

emotionality in contrast to the masculinised interpretations common in prominent past productions.

In line with the foregrounding of marginalised experience in this study, my reflection in *Chapter 1* will focus on this feminisation of Bolingbroke, together with the bodily disruption and defamiliarisation of violence that resulted from his recharacterisation. The practices and reflection on them discussed in this and the subsequent chapters draw on performance analysis of past productions, through which patterns in the narrative or embodied representation of characters, plotlines and action can be identified. In my discussion of *Richard II*, I will consider Andoh and Linton's all-women of colour *Richard II* (2019), Deborah Warner's *Richard II* with Fiona Shaw as Richard and Richard Bremmer as Bolingbroke (1996), Gregory Doran's Royal Shakespeare Company production with David Tennant as Richard and Nigel Lindsay as Bolingbroke (2012), and Rupert Goold's televisual BBC film *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*, featuring Ben Whishaw as Richard and Rory Kinnear as Bolingbroke (2012). In each of these productions, the masculine-feminine dichotomies present in the embodiments of Richard and Bolingbroke reinforce the play's hegemonic victory narrative with the depiction of Richard as a ruler deserving deposition, and Bolingbroke as a man worthy of displacing him.

Much in the way that Andoh reflects on the politics of her and Linton's *Richard II* in *Shakespeare and Gender*, this chapter will consider how the reinterpretation of Richard and Bolingbroke in 'Fall of Kings' enabled a subversion of their dichotomy. The direction and performance techniques I will discuss built on dramaturgical reconfigurations that attempted to point to the violence enacted in the play, including the creation of the Narrator, who appeared at regular intervals to comment on the action through dialogue taken from *Richard II*'s other characters. The conclusion of this first chapter reflects on how these approaches contributed to a disruption of the hegemonic victory narrative*,* in which Bolingbroke's triumph over Richard signalled a destabilisation of the heteropatriarchal gender order in place of the realignment that is commonly represented. Observations from this initial process would later inform the creative and critical aims of the second adaptation, 'Between the Armies', including a consideration of how the gendered and racial dynamics established through the production's casting impacted its performance.

Chapter 2 focuses on how the second adaptation sought to displace selected parts of the action in *Henry IV Parts 1* and 2 from their public courtly realm, to environments in which the characters private emotional lives could be more closely examined. The Eastcheap tavern was transformed into a Queer nightclub in 1980's England, where a closeted prince Hal, played by Stan Elliott, sought refuge from the compulsory heterosexuality of his father's court. Drawing attention to the Eastcheap community's Queer resistance to the heteronormative world beyond it through costume, set and lighting design, the production emphasised the gender-nonconformity of Falstaff and his companions. The heightened politicism of Hal's gay identity within this setting amplified the uneven power dynamic between him and Henry already present in the *Henry IV* texts. The homophobic hostility that pervaded British sexual politics with the rise of the AIDS epidemic and the government's abandonment of LGBTQIA+ communities throughout the 1980s formed a backdrop against which Hal could be seen to gradually succumb to the heteronormative violence required of him by his father and his kingdom. Hal's rejection of Falstaff, played by Ross Scott, could be seen as a commitment to the violent masculinity essential to performances of kingship in the second tetralogy.

Hal's marginalisation as a young gay man was mirrored with Hotspur's, who was played by Njeko Katebe, a Black British actor of Zambian heritage. As a result of this casting, Hotspur's embodiment affected a displacement of white male violence and victimisation, contributing to the disruption of Hal's victory narrative and exposing moments in which both characters could be seen to accept or reject the violent masculinities required of them. Reflecting on how Katebe's casting impacted our approach to the characterisation and staging of violent masculinities, the chapter will discuss how Hotspur's role in the dramaturgy of 'Between the Armies' contributed to a revision of the character's association with improper or "bad" violence in relation to the autonomy and political power he could be seen to hold. Alongside this, it will consider Rasul A. Mowatt's critique surrounding the consumption of Black death in representations of Black victimisation in 'Black Lives as Snuff: The Silent Complicity in Viewing Black Death' (2018), reflecting on the ways our staging and dramaturgy of Hotspur's death managed, or did not manage, to avoid the spectacle or objectification of his murder in performance. In doing so this chapter hopes, to use Silverstone's phrasing, to 'identify the difficulties of the appropriation of the experiences of others in performance, especially in relation to acts of responsibility and the possibility for making that sense of responsibility legible in performance and its documentation,' seeking to

develop practices in direction that may avoid potentially traumatic deployments of Shakespeare (2011: 53).

The practice through which 'Between the Armies' developed was informed by observations of past productions of *Henry IV Part 1* and *2* in which acceptances or rejections of violent masculinities could be read. Notably, Joe Armstrong as Hotspur and Michelle Dockery as Kate Percy in Richard Eyre's televisual adaptation *The Hollow Crown: Henry IV, Part 1* (2012), Jade Anouka as Hotspur and Harriet Walter as Henry in Phyllida Lloyd's all-woman *Henry IV* (2014), and Trevor White's Hotspur and Jasper Britton's Henry in Gregory Doran's RSC *Henry IV Part I* (2014). Comparing aspects of the textual and visual dramaturgies of these productions to those of 'Between the Armies', *Chapter 2* will consider how the adaptation, development and performance of the show contributed to the queering and re-embodying of characters and politics that can be observed in these iterations of the plays.

With the project's progression came less reliance on the explicit use of Conncell's masculinities in its approach; instead her theory formed a lens through which the production and my decisions as director could be viewed, with less literal grounding in the terminology or application of the framework itself. The analysis in this chapter reflects a move from the examination of individual characters and relationships, to broader concepts of sexuality, race, class, and political division within the overarching narratives of the play. This second chapter will therefore draw on Silverstone's approach in her analysis of past adaptations of Shakespeare, including Philip Osment and Gay Sweatshop's *This Island's Mine* (1986) and Gregory Doran and Antony Sher's *Titus Andronicus* at the National Theatre in London and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg (1995). Silverstone examines the function of the processes through which these productions were developed and their relation to the contexts in which they were performed in the representation – and generation – of trauma. Acting as a blueprint for my reflection on 'Between the Armies' and later 'The Breach', her analysis informed the consideration of the productions in relation to temporal or spatial politics, cultural messaging, and consent.

Chapter 3 continues the examination of actor-process, actor-audience and actor-director power dynamics in the development of 'The Breach', observing how the application of a modern-day, working-class lens in rehearsals served to expose and challenge stereotypical

representations of commonality, moral corruption and violence in *Henry V.* Beginning with an exploration of Patrick James Withey's portrayal of Pistol as a young working-class soldier, the chapter will discuss how narratives surrounding working-class military masculinities in 'The Breach' were able to critique the disenfranchisement and instrumentalisation of boys and men for the perpetuation of violent patriarchal conflict. The characters and narratives presented in 'The Breach' will be examined in comparison with those of past productions, observing how staging choices in Dominic Dromgoole's Shakespeare's Globe *Henry V* (2012) and Gregory Doran's RSC *Henry V* (2015) reinforced the marginalisation of characters already under- or misrepresented in the text. In contrast, Thea Sharrock's BBC adaptation *The Hollow Crown: Henry V* (2012) helped inform adaptation and staging choices that aimed to centralise these characters.

Drawing on hooks' discussion of patriarchal pedagogy in contemporary media and Silverstone's examination of how dramaturgical and practical interventions in the creation of performance can perpetuate cultures of traumatisation, *Chapter 3* will consider ways the continual association of violence and victimisation with marginalised characters can impact the creative processes and mental health of the actors who play them. Darren McGarvey's *Poverty Safari* (2017) provided an account of underclass experience that was used in our creative development of the playworld, shaping performances of hypervigilance, class violence and masculinity. The exercises contributed to a disruption of the stigma around class and authorised actors' (voluntary) use of lived experience in the development of their characters. Considering these exercises, which resisted the class-based violence that can occur within creative processes and validated the identities of working-class cast members, in relation to James C. Scott's concept of 'hidden transcripts' of subordinates in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), the chapter will reflect on moments of recognition and acceptance that occurred in rehearsals. The resulting performances contributed to a presentation of Shakespeare's characters through a working-class lens, subverting the moral logic by which they are often condemned and silenced.

Building on this discussion, the chapter will consider how performance contexts and directorial interventions might mitigate actor anxieties surrounding the content of playtexts, and the permissibility that may be granted or withheld by audiences. It will examine the ways different actors' experiences of 'The Breach' rehearsal process, compared to those of the preceding adaptations, varied in relation to their own identities or positionality to the

production's subject matter. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the performed and interior forms of bodily resistance the rehearsal process gave rise to. This exploration leads to a *Conclusion* of this study, which will offer final reflections on performance practice: in relation to the disruption and disruptive potential of actor bodies; the disproportionate emotional labour undertaken by marginalised actors; and the roles consent, responsive direction, and flexible centrality might play in creating spaces of safety in rehearsal and performance.

While not essential, the production videos are intended to serve as precursors to the written reflection, offering a chronological way of observing the practical project elements and informing an understanding of the thesis as rooted in practice. Where possible, descriptions of the adaptations or past productions that inform my discussion aim to supply substantial detail to avoid compulsory viewing. Where the specific moments referenced are necessary to understanding or should readers wish to view in greater detail, timestamps are provided as a guide to relevant scenes, available via the cited Shakespeare productions and recordings in the *Bibliography*. Timestamps are likewise used to direct readers to key moments of the production videos (Appendices 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) necessary to effective engagement with ideas arising from or demonstrated in the performed adaptations.

Like the adaptations themselves, these reflections are interspersed with (sometimes unsuccessful) navigations of the intersections, subjectivities and contradictions that emerge in, and in the creation of, dramatic production and performance. The process of reflection was sometimes uncomfortable and, as Harriet Walter writes in her collection of autobiographical essays on performing Shakespeare, *Brutus and Other Heroines*, 'like looking back through old diary entries with a mixture of affection and embarrassment' (Walter, 2016: vii). Like Walter, I have attempted to capture events from multiple perspectives to gain objectivity and acknowledge the inequalities, positionalities, and subjectivities at play within the study itself. Exemplified in these discussions are a set of practices, from a perspective both subject to and within the bounds of cultural hegemony, with which personal power can be examined and disrupted in adaptation, direction and performance.

Chapter 1

"Tis not the trial of a woman's war": embodied and performed masculinities in 'Fall of Kings'

The adaptation and staging of 'Fall of Kings' aimed to interrogate the dichotomy of passive femininity and violent masculinity that emerges in performed representations of Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke in *Richard II* throughout the early twenty-first century. As this chapter will explore, though the play itself models early modern renderings of Medieval feudal and chivalric masculinities, contemporary productions tend toward aesthetic and performed embodiments that reproduce modern gendered ideologies. Most relevant to 'Fall of Kings' among these contemporary models and modes of gender, our attempted disruption revolved around the different forms of violent masculinity that appeared throughout our work with the plays. The first of these manifestations, what I will refer to as "martial" or "warrior" masculinities, most closely resemble the feudal and chivalric masculinities that Shakespeare places in dialogue with one another, carried through the traditional representations of knighthood that served as 'object[s] of nostalgia' in early modern England (Smith, 2000: 48). In the twenty-first century, perhaps owing to the difficulty of explicating the historical nuance of Medieval-come-Elizabethan feudalism for modern audiences, this tradition is lodged within the armoured bodies of actors such as Nigel Lindsay and Rory Kinnear.

The aforementioned images of knighthood serve as a visual point of contact for the transformation of Bolingbroke's masculinity throughout the play. Yet his change is often markedly less significant than Richard's. This may be because Bolingbroke's ascent from duke to king is less drastic in its trajectory than Richard's from king to deceased former king. Through this difference, however, martiality takes on a permanence, in both the world of the play and its performance history, that other forms of masculinity do not. The other, equally destructive but enacted via different means, "toxic" or "anxious" masculinities I will reference (alluding to the popular feminist term for everyday modes of modern masculine violence), describe emotional forms of control embodied and exerted as a response to the pressure of maintaining dominance. Though anxious masculinity has been read into the play across various scholarship, 'Fall of Kings' set out to map a contemporaneous set of gendered practices onto Toby Underwood's portrayal of Richard, placing contrasting embodiments of masculinity side by side to expose their workings in the play's narrative and dramatic logic, as well as in beliefs about them in the context of theatre and performance.

The application of Connell's masculinities to the analysis and adaptation of the playtext would, theoretically, enable a departure from binary readings of gender and power in performance, enabling an exploration of the characters as embodiers of multiple gendered identities within the interchanging contexts and dynamics of the play's action. Viewed in relation to the behavioural aspects of Connell's framework, the characters could be seen to claim, defend or relinquish power through performances of masculinity. Whereas many of the productions that informed the adaptation present archetypal images of male martiality, paternity, martyrdom and "campness," their consideration in relation to hegemony, complicity, subordinacy and marginality revealed moments when masculine identity could be seen to shift in response to setting, events or action in the text. The application of this lens in the analysis of *Richard II* helped inform the inclusion, editing, reordering, and omission of plot points, lines of dialogue or characters in the adaptation, which aimed to amplify shifts or disruptions in the gendered performances of characters.

When the adaptation was eventually performed, the effects of this approach and the adjusted ways of thinking about hierarchical dynamics between characters were most visible in the actors' physical use of their bodies, vocal tone and inflections, proxemics, and costuming to represent gains or loses of confidence, power, faith, love, fear, respect, or autonomy throughout the play. As the primary mode of communication for the actors, their bodies became central to the interpretation and expression of the characters onstage, through which their language and symbolic roles could be defamiliarised, subverted or disrupted. At times, the actors' physical or performed bodies contradicted their interpretations of the playtext; most notable of these instances occurred in Russell Eccleston's characterisation of Bolingbroke, Toby Underwood's performance as Richard, and Gabrielle Finnegan's portrayals of the Narrator, Bishop of Carlisle and Groom. These embodied performances and the disruptions in gendered power they evoked will be the focus of this chapter.

I will reflect on the process through which these performances were reached with a discussion of how our reimagining of *Richard II* created possibilities for the disruption of the hegemonic victory narrative onstage. Informing our approach, Rupert Goold's television adaptation *The Hollow Crown: Richard II* (2012), Deborah Warner's stage production at the National Theatre (1996), Gregory Doran's RSC production (2014), and Andoh and Linton's Shakespeare's Globe production provided examples of how performance can reinforce or

disrupt masculine-feminine dichotomies. Goold's use of camera framing to draw focus to aspects of Whishaw and Kinnear's performances offered a way of considering how extratextual devices can influence perceptions of characters. Considered alongside Doran and Warner's productions, it was possible to observe how inclusion, exclusion and narrative framing had the potential to fulfil a similar function onstage. While Andoh and Linton's foregrounding of Andoh's role as a Ghanaian woman of colour playing Richard as a male character challenged conventional depictions of him in relation to paradigms associated with white masculinity and authority. Though Andoh and Linton's production came after 'Fall of Kings', it helped guide the retrospective consideration of how Shakespeare can be framed through casting and promotion.

Richard II's feminisation, in contrast to Bolingbroke's hyper-masculinisation, constructs a narrative in which the macho-centric figure emerges victorious from conflict with a man who is depicted as less masculine – or less representative of Western heteropatriarchal masculine ideals – and therefore less worthy of authority, explored here through close readings of the text in conjunction with these productions and drawing on sociological considerations of gender and masculinities. What can a theory of masculinities reveal when applied to the analysis of *Richard II*, and how does a sociological approach to the adaptation and rehearsal of the play affect its performance?

Character allegiance and narrative (re)framing

The initial approach to the adaptation of *Richard II* focused on how the dramaturgical framing of passive and active action could subvert the reading of gendered acts in 'Fall of Kings'. Prompting the exploration of male passivity, in *The Hollow Crown: Richard II* (2012) attention is repeatedly drawn to Richard's physical and emotional fragility, implicitly underpinning notions of masculinity attached to his body and its role in his downfall. Ben Whishaw's characterisation emphasises his slender frame with the frequent crossing of his legs and elbows tucked close to his body. His extravagant costuming heightens the anxiousness of his motions, causing him to fidget nervously as it blows in the wind, or appearing to weigh him down and restrict his movement in the film's opening scene. In an interview with John Preston for *The Telegraph*, Whishaw referenced Michael Jackson as an inspiration for his characterisation; the influence of Jackson's eternal-child personality and

public mental health battles are evident in the naivety and insecurity Whishaw brings to the role (Preston, 2012).

Suggestions of childishness and infirmity are consistent across prominent twentieth and twenty-first century performances of Richard. In ‘Fiona Shaw’s Richard II: The Girl as Player-King Comic,’ Carol Rutter catalogues the history of his feminisation and infantilisation in critical receptions of Deborah Warner’s *Richard II*:

> For Coleridge, Richard’s “inherent weakness” was “an intellectual feminineness, . . . feminine *friendism*”; for Dowden it was his “ ‘boyishness,’ ” his “want of true and manly patriotism.” What repelled Hazlitt—Richard's failure of “manliness”—Swinburne cherished: the “inspired effeminacy” of this “unmanliest of [Shakespeare’s] creatures.” It was Walter Pater who invented Richard as the poet-king, a sort of eloquent but effeminate “lassy-lad,” and it was Pater's Richard that became the standard reading of the role in the theater.
>
> (Rutter, 1997: 316)

Rutter highlights the preoccupation with gendered readings of the character and the misogynistic language through which his effeminacy is foregrounded, spanning from Coleridge in the nineteenth century to Billington’s review of Ian McKellen’s “radically” masculine performance in 1969. Coleridge’s description links concepts of femininity and “friendism” with “inherent weakness,” with the implication that strong relationships – even platonic ones – obstruct the achievement of heteronormative masculinity (Rutter, 1997: 316). Rutter goes on to discuss the narcissism later associated with the poet-king portrayal, first emerging in a review in *The Times* by an unidentified reviewer, a troupe that devalues supposedly feminine qualities like verbosity, lyricism and romanticism (Rutter, 1997: 316). Though it may not have been Shakespeare’s prerogative to associate Richard’s misrule with feminine behaviour, it has certainly been the project of critics to read contemporary notions that conceptualise the abuse of power as inherently feminine into the play.

As foil to Richard, Bolingbroke is regularly posited as his opponent in gender performance as well as politics. Opposite Whishaw in *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*, Rory Kinnear as Bolingbroke begins the film clad in armour that is not removed until he is crowned. The opening credits depict a montage of Bolingbroke preparing for combat against Thomas

Mowbray, vaulting into the saddle of his horse and decapitating a hay-stuffed dummy with a single swing of his sword. The cousins' contrast remains a major component of their characterisation throughout the film, a depiction of conflicting masculinities that is mirrored in multiple other productions of the play. In Doran's *Richard II* (2014), Nigel Lindsay's Bolingbroke appeared head-to-toe in chainmail at the funeral of the Duke of Gloucester, already prepared for battle with Mowbray. Goaded by David Tennant's Richard, he proceeded to argue his claim against Mowbray, apparently oblivious to the grieving Duchess of Gloucester draped over his late uncle's coffin centre stage.

The immediate establishment of Bolingbroke's martial identity at the opening of these productions connects the power he will later gain with the capacity for physical domination. Kinnear and Lindsay's portrayals lean into the violence inherent in much of Bolingbroke's language, represented in his first lines of dialogue: 'With a foul traitor's name stuff I thy throat, / And wish – so please my sovereign – ere I move, / What my tongue speaks my right-drawn sword may prove' (1.1.44-46). The attitudes of the characters surrounding Richard and Bolingbroke act as a lens by which audience perceptions of their conflict can be guided. Later in the play Lord Northumberland's condemnation of Richard, emphasises the Appellants' roles as a fathers, providers and paternal protectors, invoking the patriarchal authority attached to male gender roles to legitimise to their claims:

> The King is not himself, but basely led
> By flatterers; and what they will inform
> Merely in hate 'gainst any of us all,
> That will the King severely prosecute
> 'Gainst us, our lives, our children and our heirs
>
> (2.1.241-245)

This perspective is repeatedly reinforced up until the point of Bolingbroke's return from banishment (2.3), establishing a necessity for a form of leadership that Richard cannot provide, through the gaze of the disempowered Appellants – victims of a tyrant's policies, trying only to do what is best of their country and their families. Northumberland's words portray the flatterers as a danger to the legitimacy of the monarchy and nobility; as their potential saviour, Bolingbroke is the chivalrous knight who will return to vanquish these

'caterpillars of the commonwealth,' lodging England's hopes in the martial masculinity he symbolises (2.3.166).

Bolingbroke's victory is premeditated through these introductions of the conflict between them in post-1980's performance. From the offset Richard is framed as a tyrant, wrongfully seizing his cousin's title and inheritance. His transgressions are characterised by inaction: his failure to prevent Gloucester's death; his inability to resist the flattery of the 'vipers' appropriating power from the nobles; and his lack of crusades waged in foreign lands. His disdain for the 'dire aspect / Of civil wounds ploughed up with neighbours' sword' and the 'grating shock of wrathful iron arms' establishes pacifism as a defining feature of his kingship (1.3.27-36). His use of childlike images in description of his kingdom – the 'peace, which in our country's cradle / Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep' – forms an image of maternal caregiving that is not concordant with heteropatriarchal male gender roles, nor the role of King (1.3.32-33). These contrasting images of political potency and popularity encode contemporary perceptions of violent action as essential to masculinity and authority to which nonviolence, equated through this framing with ineptitude, is the antithesis. Though we may not assume that Shakespeare's exploration of the natural or unnatural uses to which monarchic power may be put is intendedly associated with Richard's gender, as Rutter's observations above demonstrate, it is an inescapable factor in the critical discourse surrounding the play and its performance from the nineteenth century onwards.

As Bruce R. Smith discusses in *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, romantic chivalric traditions associated with Medieval feudalism had long since given way to Elizabethan economies of status among the landed aristocracy and emerging military and merchant classes. For Smith, Elizabethan views of masculinity come more explicitly into play in Bolingbroke's representation of 'the cult of chivalry in late sixteenth-century England [which] served to negotiate some central conflicts for men under Elizabeth's government: obedience versus honour, defence versus aggression, royal sovereignty versus aristocratic self-assertion' (2000: 45). As Aughterson and Grant Ferguson note, in *Richard II* 'we find a deposition narrative in which the horror of destroying the anointed king is at odds with a different kind of right to rule: the military success and popularity of the pretender, Bolingbroke' (2020: 43). In Bolingbroke's trajectory from 'chivalrous night' to 'deviant rebel' to crowned king, the transformation of early modern hegemonic masculinity is traced from one in which honour is

earned through devotion, to a colonial mindset in which it is bound to material possession and conquest (Smith, 2000: 47).

In '"Blood and Soil" – *Richard II* and the Politics of Landscape,' Peter J. Smith suggests that Richard's downfall is forged through his acts of appropriation. He draws the parallel between Richard's seizure of Bolingbroke's land – 'a raw form from the natural world' – and his appropriation of 'divine omnipotence' through his intervention in the trail of combat between Bolingbroke and Mowbray (2020: 95). By disrupting the lawful passing of land from father to son and appropriating the deciding power over who lives or dies that should be God's alone, Richard undermines the natural orders of divine authority and manmade law, a performative elevation 'of his own puissance' (Smith, 2020: 95). In allowing himself to be 'basely led / By flatterers,' Richard's misuse of power is characterised as an inability to resist bodily impulse (2.1.241-242). But more so than his own, his actions pose a threat to the masculinity of other men: through Richard's appropriation of his inheritance, Bolingbroke is 'gelded of his patrimony,' a framing that mimics discourses of feminine desire throughout the Shakespearean canon (2.1.237). In *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings*, Phillipa Berry examines instances of masculine authority's intrusion and appropriation by feminine sexuality and 'generative' corporeality in *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* (1999: 53). In the case of Lady Macbeth, the desire for masculine 'worldly power (the crown as 'golden round')' disrupts "natural" early modern Christian orders of masculine dominance (in her command of Macbeth), monarchic lineage (in her murder of the King), and fixed generative femininity (in calling on the spirits to 'take my milk for gall') (1.5.48). In *Richard II*, with Shakespeare's emphasis of the divine connection between King and land, the divide between worldly power and spiritual force is blurred; Richard's desire, like Lady Macbeth's, Tamora's, or Goneril and Reagan's, poses a danger to England in both its physical and spiritual forms.

Though modern performances are less reliant on audiences' knowledge of the monarchic body politic, representations of Richard and Bolingbroke's relationship necessarily pivot on the justification of their reactions to the other's actions. Whether Richard's banishment of Bolingbroke can believably be understood as an act of protection or of spite, or whether his breaking of that banishment can be read as a sincere attempt at reconciliation or revenge, inevitably involves the dramatic establishment of a production's moral and political positioning, by which the actions of one man are deemed appropriate, and the other's not. While Shakespeare does not definitively implicate Richard's gender performance as a factor

in his downfall, the bodily markers through which his pride is signposted in post-1980's performance (long hair, painted nails, extravagant costuming, and physicality, to name a few) are in themselves gendered by the contexts in which they are viewed. Often stripped of these markers upon his imprisonment, it is through this stripping that *Richard II*'s and Richard's own tragic resolutions are reached. In contrast, through the final scene's denouement-style structure, Bolingbroke is positioned as the man who will deliver a resolution.

Performances of *Richard II* that reiterate and emphasise these tropes construct a narrative in which those who do not conform to hegemonic masculine values are marginalised, victimised or erased, banished, as Richard and his favourites are, to dungeons or death. The rhetoric formed through the attitudes of characters like Gaunt and the Appellants justifies this destruction as a realignment of natural order, integral to the performance of hegemony. How, therefore, could 'Fall of Kings' disrupt this acceptance of violent domination through its figuring and framing of Richard's deposition?

Figure 1 Production photograph of 'Fall of Kings' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Gabrielle Finnegan as the Narrator.

The view of Richard's weakness appears to hinge more upon the scrutiny to which his actions or inactions are subject than the actions themselves. With this in mind, the Narrator was formed as a device through which the subversive power of narrative framing, as Marowitz, Heinemann, Brecht and Tufekci suggest, could be explored in 'Fall of Kings', with the intent of nurturing allegiance for Richard in the way Gaunt and the Appellants do for Bolingbroke. The Narrator would eventually be performed by Gabrielle Finnegan, the production's sole female actor. While the other characters Finnegan played were male (denoted by distinct costuming and on-stage costume changes), the Narrator shared the same clothing as Queen Isabella (Figure 1), blurring the distinction between the show's two explicitly female figures.

Set apart from the closer-to-naturalistic world of the play, the Narrator was predominantly alone onstage, accompanied by a warped recording of her own voice singing an adapted version of the old English folk song *Death and the Lady* (Appendix 1.2, p.2). Edited into the *Narrator's Theme* by sound designer Edward Terry, the soundscape was used to distinguish the Narrator's realm from the main playworld, at times invading the action to underscore crucial moments (Appendix 1.3). Combined with Annabel Ellis' lighting design, which shifted from the natural, earthy tones of the general playworld to an otherworldly medley of greens and pinks, the Narrator's realm was set apart from the patriarchal realm of Richard's court (Appendix 1.1: 00.48.27). As in *Henry V*, where the Chorus' speeches are segregated to isolated prologues, with the direct address of the audience enacting a connection between them and the quasi-fictional realm of Medieval history, the Narrator's dialogue remained physically and semiotically separate from the masculine-centric main playworld.

As James Hirsh discusses in 'Shakespeare's Stage Chorus and Olivier's Film Chorus' (2015), with this connection to the audience comes an assumed, though not infallible, authority. Functioning as a bridge between audiences and the playworld, the Chorus (or any narrator) has the power to defend, comment on, undermine, or contest the claims or assumptions characters make about themselves and others. In his study of Olivier's *Henry V* (1944), Hirsh critiques the cuts made to the Chorus' speeches that transformed the character 'from a subjective and sometimes unreliable narrator to an objective and reliable one,' eliminating incompatibilities between 'the choral narration and the action' that disrupt the appearance of narratorial omnipotence (2015: 170). With this elimination, the cuts to Olivier's Chorus instate a false neutrality, aligning narratorial authority with the image of Henry put forth in the film as a victorious wartime leader and national hero. The gaze

established in the Narrator's speeches in 'Fall of Kings' would therefore play an important role in shaping the narrative through which Richard's deposition could be perceived. While adapting the Narrator there were scarce examples of female actors in the role of Shakespeare's Chorus to guide my treatment of the text; it wasn't until 2018, when Joanne Howarth performed the role under the direction of Elizabeth Freestone in Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory's *Henry V*, that a comparative female or queered chorus was exemplified onstage. Rather than follow the blueprint of Shakespeare's Chorus, I sought ways of fostering the audience-playworld connection in the text of *Richard II* itself.

In an analysis of Shakespeare's warrior heroes, Berry discusses the tendency to place blame for the fates or failings of characters such as Antony and Macbeth on 'women's enigmatic alliance with nature, fatality and death' (1999: 80). The 'most disturbing feature of these feminine aspects of horror,' Berry states, 'seems to be the mysterious mutability they share with nature' (1999: 80-81). She suggests that the cyclicality of lunar rotations, seasons and the womb, when dislocated or displaced from their "natural" roles, signal a dangerous deviation from natural order. With the prominence of masculine-feminine dichotomies in *Richard II*, the heightening of this dualism in 'Fall of Kings' seemed an effective way to highlight the tensions between masculine and feminine characters and their divided allegiances.

The politics of this dichotomy in the discourse of land and ownership in *Richard II* have been widely considered by ecofeminist and ecocritical scholars. Smith's discussion of land, possession and appropriation explores the parallels between the nationalistic dialogues in Gaunt's sceptred isle speech (2.1) and the rhetoric employed by Donald Trump during his 2016 presidential campaign (2021: 89). Discourses of nationalism, masculinity and rulership are tied together in the figuring – and control – of the land, the 'inseparability of land and king' embedded in the language and lore of the playworld (2021: 91). The segments of text retained to create the Narrator's speeches in 'Fall of Kings' were heavy with this language, invoking images of Richard as the 'blushing discontented sun / From out the fiery portal of the east, / When he perceives the envious clouds are bent / To dim his glory' (3.3.63-66). Prioritising this language in selecting the Narrator's lines foregrounded her connection to nature, bringing about a shift from the pragmatism and supposed neutrality of the narrator figures in plays such as *Henry V*.

Establishing the connection from the offset of the play, the Narrator's prologue foretold of Richard's death through images of disrupted land and skies:

> The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd,
> And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
> The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
> And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change;
> Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap,
> The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
> The other to enjoy by rage and war:
> These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.
>
> (2.4.8-15)

Though audiences may not know how this change would come about, the fearful tone of Finnegan's performance implied the sense of foreboding with which it should be contemplated. As the first voice that the audience would hear and the sole occupant of the stage, the Narrator's prologue enacted a claiming of space and narratorial authority that foregrounded her femininity. In the intimate underground cavern of Burdall's Yard, under Ellis' earth-toned lighting, the reinforcement of her connection to the earth revoked the control over land often held by men. While her separation from the main action reinforced her marginalisation, the reallocation of lines that offered direct comment and could therefore influence perceptions of the action drew power from the play's macho-centric sphere into hers. Her appearance throughout the play thereafter repeatedly laid claim to the expository power so often reserved for male characters.

When approaching the character, the lack of female narration on which to base her performance presented Finnegan with a challenge but also offered freedom to determine the identity and role of her character beyond the usual canon of Shakespearean representation. Playing with this contrast in her vocal inflections and tone, Finnegan's interpretation highlighted the conflict between the poetic, natural world reserved for the feminine, and the masculinised political sphere of the court. During our textual analysis of her dialogue we came to realise that many of the characters Finnegan portrayed shared the Narrator's connection to the natural, and the feminine. Queen Isabella frequently calls attention to her body, invoking metaphors of motherhood:

thou art the midwife to my woe,
And Bolingbroke my sorrow's dismal heir.
Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigy,
And I, a gasping new-delivered mother,
Have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow joined

(2.2.62-66)

Her invocations following Richard's deposition – 'Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth / Have any resting for her true king's queen' – lodge her expressions of grief in images of the earth, the wombed body, and bodily desire (5.1.5-6). With the blurring of the boundaries between the characters through Finnegan's costuming, the Narrator's power, drawn directly from the same feminine connection to the earth, was echoed in Isabella whenever she appeared onstage.

With the theatrical tradition of male Choruses comes a masculinised view of the already macho-centric conflict in the plays. The Narrator's creation contributed to a disruption of the male gaze through which the play could be explored and viewed. Finnegan's performance emphasised the emotional nature of her characters' relationships to Richard. Her narration rejected any pretence of neutrality and grounded her portrayals in the emotional connectedness that ran counter to the repressed masculinity of the main playworld. The Narrator's appearance throughout the production (most notably at the start and end), formed a frame in which the often feminised emotionality exhibited by her and the play's other female characters took on new authority. As the remainder of this chapter will explore, despite the Narrator's presence contributing to a shift from negative attitudes to Richard's kingship, the hegemonic victory narrative surrounding feminine domination in many ways remained intact. However, the critical attitude to Bolingbroke's violence put forth by the Narrator re-coded concepts of power, ownership and authority within the play, by way of the capacity for emotional connection in place of physical domination.

Defamiliarising Bolingbroke

Having explored the initial question of what masculinities might reveal when applied in the analysis and adaptation of the text, our approach to the play as we moved into rehearsals in November 2017 continued to centre on this attempted subversion of gendered hierarchies in performance. Just as Finnegan's character development would identify and play with aspects of her characters' marginality, the interplay between scripted and embodied performances of gender emerged early on as a potential site for (and for representing) acceptance, contradiction, rejection and manipulation of gendered expectations and expressions. Connell observes the role of the body as a limiter and driver of gendered action, and thus a prominent determiner of hegemony or subordination (2005: 45); and with their comparable view of the body as 'a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed,' Butler articulates the social processes by which the body can be appropriated for the construction and reconstruction of gender (1990: 12). The actor's body is a powerful transgressive tool, while simultaneously constrained by the contexts, perceptions and mediums through which it is viewed. Typecasting, as is represented in the history of feminine Richards and hypermasculine Bolingbrokes, can intensify the limitations by which the performer and performance are constrained.

In *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*, Whishaw's femininity presents an exaggerated image of his body's constraining influence over his kingship, at conflict always with Kinnear's martiality as Bolingbroke. Their worthiness as rulers, and men, is inferred through the apparent capabilities of their physical bodies. Richard's frailty is at odds with what it is to be a "real man" and therefore must not hold power over other – more masculine – men. Contemporary productions of *Richard II* have presented portrayals of Richard that accentuate the stereotypically feminine nature of his character via bodily performance: Shaw's costume displayed her bandage-bound chest, drawing attention to the dissonance in gender presentation between the actor's body and Richard; Tennant's characterisation connoted vanity and ostentatiousness, with long, styled hair, painted nails and a floor-length robe; and Whishaw showed similar extravagance while introducing a level of insecurity, portrayed in his constantly fiddling fingers and delicately crossed legs. These representations emphasise the embodied aspects of Richard's character that could be considered stereotypically feminine: his verbosity, flamboyance, and fragility. In a play that is widely considered a tragedy, the gradual stripping away of this masculinity that occurs through Richard's

downfall presents these characteristics as tragic flaws. When Richard finally fights back, as he does in Warner, Doran and Goold's productions, he undertakes a contrasting masculinity through which his tragic resolution is found.

Adjoa Andoh's Richard in her and Lynette Linton's all-women of colour production (2019) emphasised the King's short temper and power-hunger, a set of traits that can be considered masculine by Western gender standards. However, the production's foregrounding of the gendered and ethnic identities of its cast (though all original character pronouns were retained) called attention to Andoh's femininity, preconditioning the gaze through which her performance might be perceived. Opposite her as Bolingbroke, Sarah Niles was calm and level-headed, even while sanctioning the deaths of Sarah Lam's Bushy and Nicholle Cherrie's Green. As in Goold and Doran's productions, Niles' Bolingbroke offered a form of masculine authority grounded in the casual use of violence. Underpinned by the contrasting images of masculinity in the text, these and other past productions of *Richard II* reiterate a narrative in which violence is enacted through the physical destruction of characters who pose a threat to heteropatriarchal norms – who embody, in Connell's words, 'the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy' (2005: 77). Kinnear and Lindsay's Bolingbrokes map contemporary archetypal masculine qualities like emotional distance and control enforced through culturally condoned violence onto the body as the primary means through which this hegemony is represented and enacted.

Beyond performances of Shakespeare, a similar paradigm is reflected in the heroes of late and post-twentieth century culture, represented in the muscular action figures of popular film, television, and media. The extreme body types exemplified in the male Marvel and DC characters that have dominated blockbuster releases since the early 2000s are widely linked to an increase in body dysmorphia and mental illness in men. The white-coding of this embodied power is evident in the lack of representation for Black, Indigenous, and Global Majority people of colour in central or mainstream roles up until *Black Panther* in 2018; the continued underrepresentation of Disabled, LGBTQIA+ and other minoritised characters exemplifies a rejection of the idea that power can be possessed by anyone who does not conform to the Western hegemonic ideal. In an age of *Game of Thrones*-style Shakespeares, the casting of prominent screen actors such as David Tennant or Tom Hiddleston plays a major role in attracting wider audiences to the stage shows or television broadcasts in which they feature. Rather than offering interpretations of the characters, their performances are

presented as cultural events, contributing to the transcription of rhetorics surrounding male bodies and their ability to cause or withstand pain (for example, in Hiddleston's portrayal of Loki in the Marvel media franchise) from popular screen performance to the stage.

As the means by which Richard may be overthrown, Bolingbroke's martial identity is appropriated for the garnering of support for his (and his followers') cause, and as the primary instrument through which this identity is performed, his body is weaponised in the pursuit of power. bell hooks interrogates mass media representations that have historically propagated the notion that violence enacted by and upon the body is integral to masculine experience (hooks, 2004: 71). As she observes, many popular film narratives from the 1970s onwards served to dislocate representations of male physical and social power from expressions of emotional vulnerability, posing emotional detachment as a means by which violence can be withstood. To counter this discourse in 'Fall of Kings' and explore the representative potential of the characters beyond their archetypal roles, it seemed necessary to disconnect Bolingbroke from this emotional repression, and from other stereotypical masculine traits that might impose limitations on his character development in rehearsal.

As with the dialogue of Finnegan's characters, I approached the adaptation with the intention of emphasising language that would draw attention to the gendered aspects of Bolingbroke. So much of this language grounds his actions in images of the body, with which his oaths and desires will be actualised: his vow that 'what I speak / My body shall make good upon this earth' (1.1.36-37); the description of his 'stooped' neck under injustices of the favourites (3.1.19); his promise to 'lay the summer's dust with showers of blood / Rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen' (3.3.43-44); and his final pledge to 'wash this blood from off my guilty hand' with the spilling of more blood in conquest for the Holy Land (5.6.50). By retaining these lines in 'Fall of Kings', Bolingbroke's expressions of masculinity were grounded in the instrumentalisation of his body, usable and expendable in the attainment of hegemony. The sacrificial ideology central to this warrior masculinity became the focus of Bolingbroke's portrayal by Russell Eccleston, who undertook the role. Blood was a recurrent and resonant image, translatable from textual inscription to physical depiction onstage. Bolingbroke's use of destructive verbs such as 'aggravate' and 'stuff,' and his desire to lend emphasis to his words with acts of violence promptly established his position as the aggressor – a position we attempted to affirm as the product of external forces rather than personal power (1.1.43-44).

Figure 1.1 Rehearsal photograph of ‘Fall of Kings’ (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Russell Eccleston as Bolingbroke recoils from the harsh words of Gabrielle Finnegan’s Bishop of Carlisle.

Figure 1.2 Rehearsal Photograph of 'Fall of Kings' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Mike Harley as John of Gaunt (right) chides Toby Underwood as Richard II (left).

Eccleston is six-foot-one, white, with muscular shoulders and the vocal ability to reach thunderously loud volumes with ease (Figure 1.1). His body type could be considered typically masculine or "macho," making him an orthodox casting choice for Shakespeare's hypermasculine hero. Contradictory to the rest of his appearance, however, Eccleston had long, fair hair habitually tied in a ponytail at the nape of his neck and generally approached social interactions with demonstrable quietness and composure. The juxtaposition of these outward characteristics with the rest of Eccleston's bodily expression contributed to the disruption of what could otherwise be considered a conventional image of Western masculinity.

Toby Underwood, who was cast in the role of Richard, is six foot tall, also white, with a slim build, blue eyes, reddish hair and stubble, and a relatively high vocal register (Figure 1.2). In auditions, his performance bore many similarities to Whishaw's in *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*, with soft gestures and a friendly, forthcoming energy. Although the outward characteristics of both actors followed the trend of past productions, the possible tensions between their distinctive visual presences and their gendered performances of the characters became a focus of our exploration in rehearsals. Could such contradictions subvert

audience expectations and enable a critique of normalised perceptions of gendered violence? Might alienation from the objective actions of Shakespeare's characters through a queering of their archetypal bodies encourage greater focus on the actions themselves?

In initial character meetings, I challenged Underwood to explore ways of presenting Richard as a typically hypermasculine man through his use of posture, gesture, and vocal inflection, while confronting Eccleston with the task of portraying a feminised interpretation of Bolingbroke. In our analysis of the text, Eccleston found the basis for his interpretation in the language and rhythm of his character's dialogue; he suggested that Bolingbroke could be read as a man with low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in his own leadership, causing him to invest his sense of self entirely in his physical abilities and martial identity. In his guide to speaking Shakespeare, *Speaking the Speech*, Giles Block suggests that

> Shakespeare purposefully varies the iambic rhythm by introducing trochaic beats into the lines [...] to capture the way characters need to arrest our attention to some particular words they are using and in doing so release and express some pent-up emotion.
>
> (Block, 2013: 89)

Scanning the adapted text for these irregularities, Eccleston interpreted them as disruptions in Bolingbroke's customary flow of thought, affecting his speech and breath patterns. We experimented with what Block refers to as 'deliberate disturbances to the iambic rhythm [that] allow the emotional weight of these varying situations to find authentic release' (2013: 90). Eccleston noted that these irregularities occurred most for Bolingbroke in his negotiations of intellectual or political affairs, moments that necessitated the command of his supporters (and later in the play, his subjects) or the objective handling of conflict. In line with Eccleston's interpretation, we took these textual variances to denote an uncomfortableness in Bolingbroke when dealing with matters that could not be resolved through martial combat or other forms of physical display.

Passages where his language was most emotive appeared to support the interpretation that his actions were driven by feelings of insecurity, leading him to take refuge in the familiarity of violence. These parts of the text remained relatively undisrupted in terms of breath and thought, prompting our conclusion that the character's acts of violence came from an

emotional response to feeling threatened or out of control. Closer examination of the operative words in Bolingbroke's speeches revealed the most striking expressions to be those pertaining to brutality and bloodshed:

> Ere my tongue
> Shall wound my honour with such feeble wrong
> Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear
> The slavish motive of recanting fear
> And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace.
>
> (1.1.187-194)

Here, the graphic nature of Bolingbroke's chosen images is delivered in near-perfect iambic verse, inferring the instinctive nature with which he inhabits violence. Present also is the suggestion of a character who treats fear, an emotion considered emasculating in Western culture, with the same disdain Richard has for violence.

Eccleston suggested that, as a man whose masculine identity was formed through military prowess and violent resolution, Bolingbroke's self-worth derived solely from his ability to solve problems through use of his physical body. This psychological underpinning and the necessity for instinct-driven action in his military life had shaped Bolingbroke's masculinity, driving his reactions to the conflict with Richard. Despite his physical capacity for dominance, this interpretation created disharmony between Bolingbroke's outward hegemony and his emotionally volatile inner reality. Eccleston's approach to Bolingbroke instilled in the character's cognitive patterns an internal disruption of his self-perceived victory narrative. The character did not see his triumph over Richard as a victory but a manifestation of insecurity and inhibition, forced on by the pressure exerted by the Appellants even when he willed it to end.

Reflecting on his characterisation, Eccleston noted that the expectations placed on Bolingbroke by his body, his martial identity, and the assumed masculinity that these traits predicated were major drivers of his actions: 'I think he's comfortable in competition. [...] he knows that he can beat them, because he's bigger than them and he's stronger than them and he's more trained than they are' (Appendix 4.1, p.7). However, when it came to conflict that could not be resolved through shows of violence, Eccleston saw a pressure that arose from

the character’s emotional underdevelopment, most heightened in moments that required confrontation with characters he was intimidated by (for Eccleston, the most notable of these was Richard), or when he was expected to assume leadership roles: ‘They’re all looking to him for answers and he doesn’t have any for them apart from, “Let’s kill things.” Those moments when he’s trying actually to be diplomatic are not… He just doesn’t know what he’s doing’ (Appendix 4.1, p.5). Moments like these were recognisable onstage by Bolingbroke’s constant motion, which for Eccleston was a response to the ‘anxiety’ triggered by the ongoing situation. His performance attempted to make this anxiety visible to the audience, using the emotional nature of the character’s dialogue to externally portray his discomfort. In the opening of ‘Fall of Kings’, Eccleston entered the stage upon the lines,

> First, heaven be the record to my speech,
> In the devotion of a subject’s love,
> Tend’ring the precious safety of my prince,
> And free from other misbegotten hate,
> Come I appellant to this princely presence.
>
> (1.1.30-34)

Fuelled by nervous energy, Bolingbroke’s feet and body were constantly in motion throughout the scene. Most noticeably, his hands began wringing tensley before him, held close to his body, then hurriedly wiped perspiration onto his jeans, then folded themselves into crossed arms over his stomach (Appendix 1.1: 00.05.55). Such choices, Eccleston recalled, came from Bolingbroke’s emotional energy, which he felt it necessary to repress around Richard, his continual movement a way of displacing his anxiety: ‘he wants to explode, he wants to scream [...] but he can’t – his only method of controlling it is by touching everything and trying to get all of that kinetic energy out in whatever way he can’ (Appendix 4.1, p.10).

In rehearsals, we discussed gendered variants of arm-crossing during the building of these moments. Bolingbroke’s impulse to protect himself emotionally translated to a physical compulsion to cover his body by crossing his arms or holding his hands in a way that shielded his torso. We observed that when Eccleston folded his arms over his upper chest, it drew emphasis to his physical size and muscularity, whereas lowering his arms in a way that concealed his stomach (Figure 1.1) was evocative of an impulse to shield the womb. Having

to hunch his shoulders to perform this action caused a stooping of his upper body, diminishing his size and suggesting a submissive posture. To further separate Eccleston's Bolingbroke from conventional hegemonic portrayals, he was costumed in a floral shirt with purple and pink tones, oversized so that it hung loosely over his frame. Informed by conversations surrounding the character's low body-confidence, the shirt was chosen for its looseness and flamboyance that concealed and distracted from the body underneath. These details, combined with Eccleston's physical choices, became part of the visual disruption of Bolingbroke's embodied masculinity.

Continuing his research into feminine body language, Eccleston began searching outside the Western spectrum of performance for examples of alternative representations of violent masculinities. After scouring films and media to find male characters he considered intimidating, he began exploring anime and other Japanese animation to see 'what [those characters] did with their bodies' (Appendix 4.1, p.11). He noted that the Western villains he observed often performed explicitly hypermasculine forms of violence, whereas in the Japanese media, many demonstrated 'feminine aspects' yet remained 'threatening,' 'intimidating' and 'powerful' (Appendix 4.1, p.11). Wanting to integrate the physicality of these characters into his portrayal of Bolingbroke, Eccleston found ways of altering aspects of his movement that eventually came to impact the relationship between his and Underwood's characters. At times, when Bolingbroke was in control or immersed in violent exchange, Eccleston found that altering the distance between his feet as he walked, 'just putting one foot slightly in front of the other' and 'popping my hips a bit more so I had a little bit more of a booty shake,' helped dispel the character's anxious energy, allowing him to appear casual and collected in high-intensity moments (Appendix 4.1, p.12).

Most interesting was Eccleston's realisation that he was emulating what he found 'uncomfortable' about the animated villains he researched (Appendix 4.1, p.12). He speculated that the 'otherworldliness' this characterisation implied was 'uncomfortable because it feels weird,' possibly because it deviated from Western assumptions of what is to be threatening – or masculine (Appendix 4.1, p.12). His suggestion underscored the wide-ranging association of Queerness or gender nonconformity with Otherness and unease, a reminder that, even in contemporary culture, to deviate from socially prescribed gender is to deviate from the supposed comfort and safety afforded by heteronormativity. That a person might alienate themselves from others in order to obscure inner anxieties points to a

socialised belief in the power physical or social dominance might afford over that acquired through personal relationships or social equality.

With this characterisation, the normative portrayal of Bolingbroke's hypermasculinity was disrupted. The discomfort evoked by his movement undermined the innateness of the violence often coded as natural by his embodiment onstage, detaching his actions from his body as a signifier of social worth and merited power. Following one performance at Burdall’s Yard, one audience member described Bolingbroke to another as “the evil king,” implying a negative view of the violence that is commonly presented in positive or neutral terms. However, this comment may more closely pertain to a position on femininity, and the dissonance Eccleston’s performance created between embodied maleness and masculine performance. The association of feminine power with female appropriation of male authority is often raised in discussions of Shakespearean characters such as Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, and Margaret of Anjou. The maintenance of patriarchy requires a view of female dominance, or any aspect of femininity that might threaten to destabilise white cisgender male supremacy, as disruptive to naturalised hierarchy. The relationship between hegemony and subordinacy, coded in patriarchal culture as a relationship between controller and controlled, defines any deviation from this arrangement as sinister, maligned, or dangerous. In the case of Eccleston’s Bolingbroke, whose feminisation hinted at the disruption of this natural order, the “evil king” analogy drew closer parallels with female appropriators such as Lady Macbeth and Margaret than their male counterparts Macbeth or Richard III.

Although, unlike these characters, Bolingbroke gained power through compliance to the system that maintained dominance on his behalf. In seeking to disrupt his victory narrative without altering the plot to deny Bolingbroke kingship at the end of the play, his rise to power remained. His unwillingness to take the throne, however, marked a change in the dramaturgy of the action that would eventually place him there. With purposeful deviations in Bolingbroke’s characterisation from the archetypal masculine identities he has typically represented in performance, the psychological in-roads available to actors that might be limited by this type-casting were transformed, generating new possibilities for his portrayal. Eccleston’s performance of Bolingbroke, as a direct impact of our interventions, introduced to the character body language and gestures that alienated him from conventional images of masculinity and hegemony. This defamiliarisation enabled a reimagining of the character’s mimetic and dramaturgical roles in the play and the realities surrounding it.

Bolingbroke’s disharmony with his hegemony exposed the mythopoetic warriorhood imposed upon him as an identity that men can be inducted into and alienated by, rather than innately at one with. With this, we presented a notion of violent masculinity as inherently destructive to male experience, removing from it the valuing so often insisted on in performance. Bolingbroke’s recharacterisation instigated a shift in the power dynamics of the play, placing greater weight on the roles of other characters in the upholding of violent hegemonic ideals and spreading the scope of the production’s critique to include every character whose participation in this ideology contributed to Richard’s downfall – including Richard himself.

Performing toxic masculinity

With the adaptation’s focus on interplays of power, our conversations inevitably began or ended with the subject of control: self-control, political control, bodily control, imposition, autonomy, policing, and the means by which they are enacted. The subject’s dramatic presentation in the production meant that these discussions almost always returned to the question of the emotional impact various forms of control can have. Though not necessarily revolutionary within the characterisation of masculinity, the interpretation that so much of Bolingbroke’s energy was dedicated to maintaining self-control foregrounded the question of why the suppression of violent expression remains such a significant source of masculine anxiety.

Aughterson and Grant Ferguson’s examination of contemporary and early modern representations of anxious masculinity suggests that conjunctions of psychological and physical manifestations of anxiety in plays such as *The Winter’s Tale*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *Cymbeline*, and *Othello* ‘[plot] masculine identity as both competitive with other men (hence inherently anxious) and embedded in the surveillance and control of women (hence exteriorly anxious)’ (2020: 211). In the second tetralogy, the control of women extends to a policing of femininity – most prevalent in this study, that which is considered feminine in men. In contemporary culture, this phenomenon has come to be known as the enactment of toxic masculinity, so called due to its destructive and damaging impact on male bodies and male mental health. In ‘Who’s Afraid of “Toxic Masculinity”?’ Bryant W. Sculos defines toxic

masculinity as a 'loosely interrelated collection of norms, beliefs, and behaviours associated with masculinity, which are harmful to women, men, children, and society more broadly' (2017: 3). He offers an extensive list of traits commonly associated with performances of toxic masculinity, including 'self-sufficiency (often to the point of isolation)' and 'rigid conceptions of sexual/gender identity and roles' (Sculos, 2017: 3). During our work on 'Fall of Kings', many of these ideals were embedded in the principals that could be seen to motivate the play's male characters, driving their actions and ultimately contributing to their destruction.

Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe's examination of the motivations, affects and effects of heteropatriarchal male behaviour in 'Men, Masculinity and Manhood Acts' figures the control as an integral performance of masculine identities that uphold the norms discussed by Sculos. Their argument centres on the definition of actions 'aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, or resisting exploitations' as 'manhood acts' (2009: 281). For Schrock and Schwalbe, the body is irrelevant, and any man may perform a manhood act, whether consciously or unconsciously, to demonstrate the possession of a masculine self. In 'Fall of Kings', despite Underwood's narrower frame giving him a less stereotypically masculine appearance, his interpretation of the text presented a version of Richard who ascribed fully to this patriarchal economy of domination through the emotional policing of other men. Within this economy, the masculine status implied in Bolingbroke's martiality made him a key figure to be conquered, and his emotionality made him a target for the censorship that came to characterise Richard's assertions of authority.

For Underwood's Richard, the authority of kingship protected him from any challenge to his own destructive behaviours, his gender performance predicated entirely on the anxiety of losing this power. Underwood's script was littered with annotations alluding to the importance of this apparent stability in his performance of hegemonic masculinity. His notes referred at multiple points to the "front" put on by Richard, a term used to signify the character's concealment of his emotions. Underwood used the colour-coded highlighting in his script, with green representing "suppressed emotion" and "outbursts of emotion" in orange, to signal moments when Richard was successful in disguising his feelings and when they spilled out, often (as suggested by his use of the word "outbursts") explosively. This emotional repression became the foundation upon which Underwood built his characterisation of Richard's masculinity, loading lines such as 'We were not born to sue but

to command' (highlighted orange) with the need to maintain control over his public image with the projection of unemotional and unquestionable manhood (1.1.196). Facing others with his body squared and leading with his chest when he moved to enhance the breadth of his shoulders, Underwood used his body language to construct a calm, assertive demeanour, which he would let slip in pivotal moments to reveal the anxiety it concealed.

When he moved, it was directly from one place to another without hesitation or uncertainty, a carefully-curated performance of power. On first entrance to the stage, Underwood lingered by the entrance, leaning casually against a wall with composure that was infinitely louder than the bickering voices of Mowbray and Bolingbroke. When he finally entered the space, it was to sit unceremoniously on his throne (Appendix 1.1: 00.04.17). The Richard of 'Fall of Kings' had no need for overt hostility; when he finally spoke, it was to relish in the antagonism of his cousin, goading him on with exclamations like 'How high a pitch his resolution soars!' (1.1.109) When he finally took control more than five minutes into the scene, it became clear that when the King spoke, even with such quiet command, no one dared interrupt.

Richard's emotional policing was most apparent when he and Bollingbroke were on stage together, his restraint clearest when contrasted with his cousin's constant motion. Despite his rejection of the physical violence exercised by Bolingbroke and Mowbray, Richard's censorship and emotional withdrawal were deployed as a means of asserting dominance when his royal status failed to do so. With the sparseness of the production's set leaning into the tunnel-like intimacy of Burdall's Yard (Appendix 1.4), the temporal and contextual ambiguity of the show's setting left it to the performance of gendered principles in the text to distinguish this cultural hostility. In the opening scene, Adam Lloyd-James' performance of Mowbray presented an opportunity to establish the censorship of emotional display as a defining factor of the playworld.

Though neither Underwood or Lloyd-James embodied the typical image of Western hegemony, their performances highlighted the stoicism and emotional distance often associated with the hegemony represented in characters such as Bolingbroke. Mowbray dismissed Bolingbroke by calling attention to his feminine qualities with references to womanhood and cold-bloodedness (associated in early modern literature with weakness and a lack of masculine vigour):

Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal.
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,
The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,
The blood is hot that must be cooled for this.
(1.1.47-51)

Lloyd-James' dismissive intonation on 'woman's war' and their sneer on 'eager tongues' made clear Mowbray's attitude to any feminising attempts at verbal conflict resolution. The repetitiveness and frequency with which these lines appeared in the scene formed a pattern of censorship that existed among male characters through subtle verbal acts that also informed Lloyd-James' physical characterisation of Mowbray. With their body squared to their opponent and both feet planted solidly on the ground, Lloyd-James' physical performance was immediately at odds with Eccleston's. Despite their smaller frame, this rootedness gave Mowbray authority over the onstage court: when he travelled, it was with purpose, without the nervousness or second-guessing of his rival; when Bolingbroke relinquished ground, Mowbray took possession of it; and with the line 'The blood is hot that must be cooled for this,' Mowbray's advance on Bolingbroke was accompanied by a physical beating of his chest (Appendix 1.1: 00.03.11). Underlying this fervour, the tone and pitch of Lloyd-James' voice was even, lending legitimacy to Mowbray's argument in contrast to Bolingbroke's trembling outbursts.

In their discussion of how heteropatriarchal culture is learned and maintained, Schrock and Schwalbe discuss the use of language by men and boys to turn women, girls, and 'boys who are deemed feminine' into props for signifying heteronormativity (2009: 282). Lloyd-James' choices in their performance of Mowbray emerged from the instruction to identify and play with lines of text that could be used to call attention to Bolingbroke's femininity. In spite of his physical hegemony, any action or attitude Bolingbroke displayed that might contradict his hypermasculinity was subject to censorship and ridicule. Eccleston observed that the effect of this throughout the play was 'like all of [Bolingbroke's] insecurities were being paraded by everyone else, like everything he was trying not to be they were aware of and were making fun of him for' (Appendix 4.1, p.16). Building on his point, he noted that the discomfort this created fuelled his portrayal of Bolingbroke's 'journey in trying to quash those aspects of himself' (Appendix 4.1, p.16). His description of the character's attempts to 'quash' the

feminine aspects of his personality mirrors a case study discussed by Connell in *Masculinities*, in which she considers a young man's recollection of trauma sustained through his relationship with his father. '*I didn't want to throw a ball in front of my Dad*,' he states in the interview, '*because I knew it wouldn't look right, it wouldn't be like the way a good strong boy should throw it*' (Connell, 2005: 62). She explains:

> Adam has learned how to be both in his body (throwing), and outside his body watching its gendered performance ('I knew it wouldn't look right') [...] ('he made fun of me and said . . .'), with all the emotional charge of the father-son relationship behind it.
>
> (Connell, 2005: 62-63)

Bolingbroke had learned to see himself through the eyes of other men as someone unworthy of acceptance, self-expression, or compassion. When the time came for Bolingbroke and Gaunt's farewell before his banishment was effected, the scene between them represented a contest between Gaunt's stiff-upper-lip mentality and the supposedly feminine emotions of his son, the microaggressions shaping an image of Bolingbroke's experiences of familial affection as a cyclical sequence of emotional outburst and social reprimand. With this private identity constructed through the constant policing of his actions and reactions, Bolingbroke's feelings of inferiority fed the hypervigilant anticipation of violence that would come to characterise his kingship in the adaptation of *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2* that followed 'Fall of Kings'.

In *The Will to Change*, bell hooks addresses the emotional labour undertaken by women as a result of the emotional estrangement of men. Using the workplace as an example, hooks connects this binary gendering of labour to economies of emotion in masculine-centred environments, in which male or masculinised individuals are expected to uphold the myth that 'emotions have no place in the work world' (2004: 97). The workplace, hooks states, has evolved as a place of emotional numbness, fulfilling the need for a space in which private anxieties must be disengaged from, much like the action of *Richard II* that is played out in the political realm while the personal nature of the conflict is continually understated by the characters. hooks draws on Victor J. Seidler's discussion of masculine emotional distance in *Rediscovering Masculinity*, in which he states:

> We only seem to learn that the 'self is something we have to control tightly, since otherwise it might upset our plans. We have learnt for so long not to show or express too much since others might put us down or use this against us. [...] We never really give ourselves much chance to know ourselves better or develop more contact with ourselves, since [...] this all threatens the 'control' we have been brought up to identify our masculinity with. We feel trapped though we do not know how we are constantly remaking this trap for ourselves.
>
> (Seidler, 1989: 155-156)

Seidler is one of many men cited by hooks who discuss lived experiences of learning and unlearning toxic masculine behaviours in heteropatriarchal cultures that condone and require subtle forms of everyday violence from them. The control discussed by Seidler is reflected in a recollection of Eccleston's after 'Fall of Kings', in which he described learning to embrace the image of masculinity projected by those around him:

> I've always been quite broad-shouldered and a bit taller than other men and I found that – especially when I was growing up – a lot of my friends looked to me as, like, the bruiser or the bully. And I think that gave me my own sort of notion of who I was, what they told me I was. And, looking back, I think I [...] took what they told me I was and just *was* that because it was easier than being myself.
>
> (Appendix 4.1, p.1-2)

As Seidler, Eccleston, and the testimonies of numerous other men demonstrate, the mental and physical health impacts of even subtle sustained violences manifest in the lack of capacity for emotional vulnerability or the giving and receiving of love. As hooks expresses, 'we doom them to live in states of emotional numbness. We construct a culture where male pain can have no voice, where male hurt cannot be named or healed' (2004: 6). If we are to expect men – or anyone – to reject damaging notions of gender, performance can play a major role in imagining what this may look like. Such lessons can begin by reckoning with an external view of masculine violence.

Often, processes concerned with generating feminist theatre or thought necessarily focus on building and broadening the representation of women and marginalised individuals through, in the majority of instances, the examination or creation of female or Queer dramatic

roles. By subverting the heteropatriarchal roles of the male characters in its dramatic dimensions, 'Fall of Kings' aimed to disrupt the normalcy of representations that condone destructive masculinity. Harry Brod, in 'Studying Masculinities as Superordinate Studies,' discusses pedagogical techniques for the examination of masculinities. The feminist studies course taught by Brod at the University of Pennsylvania, he explains, facilitates the interrogation of white, heterosexual male hegemony, or 'superordinacy,' and its role in the maintenance of patriarchy. Rationalising his approach, Brod expresses the sentiment, echoing the feminist scholarship of hooks and Connell, that 'for at least some men, moving away from being personally blamed for sexism facilitates moving toward taking personal responsibility for it. [...] I see that my target is not myself but rather social forces and what they have done to me (2002: 168). For Brod, the interrogation of superordinacy is a step towards the cognitive connection of male violence and female oppression while avoiding blame. In 'Fall of Kings', the active nature of the actors' involvement and the examination of their lived experiences of gender in the production's development was done indirectly, with a systemic rather than individual focus.

Using their characters as vehicles for exploration, the actors were able to examine, name and take ownership of destructive aspects of masculinity that existed in their personal histories. Eccleston's performance required him to find ways to rationalise and validate Bolingbroke's emotions as an actor, leading to an understanding that these aspects of the character did not have to detract from his personal power. The visible discomfort with which Bolingbroke took the throne after Richard's deposition in 'Fall of Kings' made clear his unwillingness to accept the hegemony imposed on him. Coinciding with Richard's release from the pressures of kingship, the tragic character arc to which Richard falls victim in *Richard II* appeared instead as a downfall for Bolingbroke. Underwood's Richard took strength from the freedom his solitude gave him to feel, to rage at the world, and to mourn what he had lost. Banished from the court, he was able to drop his 'front' and feel justified in his pain, while Bolingbroke's continued, perpetuated in his promise to 'make a voyage to the Holy Land / To wash this blood from off my guilty hand' (5.6.49-50). The external view of his character's violence that might otherwise have been irreconcilable with the emotionality commonly associated with weakness eventually led Eccleston to recognise the strength in embracing feeling. During the post-show discussion for the final adaptation, which Eccleston assistant directed, he returned to the idea of internalised repression:

> If you're constantly trying to quash elements of yourself that you dislike – but there's nothing wrong with that, the world is just *telling* you there are things wrong with that – then you're just going to be stuck in a hole for your whole life and end up doing horrible things to people who don't necessarily deserve them.
>
> (Appendix 3.4: 00.00.49)

Our examination and discussion around what might drive violent action, how it may feel to be on either end of it, and its emotional or embodied impacts embedded these dialogues in the performances of the characters, as well as the processes via which they were reached.

That the "evil king" stereotype appeared to one, and possibly other, audience members suggests that 'Fall of Kings' did not wholly validate the emotionality portrayed in Bolingbroke. Rather, Richard's masculinisation perhaps justified the King's censorship in the face of a physically imposing, emotionally volatile man. However, with the emphasis of such behaviours onstage, the reciprocal nature of their violence could be seen. The perceived unnaturalness of Bolingbroke's violence signified an understanding that alternative forms of "good" violence might be taken. It is possible that audience members saw their own rage reflected in Bolingbroke's outbursts, or the pain of their own emotional repression through the cracks in Richard's detachment. It is possible that some gained an external view of their own anger, control or isolation, together with the representation of its effect on others. Perhaps, there were some who left with new understandings of the destructiveness of their or others' actions and a willingness to examine them closer.

In *Chapter 2*, I will explore the dramatic and practical applications of acknowledging trauma in production and performance processes. Progressing from 'Fall of Kings' to the subsequent adaptation, a merging of *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2* titled 'Between the Armies', this acknowledgement would drive the questioning of how further alienation of the second tetralogy characters and their relative sociologies could be achieved. Eccleston, continuing the role of Bolingbroke as he evolved into Henry IV, would be challenged with portraying the entrenchment of the character's anxieties and guilt in relationships with his former allies, his kingdom, and his son. The critique of toxic and violent masculinities would develop with the continued scrutiny of its perpetrators, victims, and spectators. Where 'Fall of Kings' had explored these concepts within character psychologies and embodiments, the following adaptations would consider further the operation of this violence in the practices *surrounding*

performance. How might the double-edged nature of masculine trauma be made visible through the reimagining of male victory? How might a recontextualisation of the playworld further alienate audiences from their preconceptions of gender and gendered acts, and how might approaches to adaptation, direction and performance inform this exploration?

Chapter 2
"Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself": inherited manhood, inherited violence in 'Between the Armies'

'Fall of Kings' had explored the violent interplays of characters in *Richard II*, using Connell's masculinities to identify and examine the narrativisation of active masculine-passive feminine dichotomies in the texts and performance. The production laid the foundations for a portrayal of Henry IV as a symbol of violent masculinity. Our interrogation of the hegemony wielded through his actions had shown that actor and character bodies are never fully negatable in negotiations of power onstage, but that physical gender performance could be used to alter perceptions of the action itself, alienating audiences from conventional views of power to undermine the paradigms within which they operate. Whereas the approach to 'Fall of Kings' had focused on this defamiliarisation of individual characters and the relationships between them, 'Between the Armies' would examine the broader narratives spanning *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2*. Drawing on Catherine Silverstone's consideration of productions, performances, and the processes through which they are formed as simultaneous archives and sites of trauma in *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance* (2011), this chapter will consider the wider scope of the production's narrative and its reflection of wider-still social discourses. The process of interrogating the hypermasculine aspects of Bolingbroke's leadership in 'Fall of Kings', with the intention of disrupting his victory narrative in performance, foregrounded the subtle violences that led to reactive patterns of emotional repression and control. With Henry's progression from fresh deposer to established king, his loss, grief, and guilt at the close of *Richard II* is compounded in his insistence on the same commitment to violence from his son, Prince Hal. This trauma and its passing down from father to son were central to our explorations in 'Between the Armies'.

This chapter will explore the function of Queer identity in the adaptation, and how our interpretation of Hal and Falstaff as gay men in the context of 1980's England helped foreground the violence of heteronormative hegemony. The setting established a social landscape against which the identities of marginalised characters could be seen to oppose their oppression through subtle acts of resistance, underscored by the production's set, lighting and costume design. I will explore how this interpretation affected Ross Scott's characterisation of Falstaff and our understanding of the character's Otherness, which contributed to an exposure of the cyclical violence in the plays.

Stan Elliott and Njeko Katebe's portrayals of Hal and Hotspur as young men whose sexual and racial identities were subject to oppression under Henry's rule sought to challenge dichotomies of "good" and "bad" violence as they have portrayed in past performance. In Richard Eyre's *The Hollow Crown: Henry IV, Part 1* (2012), the aggression and volatility of Joe Armstrong's Hotspur is repeatedly affirmed in his relationships with other characters, most visible in his use of physical force over his wife Kate. Similar power struggles can be observed in scenes between Trevor White's Hotspur and Jasper Britton's Henry in Gregory Doran's RSC *Henry IV Part I* (2014), upholding the tradition in which Hotspur, as the antagonist in Hal's victory narrative, is repeatedly positioned as the aggressor. 'Between the Armies' recontextualisation of the plays' action into 1980's England served to reconfigure representations of power between the characters, redefining temporally specific masculine roles and concepts of what could be considered normative or deviant. In this setting, Hotspur's disempowerment as a Black man in a white supremacist playworld redefined his opposition to Henry as political resistance, establishing Hal's complicity in his father's attempts to repress the rebellion.

The setting helped call attention to moments of acceptance, assimilation and rejection, both in the journeys of the characters onstage and the production as a whole. Hotspur could be seen to be 'the theme of honour's tongue' only while he remained loyal to Henry; when his allegiance began to slip, so did his position within the hierarchy of the court (1.1.80). The displacement of white masculinity in Katebe's casting in 'Between the Armies' made visible the channels of violence and their operation in the playtexts and onstage. This chapter will consider how the re-embodiment of Falstaff, Hal and Hotspur exposed the reliance of the *Henry IV* plays, and the second tetralogy in general, on representations of violence and trauma among masculine characters. The resulting exploration of Queer and Black masculinities enabled an interrogation of heteropatriarchal and racialised violence in the renewed context of the production.

Queerness, otherness and Eastcheap

'Between the Armies' saw time advance several years into the rule of Henry IV from the close of 'Fall of Kings'. Though the productions did not follow on from one another

narratively, echoes of those before were present in many of the stylistic elements that arose from the approaches to text, voice and movement in my direction; as some actors were cast in multiple productions, or chose to draw influence from former portrayals of their characters, their decisions contributed to a sense of continuity throughout the adaptations. The plot of 'Between the Armies' was rooted in the conflict arising between Bolingbroke and his former most prolific supporter, Northumberland. Through the action's recontextualisation to a world with undertones of Thatcher's Britain, it was possible to read the social and economic anxieties of a complicit votership in the frustrations of Northumberland's faction, who's discontentment was deeply interconnected yet at odds with the desires of the marginalised Eastcheap community. Enstating a paradigm shift in the sociopolitics in the adaptation, this recontextualisation enabled an exploration of the respective marginalisation of Hal, Fastaff, and Hotspur and the narratives that surrounded them. The willingness of these character's participation in hegemonic oppression was called into question by their re-embodiment as gay and Black men within an economy built on loyalty to the crown. Though Hotspur would willingly die to defend his father's cause, his desire was born from the expectation that he would inherit this conflict and the pressure of a society that would accept him only in the context of military glory. As a gay (and declaratively unwilling soldier) Falstaff faced a similar choice between acceptance under Henry's command, or rejection.

In *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, though Falstaff and Hotspur are central to the narrative, the spaces they reside in are marginalised through the action's orientation around the court. If we identify these spaces as such, the plurality activated in the production's representation of marginality reconstitutes these margins as a space where the majority of the action takes place, displacing the court from its position of structural priority. Creating space for this exploration within a single adaptation created from two plays inevitably involved the prioritisation of plot points and dialogues that fit with this intention. Many of the scenes supporting the allusions to Falstaff's criminality were omitted, laying emphasis on his homosexuality as the basis for his condemnation within the context of Thatcher's political oppression. The shift in setting contributed to a queering of Eastcheap and the characters associated with it, the politically charged relationship between Hal and Falstaff exposing processes of assimilation, rejection, and othering present in Hal's accession to the throne.

The generational divide separating Henry and Northumberland from Hal and Hotspur was key to addressing the complex political implications of the 1980's setting. As a company, we

understood the emotional history of Northumberland's role in Henry's ascent as the basis of their animosity, entrenched in the politics of their country more so than complicated by it. In their inheritance of a battle they did not create, their sons' lack of control played out in their varying levels of naivety, unwillingness and misplaced rage vented on others like Falstaff, who had no control and little stake, but whose lives were dictated by these powerful opposing forces. In the context of a civil war of his own making, Northumberland's sudden disappearance on the lead-up to battle could be seen to undermine his faction's confidence in their cause, even as his son had no choice but to continue their fight.

Against this backdrop of quasi-Thatcherite conservatism, the Henry of 'Between the Armies' had grown into his power through the obsessive domination of those who might contest his claim to the crown. Bearing the brunt of his persecution was Hal, whose identity as a young gay man, closeted by the confines of his father's court, eventually became the defining feature of his journey toward kingship. In *Henry IV Part 1*, Henry's disparagement of Hal exhibits an intensified sense of the cruelty that can be glimpsed between the cousins in the play's prequel. He labels Hal 'an alien to the hearts / Of all the court' (3.2.34-35), claiming that 'Not an eye / But is a-weary of thy common sight' (3.2.87-88). For Hal, whose escapades in Eastcheap with Falstaff earn him this alienation, redemption can be achieved only with the enactment of bloody violence against his father's rivals. Hotspur, the son of Henry's ally-turned-opposer Northumberland, is the primary target of Hal's vow to 'tear the reckoning from his heart' (3.2.153). Hal's redemption is only absolute upon his rejection of Falstaff in *Henry IV Part 2*, with the public performance of piety and ridicule:

> Presume not that I am the thing I was,
> For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
> That I have turned away my former self;
> So will I those that kept my company.
>
> (5.5.55-58)

All this occurs against the backdrop of political division created by Northumberland's rebellion, waged as vengeance for Henry's broken oaths after his ascension to the throne. Despite his fall from celebrated warrior to rebel throughout *Henry IV Part 1*, Hotspur remains the foil to Hal even after his death. Hotspur's martial identity is established from the play's opening in Henry's description of him as a 'son who is the theme of honour's tongue'

(1.1.80). This martial imagery is sustained throughout the play in the descriptions of him as 'Mars in swaddling-clothes' (3.2.112), contrasted with those of Hal as 'an angel dropp'd down from the clouds' (4.1.105-107) that emphasise his 'modest' and 'gentle' nature (5.2.52-54). Such images are frequently deployed against the two sons, their fathers, and their rivals to stoke the division between their warring factions. The gendered language frequently serves as an affirmer, exposer, or disruptor of projected identity, guiding audience perceptions of the characters.

The contrasting masculinities inferred in these invocations demonstrate the glorification of violence in Hotspur's celebrated warriorhood, and the feminising force of Hal's consortment with the commoners of Eastcheap, a duality that remains even after Hal's defeat of Hotspur. 'Between the Armies' aimed to amplify these contrasting presentations of masculinity, exposing the weaponisation of the two young men against one another by their fathers as an enactment of intergenerational trauma. Having explored the role of toxic and anxious masculinities in the maintenance of heteropatriarchal control, these concepts formed a thread in our inquiries into cycles of oppression and unity within the play, how they are justified in accordance with narrative, and how they might be challenged in the process of rehearsal and performance.

Figure 2 Production photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Left to right, Ross Scott as Falstaff, Stan Elliott as Hal, Russell Eccleston as Henry IV, and Mike Harley as Westmoreland gaze out over the battlefield. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

Figure 2.1 Production photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Joe Samuels' lighting design accentuates the cold industrialism of the set at The Rondo Theatre, Bath. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

Reprising his role, Eccleston portrayed a version of Henry (Figure 2) who had gained greater control of the emotions that previously earned him ridicule through the stability of kingship. Now possessing the power to determine his own identity, Henry was able to unleash his rage whenever, and against whoever, he wished. This interpretation took influence from Henry's continued predisposition toward violence in the *Henry IV*s. His opening lines in *Part 1* indicate the intended wars that have occupied his mind since Richard's death: 'So shaken as we are, so wan with care, / Find we a time for frighted peace to pant / And breathe short-winded accents of new broils' (1.1.1-3). Henry's language forms the lens through which the action in this first scene is recounted; the nightmarish images of England's lips daubed with 'her own children's blood' and 'the intestine shock / And furious close of civil butchery' present an image of King and country unable to shed the trauma of past events (1.1.6-13). In 'Between the Armies', Eccleston's youth played into the image of a ruler led by impulse and unequipped to deal with the complexities of the conflict he faced.

The tension of Henry and Northumberland's backstory and the political landscape it established for the adaptation served as a backdrop against which marginalised characters could be seen to challenge, yield, or fall victim to normalised cultures of violence. With the government conflict with trade unions, the rise of media focus on male bodies, and the clash of LGBTQ+, Conservative and "skinhead" cultures and subcultures, 1980's England presented a living-memory setting in which the cultural turbulence and politics of male desire in the two parts of *Henry IV* could be explored. While Eccleston's performance emphasised the patriotism one might expect from a ruler, the design elements that contributed to the establishment of this temporal backdrop were suggestive of a more nationalistic sense of pride. Eccleston's costume drew on stylistic features of the 1980's skinhead movement, with braces, checked trousers, and heavy Doc Marten-style boots (Figure 2). These visual echoes of the far-right supported his performance of Henry's progressively destructive politics. Though the setting was never explicitly referenced in the production, the 1980's aesthetic contributed to an ambiguity that the production's abstract set design (Figure 2.1) attempted to emphasise. The set was formed of two scaffolding towers that loomed over opposite sides of the stage, providing an adaptable space that could be used to represent multiple settings.

The adaptations' movement between these settings contributed to a blurring of the boundaries between worlds, time periods, public and private spaces, and the sociologies evoked by them. Though the production gave a location to formerly unlocalised Shakespearen settings, the pace and flow of the movement between them was affected through the omission of large chunks of the *Henry IV* texts. Though the adaptation preserved the plays' 'sequential development,' the jarringness of this motion activated a form of the 'discontinuity' and 'juxtaposition' of Marowitz's collage, fragmenting the dramatic logic of the play (Marowitz, 1991: 32). Yet, rather than engaging this discontinuity for the expression of 'interior meanings,' the effect of this dramatic structure was nearer to character-audience alienation of Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt*. No sooner had a point of interiority been reached within a scene than the scene moved on, focusing audiences' attention on a different set of characters and events.

Figure 2.2 Production photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Ross Scott as Falstaff (left), Elisabeth Winkler as Mistress Quickly (centre) and Stan Elliott as Hal (right) party under the neon lights of Eastcheap. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

The sparseness of the design attempted to physicalise the emptiness and isolation of Henry's court. The towers called attention to the theatre itself, accentuating the expansiveness of the eight metre-wide, four-and-a-half metre-high space (Figure 2.1) and leaving it to Joe Samuels' lighting to distinguish separate settings within the show. Samuels' design sought to blur the realms in which the political struggle between Henry and Northumberland, and the private conflicts between fathers and sons, husbands and wives, friends, comrades, and chosen family could take place. Cold, naturalistic tones defined the unwelcoming oppressiveness of the court, while Eastcheap was illuminated by neon blues and pinks, with a glitter ball revolving overhead (Figure 2.2). Slanting shafts of dim light shone through an obscured window somewhere offstage right, and industrial-style outdoor lighting combined interior and exterior elements that could be used to transform the scaffolding towers from the parapets of the rebel base, to a nightclub seating area, to the furnishings of the King's

bedchamber. The vacant space between the towers remained empty throughout the show as a representation of the divide between Henry and Northumberland.

In performance this division was reflected in the increasing separation between the court and rebel factions in the show's staging; in the lead-up to the Battle of Shrewsbury Henry, Hal and their followers almost exclusively occupied the stage left scaffold (Figure 2), while the rebels took control of stage right. Caught in this semiotic 'between,' the next generation of the opposing factions were indoctrinated. Referenced in the show's title, the design intended to invoke the atmosphere of a no-man's-land, liminal and isolating, where Hal and Hotspur would remain until they conformed to or rejected once and for all the principles laid out for them by their fathers. A product and instrument of the violent economies of Henry's England, Hotspur thrived by embracing the mythopoetic warrior identity lauded by his father. With the inherited threat he posed to the crown as Northumberland's son, the escalation of his power created an increasing state of jeopardy for Henry. As this chapter will later discuss, Njeko Katebe's casting as Hotspur served to highlight the complexity of the character's relationship with hegemony and masculinity.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the transformation of the Boar's Head tavern into a gay nightclub, and with it the inhabitants of Eastcheap into a Queer community during a period in Western history when homosexuality was subject to forceful policing, created a new lens through which Hal's 'riot and dishonour' could be viewed, leaden not only with the heteropatriarchal disapproval of his father but also the mimetic weight of the hostility experienced by LGBTQAI+ people in the 1980s (1.1.84). When 'Between the Armies' transported audiences to the nightworld of Eastcheap, the colour palette of the stage and costumes changed but the rival towers continued to loom over the stage (Figure 2.2), reminders of the impending violence their division foreshadowed. Despite this, the boozy exchanges of wit between Hal and Falstaff remained the defining feature of Eastcheap. Under the neon of Samuels' lighting the tavern was transported from the brown-toned demi-realism of productions such as Doran or Eyre's, to the spiritual home of a Queer enclave who shared a collective consciousness of their Otherness. In the context of this onstage world, the divided nature of Hal's masculinity (at home in Eastcheap and "alien" to the court, while also seeking reconciliation with his father and monarchic identity) was reflected in the division between the communities to which he was simultaneously a part of and Other.

The tavern's recontextualisation established a dialogue between the politics of exclusion at the centre of Hal's eventual rejection of Falstaff, and the heightened homophobia of the 1980s, which is now seeing a resurgence in the passing of anti-gay and -trans legislation and the global rise of anti-LGBTQIA+ movements in the early 2020s. Where before the divisions between the court and tavern were predominantly class-based, the adaptation introduced the added dimension of sexuality and with it a Queer-coding of the degenerate masculinities commonly represented in the Eastcheap scenes. As I have discussed, the knowledge of Apricity Theatre's regular and returning LGBTQIA+ audiences proved key to avoiding a generalised projection of deviance onto Falstaff's Queerness or commonality. As a Queer director, personal understandings of the different embodied tensions associated with spaces of acceptance and hostility informed the approaches to adapting Eastcheap's characters in the text and onstage. The tones struck in their interactions in and with the various settings of the playworld sought to draw a contrast between the tavern and the world beyond it, rooted in the visibility of outness and the discomfort of closetedness. In Henry's court, repression was apparent in the tension of the actors' bodies and the physical distance between them; when they did make contact, it was violent, with touch functioning as a form of control. Strict rules, decided by characters' status within the court hierarchy, dictated who was allowed on certain areas of the stage, who had free reign of the space, and who remained static. In Eastcheap, physical touch between the characters was frequent and welcomed, as was their vulnerability, (often brutal) honesty, sexual playfulness, and uninhibited joy. This freedom was reflected in characters' wandering, more loosely choreographed movements, brightly coloured costumes that made a point of their visibility among one another, and the irreverence with which they treated the space and objects in it – such as Hal's vomiting down the back of the stage left scaffold (Appendix 2.1: 00.06.26).

With the expectation of audiences' positive relationality to the production's Queer characters, such tensions could be explored and played with under the assumption that through this lens, they might recognise Falstaff's humour as a defence mechanism, his cowardice as a desire to protect his loved ones, and his joy as radical expression in a world that sought to oppress it. In their analysis of a passage in *Richard II* that foreshadows Hal's 'wanton and effeminate' (5.3.10) antics in *Henry IV Part 1*, Howard and Rackin observe a similar practice in the narrative's alignment with the anticipated outlooks of popular audiences:

> [Henry's] speech announces in advance two important features of Hal's characterization: the fact that his chosen companions are exactly the sort of people that antitheatrical writers claimed constituted the majority of the audience in the commercial theatres, and the fact that the king regards those associations as symptoms of effeminacy.
>
> (Howard and Rackin, 1997: 174-175)

Particularly in their exploration of Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet in the *Henry IV*s (an analysis made applicable to Scott's performance of homosexuality through Falstaff's queering) they observe that 'the very act of representing' the women of Eastcheap 'as internal threats to the nation [...] opens the door to registering their theatrical vitality and their links to the commercial world where the players plied their trade,' calling attention 'to the gap between official history and the social domains it must exclude to constitute itself' (1997: 176). While Henry's declaration has the potential to divide an audience, its irony carries the stronger possibility of connecting playgoers in their collective defiance of antitheatrical ideology, perhaps even eliciting an atmosphere of defiance toward the character himself. In 'Between the Armies', rather than femininity, a feminine masculinity could be seen to come under scrutiny in Falstaff. The omission of plot points such as the failed highway robbery (2.2), through which his criminality is foregrounded and his judgement justified, instead drew attention to his gender-nonconformity as the basis for his supposed deviance. Though he was still ridiculed and condemned, with varying levels of sincerity, the affection he shared with his community undermined its animosity, relocating moral ambiguity in those who reacted with cruelty in the face of his kindness.

With Apricity's reputation for staging Queer and feminist theatre, 'Between the Armies' undertook this exploration with the understanding that audiences would accept this political standpoint on the plays. In order to avoid implying that the criminalisation of the gay community in the 1980s was in any way warranted, Falstaff's adaptation relied upon audiences' relation to a Queer version of the character as the basis for turning the plays' moral critique upon the law-makers themselves. Whereas audiences beyond Apricity's following may be less attuned to the impacts of homophobic political strategies (like Thatcher's Section 28 and reaction to the AIDS crisis through the 1980s), the Queer presence among 'Between the Armies' spectators adjusted the gaze at play in Falstaff's signification. As Butler suggests, 'the body, defined politically, is precisely organized by a perspective that

is not one's own and is, in that sense, already elsewhere, for another, and so in departure from oneself' (2011: 3). In departing from the political frameworks of Shakespeare's text, Falstaff and Eastcheap's representation affected the adaptation's alignment with a Queer gaze, redefining the moral implications of Henry and Hal's condemnation through their moral separation from the audiences' own.

In a temporal setting characterised by intense homophobic brutality, characters like Falstaff and Mistress Quickly, played by Elisabeth Winkler, gained an amplified sense of awareness of their own politicism. While exploring ways to emphasise this in rehearsals, it became clear that such consciousness is already integral to the characters in the texts. Falstaff's 'honour' speech calls attention to the futility of class-based concepts like the knightly codes that govern the actions of the plays' noble characters: 'Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No.' (5.1.131-132) The comedy with which this line is often performed downplays the sincerity of Fastaff's acknowledgement that for many of the soldiers, whose lives are placed on the line in the name of the King or his opposers, honour serves little purpose. It is a means by which they are goaded into battle, an insubstantial promise luring them toward very real violence.

Building on these ideas in 'Between the Armies', we sought to connect Falstaff's political consciousness to the purposeful performance of gay masculinity that would eventually be embodied in performance. As discussed in *Chapter 1*, nature's forces are commonly associated with femininity and the changeability of the female body in early modern literature, supernaturally tied to the moon and its nighttime motions. Throughout *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2*, Falstaff's frequent orisons to the moon, that 'primordial Goddess of Night,' align him with these feminine forces, and with the implied unnaturalness of male femininity (Berry, 1999: 86). His invocations repeatedly position him as a servant to the night, an active self-identification that rejects the negative connotations of his gender nonconformity:

> Let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.
>
> (*Henry IV Part 1*, 1.2.22-28)

By retaining these lines and others like them throughout the adapted playtext, Ross Scott, who played Falstaff, had opportunities to emphasise his connection to nature. By his own affirmation, Falstaff was a character consciously, almost romantically, engaged in the performance of femininity. As the major driving force of Eastcheap's representation in the production, his campness contributed to a queering of the setting, and of the relationship between him and Hal.

Scott stands at six foot three, with a naturally loud, low voice and a flair for flamboyance. His towering presence over the other actors (in particular the five foot seven Stan Elliott, who played Hal) became the measure of Falstaff's mountainousness in 'Between the Armies'. As Scott was significantly younger than Shakespeare's Falstaff when he took on the role, allusions to his old age were used as the foundation for a running joke between him and Hal, who took every opportunity to remind him of their age difference. Using performance techniques similar to Eccleston in his portrayal of Bolingbroke in 'Fall of Kings', Scott endeavoured to accentuate Falstaff's femininity through his physical characterisation. In the post-show discussion after a performance of 'Between the Armies', Scott spoke about discovering how softening his gestures or angling his palms upward, replacing any motion that could be construed as aggressive with an implied 'let me help you,' made it possible to convey the gentle, conciliatory nature of Falstaff's gender performance (Appendix 2.3: 00.07.29). Emphasising mentions of the moon and stars with upward gestures toward the illuminated 'Eastcheap' sign (Appendix 2.1: 00.07.55), the affectionate tone with which he delivered these lines and gestures suggested that such allusions to the night referred more specifically to nights spent in the tavern – or bar – among those with whom he felt at home.

These discoveries underlined the danger of gender nonconformity in the context of the adaptation's setting. For Scott, the qualities that characterised femininity and homosexuality in the playworld were pacifying, defensive, and invariably configured in response to anticipated violence. In discussions surrounding Falstaff's backstory, Scott determined that, although his knighthood had been earned in battle, he still 'wasn't accepted' and 'didn't feel comfortable in that soldier-like community' (Appendix 2.3: 00.01.48). The tavern was a space in which he and the other frequenters of Eastcheap could find safety, solace and kinship, away from the contempt of Henry's kingdom. Beyond Eastcheap, his sexuality was subject to strict censorship. In performance, while preparing for battle with Hal and their fellow soldiers (5.1), Falstaff was conspicuously silent. When he did speak, the conversation

was muted, sincere, and loaded with thoughts of the battle to come, his silence an act of self-suppression in the face of the normalised violence of his surroundings. To reconcile these two versions of the character was a matter of dimensionality; Falstaff remained, at all times, the man who decries the whole concept of honour in one moment and 'takes Commander Blunt in his arms and says "there's honour for you"' in the next (Appendix 2.3: 00:02:05).

These contradictions posed a challenge to Scott, who's portrayal had to ensure the sides of Falstaff's personality that jarred with one another were visible as parts of a complex whole, without creating so much inconsistency as to alienate the audience entirely. The added weight of more serious moments intended to contribute to this balance in the character's dimensionality, which comedy might otherwise dominate and undermine. Our interpretation drew on the fleeting glimpses of earnestness often toyed with by actors such as Simon Russell Beale in Eyre's *The Hollow Crown: Henry IV Part 1* (2012), where close-ups and reaction shots lend momentary windows into Falstaff's private unhappiness. We hoped that the tragic balance in Scott's performance would generate a greater contrast to his comedic scenes, but with the strain of this private burden weighing on Falstaff from the offset of the play, the comedy of these scenes was difficult to reach. Perhaps emphasised by Scott's natural leaning toward tragic characterisation, Falstaff's psychological underpinning as a gay man in a culturally hostile setting made breaking from this baseline a complex task to achieve through the Shakespearean dialogue available. The character's political consciousness further obfuscated his comedic function, as perhaps did our attempt to underscore his cynicism about the battles he was forced to fight on Henry's behalf.

The line 'They'll fill a pit as well as better,' part of Falstaff's catechism on the almost certain death of his soldiers on the run-up to the Battle of Shrewsbury, was omitted from the final script of 'Between the Armies' (4.2.65-66). However, it remained an influence on the dramaturgical objectives of the production's representation of war and the role of civilian soldiers. The disturbing frankness of the line, often delivered with a sense of indifference or comic darkness, fed into Falstaff's honour speech in Scott's performance (5.1). Speaking directly to Hal in a final futile attempt to make him see sense and withdraw from the battle, Scott emphasised the sharp, interrogatory nature of Falstaff's sentences, with attention to the heavy use of fullstops and question marks throughout the speech: 'What is honour? A word. What is in that word 'honour'? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' a Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No' (5.1.133-137). With a stress on 'Doth

he hear it' and a gesture in the offstage direction in which Henry had exited moments before, Falstaff alluded to the coercive, unsatisfiable nature of Henry's control over Hal (Appendix 2.1: 01.17.40). With Hal onstage, the speech could be read as Falstaff's attempt to name the violence that threatened his every day, both in and beyond the military. Unwilling to listen, Hal eventually left the stage, leaving Falstaff to call 'Tis insensible then' into the empty space (5.1.137). The urgency of Falstaff's suit aimed to underline the destructiveness of honour-bound masculinity. For Henry, honour could be found in the justification of his former actions through Hal's inheritance of his kingship. To Falstaff, it was nothing but a tool of his oppression. For Hal, it was a barrage of conflicting signals compelling him to commit himself to the performance of one version of manhood or another, a slow-lost battle that eventually ended with his commitment to the heteropatriarchal paradigms enforced by Henry, with the implication of continued marginalisation for Falstaff and his community.

These instances established Falstaff as a key critical voice through which the hegemonic politics represented in the production could be signalled and critiqued. In Eastcheap, Falstaff could be gay without being Other. The bar presented a setting in which Queer acceptance and self-actualisation could be imagined, where the lives of its inhabitants did not depend on their assimilation to the compulsory heteronormativity beyond its walls. With this, the production's criticality of the ideologies represented by Henry underscored the fact that Queerness itself does not create danger; rather it is the hegemony by which it is constituted Other that does so. For Hal, while Eastcheap provided an escape from the pressures of the court, it was also a source of tension in his relationship with Henry. The father-son bond between them is obfuscated by the multifaceted nature of their relationships as king and subject, commander and soldier, moral enforcer and degenerate. To further complicate the disproportionate power between parent and child, their relationship is frequently conducted through Henry's use of verbal violence against his son. As a young man still under the jurisdiction of his father, the ideologies enforced in Hal's homelife could be seen to impact his responses to the situations and decisions he faced. As rehearsals progressed, our discoveries in the scenes between Henry and Hal increasingly brought to light the violence at the heart of Henry's reprimands.

With this realisation, our approach to the dramaturgy of Henry and Hal's relationship shifted focus, aiming to expose Henry's abuse by building on the verbal confrontations already present in the text. Henry's disdain for his son is established in the opening scene of *Henry IV Part 1*, in his exchange with the Earl of Westmorland:

> Yea, there thou mak'st me sad and mak'st me sin
> In envy that my lord Northumberland
> Should be the father to so blest a son,
> A son who is the theme of honour's tongue,
> Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
> Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride;
> Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,
> See riot and dishonour stain the brow
> Of my young Harry. O, that it could be proved
> That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
> In cradle clothes our children where they lay,
> And called mine 'Percy', his 'Plantagenet';
> Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
>
> (1.1.77-89)

The contempt in Henry's wish that his son had been exchanged at birth with Hotspur remains consistent throughout the plays, momentarily disrupted when Hal proves himself in battle. Their frequent comparisons establish and reinforce the value of Hotspur's warriorhood over Hal's riotousness. Henry's attitude espouses the notion that masculinity must be signified, rather than simply born into or inherited. Kingship, like manhood, must be performed, and the status of both young men is dependent on their contribution to the upholding of Henry's hegemony.

The pressure Henry exerts on Hal is as much a manifestation of the shame and fear that he will fail to raise a worthy future King of England as anger. When the tension between them comes to a head in *Part 1*, 'ruined,' 'lavish,' 'vulgar' and 'vile' are among the words Henry uses against Hal (3.2.37-87). Within the contemporary context of the production's setting and performance, these words had the potential to evoke alternate meanings perhaps more familiar to modern audiences than the early modern messaging behind them. Words such as 'ruined' and 'lavish' possibly pertain more closely to contemporary stereotypes of gay or gender nonconforming men (3.2.37-39). Used in conjunction with descriptives such as 'vulgar' and 'vile,' these terms connect the performance of Queerness to indecency

(3.2.41-87). In ‘Between the Armies’, Henry’s reprimand of Hal drew on this interpretation of these terms as references to his son’s homosexuality, and his revulsion to it.

Figure 2.3 Production photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018)
Russell Eccleston as Henry (right) and Stan Elliott as Hal (left) during a fight sequence

choreographed by Eccleston and Tiffany Rhodes. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

Buried in such a dense segment of text, Henry's phrasing alone seemed ineffective in communicating this dimension of his tirade. We therefore sought ways to physicalise the abusive and coercive tendencies that might be obscured by the early modern language. In addition to his acting role, Eccleston was the fight choreographer for the production alongside Tiffany Rhodes and together they devised a combat sequence between Henry and Hal that would present a physical representation of Henry's verbal abuse. In the lead up to the sequence, Eccleston took full reign of the stage while Elliott was restricted to a limited area (Appendix 2.1: 00.49.57), the contrasting freedom of movement a manifestation of Henry's textual domination of the scene (3.2). The length and density of Henry's speeches offered little opportunity for Hal to respond, providing no respite from the barrage of insults aimed his way. Eccleston grasped Elliott by the back of the neck and thrust him to the front of the stage before pacing the upstage space behind him. Building on the tone and pacing of these passages, his movements grew faster and faster as Hal's discomfort heightened, reflected in the increasing stillness and tension of Elliott's body. Blocking Hal's attempts to leave the room, Henry eventually backed him up against the stage left wall, before grasping him by the throat and throwing him to the ground. Then, pulling him up by his hair and speaking in his ear (Figure 2.3), Eccleston's emphasis on words such as 'fear' and 'curtsy' connected the motivation behind his physical violence to the ridicule of Hal's homosexuality:

> Thou art like enough, through vassal *fear*,
> To fight *against* me under Percy's pay,
> To dog his heels and *curtsy* at his frowns,
> To show how much *thou art degenerate*.
>
> (3.2.124-128)

In light of this violence, Hal's subsequent agreement to follow his father to war appeared nothing more than a desperate attempt to evade a further beating. In the domestic setting inferred by their casual clothing and privacy, their interaction was more emotional than political, Hal's pleas between gasps of pain an attempt to reconcile with his father rather than fulfil any princely duty to his kingdom. The bargain marked the beginning of his rejection of homosexuality – and of Eastcheap.

As a result of the queering of Hal and Falstaff's connection the impact of Hal's concluding moment of rejection underscored the violence on which his ascension to the throne is predicated. Within the scope of the second tetralogy the scene represents a defining step in Hal's transformation from riotous youth to Great King, a victory narrative that concludes with the final events of *Henry V.* Hal and Falstaff's queering made visible the power disparities between them and characters who benefited from the culture of violently enforced heteronormativity that characterised Henry's England, highlighting acts of rejection, banishment, and silencing upon which his power was based. The legacy of Henry's hegemonic identity was exposed for its reliance on the maintenance of such violence. Having grown into the power that allowed him to determine his own masculine identity since the events portrayed in 'Fall of Kings', the upholding of this masculinity, ironically, now depended on the destruction of Hal's.

The 1980's setting established a bridge between the Shakespearean gender politics and the contemporary world in which it was performed and experienced. With the alignment of locations such as Eastcheap and the court with temporally specific histories of Queerness and the Right, the production was able to identify and narrativise experiences that have existed throughout the settings it brought together. Characterised by repression and fear, the realm of hegemonic masculinity was contrasted by the safety and community displayed between the inhabitants of Eastcheap. The opposition to Henry's ideologies that emanated from this community posed the love and protectiveness they showed one another as radical acts of resistance. Among them, Falstaff's rejection of the codes of honour central to the performance of hegemonic masculinity and his continued loyalty to Hal in the face of increasing hostility represented a queering not only of the character but also his actions. The dissidence of the Eastcheap community was re-characterised as a form of identity politics that resisted the repression of heterosexual hegemony. As the rest of this chapter will explore, their representation contributed to an overall critique of heteronormative, white, cisgender male power, in a production process that aimed to redefine the character of opposition and place the marginalised at its centre.

Re-embodying (white male) violence

AKIRA ROSS
JORDAN NEELY
DARRYL TYREE WILLIAMS
TYRE NICHOLS
KEENAN ANDERSON
SINZAE REED
KESHAWN THOMAS
DANTE KITTRELL
JAYLAND WALKER
CHRISTOPHER KELLEY
RUTH WHITFIELD
PEARL YOUNG
KATHERINE MASSEY
HEYWARD PATTERSON
CELESTINE CHANEY
GERALDINE TALLEY
AARON SALTER JR.
ANDRE MACKNIEL
MARCUS MORRISON
ROBERTA DRURY
PATRICK LYOYA
DONNELL ROCHESTER
AMIR LOCKE
ISAIAH TYREE WILLIAMS
JASON WALKER
JAMES WILLIAMS
MICHAEL WAYNE JACKSON
ARNELL "AJ" STEWART
FANTA BILITY
ALVIN MOTLEY JR.
TA'NEASHA CHAPPELL
RYAN LEROUX
WINSTON SMITH
LATOYA DENISE JAMES
ANDREW BROWN JR.
MA'KHIA BRYANT
MATTHEW "ZADOK" WILLIAMS
DAUNTE WRIGHT
JAMES LIONEL JOHNSON
DOMINIQUE WILLIAMS
DONOVON LYNCH
MARVIN SCOTT III
JENOAH DONALD
PATRICK WARREN
XZAVIER HILL
ROBERT HOWARD
VINCENT BELMONTE
MONICA GOODS
BENNIE EDWARDS
CASEY GOODSON JR.
AIDEN ELLISON
QUAWAN CHARLES
KEVIN PETERSON JR.
WALTER WALLACE JR.
JONATHAN PRICE
KURT REINHOLD
DIJON KIZZEE
DAMIAN DANIELS
ANTHONY MCCLAIN
JULIAN LEWIS
MAURICE ABISDID-WAGNER
BRAYLA STONE
RAYSHARD BROOKS
PRISCILLA SLATER
ROBERT FORBES
KAMAL FLOWERS
JAMEL FLOYD
DAVID MCATEE
JAMES SCURLOCK
CALVIN HORTON JR.
TONY MCDADE
DION JOHNSON

GEORGE FLOYD	MAURICE GORDON	CORNELIUS FREDERICKS
STEVEN TAYLOR	DANIEL PRUDE	BREONNA TAYLOR
BARRY GEDEUS	MANUEL ELLIS	REGINALD "REGGIE" PAYNE
AHMAUD ARBERY	LIONEL MORRIS	JAQUYN O'NEILL LIGHT
WILLIAM GREEN	DARIUS TARVER	MICIAH LEE
JOHN NEVILLE	CAMERON LAMB	MICHAEL DEAN
ATATIANA JEFFERSON	BYRON WILLIAMS	ELIJAH MCCLAIN
JALEEL MEDLOCK	TITI "TETE" GULLEY	DOMINIQUE CLAYTON
PAMELA TURNER	RONALD GREENE	STERLING HIGGINS
BRADLEY BLACKSHIRE	JASSMINE MCBRIDE	
ALEAH JENKINS	EMANTIC BRADFORD JR.	JEMEL ROBERSON
CHARLES ROUNDTREE JR.	BOTHAM JEAN	HARITH AUGUSTUS
JASON WASHINGTON	ANTWON ROSE JR.	ROBERT WHITE
EARL MCNEIL	MARCUS-DAVID PETERS	DORIAN HARRIS
DANNY RAY THOMAS	STEPHON CLARK	RONELL FOSTER
DAMON GRIMES	JAMES LACY	CHARLEENA LYLES
MIKEL MCINTYRE	JORDAN EDWARDS	TIMOTHY CAUGHMAN
ALTERIA WOODS	DESMOND PHILLIPS	
DEBORAH DANNER	ALFRED OLANGO	TERENCE CRUTCHER
CHRISTIAN TAYLOR	JAMARION ROBINSON	DONNELL THOMPSON JR.
JOSEPH MANN	PHILANDO CASTILE	ALTON STERLING
JAY ANDERSON JR.	CHE TAYLOR	DAVID JOSEPH
ANTRONIE SCOTT		
BETTIE JONES	QUINTONIO LEGRIER	COREY JONES
SAMUEL DUBOSE	DARRIUS STEWART	SANDRA BLAND
SUSIE JACKSON	DANIEL SIMMONS	ETHEL LANCE

MYRA THOMPSON	CYNTHIA HURD	DEPAYNE MIDDLETON-DOCTOR
SHARONDA COLEMAN-SINGLETON	CLEMENTA PINCKNEY	TYWANZA SANDERS
KALIEF BROWDER	FREDDIE GRAY	NORMAN COOPER
WALTER SCOTT	ERIC HARRIS	MEAGAN HOCKADAY
NATASHA MCKENNA		
RUMAIN BRISBON	TAMIR RICE	AKAI GURLEY
TANISHA ANDERSON	LAQUAN MCDONALD	CAMERON TILLMAN
DARRIEN HUNT	KAJIEME POWELL	MICHELLE CUSSEAUX
DANTE PARKER	EZELL FORD	MICHAEL BROWN
AMIR BROOKS	JOHN CRAWFORD III	ERIC GARNER
JERRY DWIGHT BROWN	VICTOR WHITE III	MARQUISE JONES
YVETTE SMITH		
RENISHA MCBRIDE	JONATHAN FERRELL	DEION FLUDD
GABRIEL WINZER	WAYNE A. JONES	KIMANI GRAY
KAYLA MOORE		
COREY STINGLEY	DARNESHA HARRIS	JORDAN DAVIS
MOHAMED BAH	SGT. JAMES BROWN	DARIUS SIMMONS
REKIA BOYD	TRAYVON MARTIN	
WILLIE RAY BANKS	KENNETH CHAMBERLAIN SR.	CLETIS WILLIAMS
ROBERT RICKS		
EUGENE ELLISON	DANROY "DJ" HENRY JR.	AIYANA STANLEY-JONES
LAWRENCE ALLEN	OSCAR GRANT	JULIAN ALEXANDER
MARVIN PARKER	DEAUNTA FARROW	SEAN BELL
KATHRYN JOHNSTON	TIMOTHY STANSBURY JR.	ALBERTA SPRUILL
ANTHONY DWAIN LEE	RICKY BYRDSONG	AMADOU DIALLO
JAMES BYRD JR.	NICHOLAS HEYWARD JR.	MARY MITCHELL

Figure 2.4 Screenshot from *Say Their Names* (2023)

This list – which will no doubt have lengthened since the conclusion of this project in 2023 – and the immensity of the historical, systemic issues that underlie the need for campaigns such as *Say Their Names*, illustrate the context in which the following reflections on 'Between the Armies' occurred. Beginning with the most recent shooting of twenty-four-year-old Akira Ross on 2nd June 2023, *Say Their Names*' database lists the known deaths of Black people dating back to the lynching of Levi Harrington at the age of twenty-three on 3rd April 1882. Countless others do not feature, remaining unrecorded and erased by the historically inadequate documentation of Black death. Seventy-three names down (Figure 2.4) is George Floyd, whose murder on 25th May 2020 brought global attention to the extremity of the state-sanctioned violence against Black men, women, and individuals in the U.S. in the midst of the first wave of Covid-19 lockdowns.

During the initial drafting of this chapter, the image of Floyd's murder was at the forefront of global consciousness. It became impossible not to perceive the parallels between the image of Hotspur's death presented in 'Between the Armies' and those that constantly occupied the news during the 2020 wave of Black Lives Matter protests. With the casting of Elliott and Katebe, the skirmish between Hal and Hotspur that ends in Hotspur's death (5.4) presented an image of the white, blonde-haired, blue-eyed prince's brutal execution of a vocal opposer of his father's regime, who was also a Black man. The image was a conscious one, attempting to

subvert the glorification of Hal's violence and disrupt the redemption arc in which Hotspur's death plays an integral part. The remainder of this chapter will consider this subversion and Hotspur's role in it from a perspective informed by the events of 2020, and by the immeasurable loss of Black lives to white supremacy in the time since 2018 when the show was performed.

With the re-embodiment of characters like Hotspur and Falstaff who fell into the firing line of the warring nobility, 'Between the Armies' made visible the everyday and extreme violences often central to marginal experience. However, as the following pages will explore, visualisation without critique serves only to mimic and further enact the violence it seeks to portray. At a time when Queer, Black, and Disabled artists and audiences are calling for representations of joy, justice, autonomy and freedom, not merely repetitions of trauma, it is not enough to lay claim to marginal experience without first examining the contexts and narratives in which such representations occur.

Figure 2.5 Production photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Emily Malloy as Kate and Njeko Katebe as Hotspur share a passionate embrace. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

During casting for 'Between the Armies', Hotspur was the favourite of several roles Katebe could have taken on. In our effort to employ colour consciousness in casting decisions, the audition panel discussed the possibility that the pre-existent assumptions surrounding Hotspur's role as the antagonist in the play and his alignment with violence might engender harmful stereotypical notions when attached to the body of a Black actor in performance. Addressing the stereotyping of Black characters in productions of *Titus Andronicus* in *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, Pascale Aebischer addresses the forms of sexualisation, fetishising, exoticising, and masculinisation that displace 'violence, evil, social disorder and aggression [...] from the "norm" of Roman masculinity' (2004: 116). Gregory Doran's *Titus Andronicus* (1995) was performed by a South African-based company at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg a year after the country's first post-apartheid democratic elections. Aebischer observes that the production's casting coded Roman masculinity white, activating a racialisation of violence in relation to characters positioned as the villains of the play. Establishing nonviolent aspects of Hotspur's masculinity and ensuring that the dramaturgy of 'Between the Armies' provided sufficient justification for his violence beyond these moments would therefore be integral to avoiding what Aebischer terms the projection of 'aggression onto racial "Otherness" in a "blackening" of violence' (2004: 115).

Hotspur's performance history throughout the early twenty-first century is littered with representations of his martiality as an inherently negative aspect of his character. The insinuation of "bad" violence is exemplified in the brutishness of Joe Armstrong's Hotspur in *The Hollow Crown: Henry IV Part 1* (2012), most notable in the aggressive interaction with Kate that introduces their relationship (2.3). In the lead up to their conversation, Kate, played by Michelle Dockery, listens as Hotspur rants in the corridor outside their bedroom; she sits in bed, unclothed, with the cover drawn up to her chest and concern on her face. After getting up and pulling on a robe, she hits Hotspur frustratedly, grabbing at him in an attempt to convince him to share his plans with her. The physical language between them appears habitual, suggesting a relationship based on touch and playful intimacy, until Hotspur forcefully throws her off of him onto the bed. Standing over her, he proclaims, 'Love? I love thee not; / I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world / To play with mammets and to tilt with

lips' (2.3.86-88). He grasps her by the arm, placing his hand over her mouth until he is finished arguing why he cannot reveal the rebellion's plot.

Hotspur's use of physical force is downplayed later in the scene with the return to a gentler body-language between them and the introduction of a romantic instrumental underscore. Kate's initiation of a kiss appears to absolve him of his violent display, but the insinuation of abuse cannot be un-introduced. The unjustifiable nature of Hotspur's aggression (if we assume that forms of justifiable violence can exist) undermines the stakes generated by the political circumstances beyond it. As a result, any vindication the scene might provide through the depiction of an alternative masculinity to the rage-driven warrior remains obfuscated by the "wrong"ness of this particular form of violence. Played by a white actor, the supposed neutrality of white male identity can obscure the consideration of this violence in relation to race.

In Phillida Lloyd's *Henry IV*, Jade Anouka's femininity and her surrounding by the multiracial and multinational all-women cast helped negate the potential for a racialised portrayal of her violence. Contextualised by the production's women's prison setting, the parallels between the incarcerated characters, many of whose crimes were a result of desperation or coercion, and the Shakespearean characters they played made it possible to cognise and defend their actions. Throughout Lloyd's Donmar Trilogy, the actors played a group of prisoners staging productions of Shakespeare as part of a creative rehabilitation program. In addition to Hotspur, Anouka also played Sharde, and Harriet Walter played Hannah as well as Henry IV; throughout the trilogy the offstage dramas between the incarcerated women could be seen to bleed into their performance of the plays. Sharde's quiet vulnerability and the evident respect she held for Hannah contributed to the depiction of her unwillingness to engage in the multi-layered conflict.

Had the crossing of this colour line been a less rare occurrence, the catalogue of Hotspur's performance history might have provided a more immediate solution to our questions concerning Katebe's casting. However, we agreed that the opportunity for the subversion of negative stereotypes was exactly the reason he should perform the role. As an actor with the charisma to easily garner audience allegiances and the skill to bring a complex multidimensionality to the character, Katebe could offer a portrayal that acknowledged Hotspur's alternative masculine identities alongside his warriorhood. As discussed earlier in

the chapter, the interpretation of Henry's kingship presented by the adaptation and design established a backdrop against which the Percys' rebellion could be considered a justifiable defiance of violent tyranny; it would now fall to the dramaturgy and direction of the production to continue this work and support Katebe in his exploration of Hotspur as a Black man navigating a hostile environment.

The casting affected what can be considered a re-racialisation of the character as he is conventionally embodied in performance: portrayed by a Black male actor, Hotspur's representation had the potential to reject the white hegemony of his past characterisation and narrativisation. In 'Between the Armies', rather than aggression, the moments between Kate and Hotspur offered a window into a support system that could be seen to soothe the collective frustrations and fears of both characters (Figure 2.5). Played by Emily Malloy, Kate was tentative and softly spoken, gentle yet playful in her interrogation of Hotspur. The scene opened with Hotspur downstage right as Kate emerged onto the stage left scaffold, her face lighting up with the first shared glance between them before the memory of their situation wiped away her smile (Appendix 2.1: 00.28.58). Taking his face tenderly between her hands on the line 'And in thy face strange motions have appeared' (2.3.59), Malloy established the physical touch between them as a love language, and broke from any suggestion of seriousness with a laugh in her voice as she threatened, 'I'll break thy little finger, Harry, / An if thou wilt not tell me all things true' (2.3.84-85). With this, Hotspur's statements about the necessity of violence seemed more for his own benefit than Kate's. On the line 'We must have bloody noses and cracked crowns,' Katebe turned his back on Malloy, presenting the line as Hotspur's attempt to convince *himself* with emphasis of the word 'must' (2.3.89). In the brief pause that followed, Hotspur's doubt in his own assertion could be felt.

Their affection exemplified a sense of safety that it soon became clear existed solely between the two of them. By including Kate in several scenes in which she does not appear in Shakespeare's texts, we created opportunities to show this dimension of their relationship, and when they came to part as Hotspur prepared to enter the battle (5.2) they shared a long, tearful embrace. As Hotspur left the stage, there was a forcedness to his battlecry and a reluctance to leave in the last glance he shared with Kate (Appendix 2.1: 01.22.32). Beyond these private moments, the tensions that occupied the central action of the play could be seen to act upon Kate and Hotspur, the culture of violence by which they were surrounded

encroaching further and further on their happiness. These pressures were introduced in the early scenes of the play with the establishment of Hotspur's positioning within the political climate of the court. In addition to Malloy, Katebe was cast alongside Mike Harley as Northumberland, a white actor who had previously played John of Gaunt in 'Fall of Kings'. In early rehearsals, we dedicated time to building a shared backstory in which Hotspur and Northumberland's familial and social identities, specific to the newly constructed narratives of marginalisation in the adaptation, were active in the manufacture of Hotspur's martiality. We imagined that Lady Northumberland's absence, notable throughout *Richard II* and *Henry IV Part 1*, may be due to her wish to avoid the hostility it was possible to interpret from the dialogue.

Leaning into this interpretation, we attempted to create moments of visual exposition early in the show to establish the power dynamics between Henry, Hotspur and Northumberland. The three are first onstage together following Hotspur's victory against Douglas at Humbleton when, in a bid to convince Henry to ransom his captured brother-in-law Mortimer, Hotspur refuses to hand over his prisoners (1.3). Katebe's steady voice and calm presence made clear Hotspur's effectiveness as a leader, level-headed, charismatic, and capable of rousing an army with even the gentlest entreaty. However, in his initial interaction with Henry and Northumberland (Appendix 2.1: 00.16.28) he was continually relegated to the background, repeatedly hushed by warning looks or gestures from his father. The interactions conveyed the measured nature of Northumberland's parenting and command as a military leader, as well as Hotspur's willingness to obey. Their show of self-restraint highlighted Henry's position as the aggressor throughout their conversation.

Katebe and Eccleston's similar heights and body shapes created an atmosphere of competitive tension between them, but with Henry and Hotspur's exchanges performed by a white and a Black actor, the politics of racial difference altered the nature of the stakes underpinning their statuses, motivations, and the possible repercussions of their actions. When the tensions rose between them, the white supremacist implications of Henry's costuming contributed to the intensification of the stakes for Hotspur. Eccleston showed Henry's contrasting attitudes toward Hotspur and Northumberland with a differentiation in the vocal tones with which he spoke to them, and an irritated tilting of his head whenever Hotspur spoke out of turn. Added to his inheritance of the conflict between Henry and his father, the Otherness these displays imposed on Hotspur made clear the hostility to which he

was subject at court. While Hotspur could be seen to resist the urge to counter Henry's rebukes, his building rage throughout the scene and the ones that followed could be seen to drive the violence through which it was later expressed. Rather than posing his aggression as an innate character trait in a way that might reinforce problematic stereotypes, it appeared a reaction to the danger imposed by external forces, an attempt to forge for himself the safety denied by Henry.

The disdain Henry held for Hotspur after the souring of their relationship mirrored the disdain he had for Hal, layering the redefined parallels between Hal and Hotspur as embodiments of historically oppressed individuals over the poetics of their relationship. Across the *Henry IV*s, the scales of Fortune that are tipped in Hotspur's favour at the beginning of *Part 1* can be seen to tilt in the opposite direction. With Hotspur's fall comes Hal's ascension, and this structure dictates that one cannot occur without the other. In 'Between the Armies', despite the racialised hostility Henry held for him, Hotspur's fealty to the crown and the political position of honour achieved through his deeds in battle protected him against it. As in all assimilation, however, Hotspur's acceptance was precarious, and dependent on his commitment to the maintenance of hegemony on Henry's behalf. As Falstaff implies, honour is really honour as defined and bestowed by those in power, a definition which included following orders unquestioningly and expecting nothing in return. Within this context, Henry's wish that Hal be more like Hotspur more accurately signified a wish that Hal be as easy to control. While Hal's royal status, and his whiteness, created a stability that Hotspur could not lay claim to, his homosexuality was viewed as something that could be set aside in exchange for honour, or surpassed through the performance of violence.

With the inheritance of their fathers' war, the partial unity created by their shared marginalisation remained obfuscated by political division, the constant references to Hotspur's honour and Hal's gentility frequently inflaming the animosity between them. Their duality was driven home in a split-stage scene that opened the second act of 'Between the Armies'. As the lights went up, Hotspur entered downstage left, followed by Hal downstage right (Appendix 2.1: 01.03.25). Earlier in the show, a can of yellow paint had been carried by Hotspur onto the stage and used by Kate to mark the rebel coats in preparation for battle; thrust into a corner and abandoned onstage, the can remained a silent reminder of the impending battle. Now, kneeling on the ground before it, Hotspur's fingers reached into the

can and emerged coated in paint. After a long look at his hand, he smeared it slowly and deliberately across his face and arms.

Beside him, Hal emerged clutching a pair of combat gloves. Dropping them to the floor, he proceeded to remove his grey shirt and the pink t-shirt underneath (Appendix 2.1: 01.04.07). Prior to this moment, the t-shirt acted as a symbol of Hal's gay identity, comfortably on display in Eastcheap and concealed with the buttoning of his shirt when he returned to court. Hal gazed at the t-shirt in his hands before dropping that too to the ground. Visible in the dim light, bruises across his arms and torso illustrated the damage inflicted by Henry's desperation to uphold his legacy, quickly covered as Hal re-dressed himself in the colourless shirt and slipped on the gloves. The scene made clear the mirror image of the two young men, both physically altered by the conflict inherited from their fathers, both carrying the weight of identities distorted by hate and exploited by those more powerful than them. Following this, the next time Hal and Hotspur shared the stage would be during the battle, and the act of brutality with which their mirroring would end.

Figure 2.6 Rehearsal photograph of 'Between the Armies' (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Stan Elliott as Hal and Njeko Katebe as Hotspur, moments before Hotspur's death.

When they eventually met in battle, Hal was left alone onstage in the red-tinged dimness of Samuels' lighting until Hotspur's casual laugh announced his entrance to the scene (Appendix 2.1: 01.28.29). Picking up a baseball bat left behind by Douglas, Hotspur's confidence concealed the trepidation of the previous scene. At six foot five with a muscular build, Katebe towered over Elliott. Hotspur's military experience gave him the advantage over Hal but, managing to weave between swings of the bat and land a few debilitating knife strikes, Hal eventually brought him to his knees. Injured and gasping, Hotspur was powerless as Hal struck him repeatedly and relentlessly in the face. Then, taking him by the hair and wrenching his head back (Figure 2.6), Hal placed the blade of his knife to Hotspur's throat, cutting it before Hotspur could speak his final words. Displaced from the Medieval and Elizabethan settings common in post-1980's productions, Hal's defeat of Hotspur read as little more than murder, a manifestation of trauma enacted through a mode of violence sanctioned by his monarchic status and the context of battle. With Hotspur's final kneeling position, unarmed and conceding, Eccleston and Rhodes' choreography made apparent the entirely unwarranted nature of his death.

The scene's mirroring of Henry's abuse (Figure 2.3) tied the violence of his and Hal's relationship directly to Hal's murder of Hotspur in a dramaturgical thread linking the three of them in a cycle of compulsory masculine violence. The moment exposed the brutality underlying what is often portrayed as a victory that gains Hal the approval of his father and country. In doing so, however, the scene reduced Hotspur (as embodied by Katebe) from a being with personal power, agency, and consciousness, to a plot device in the narrative of a more politically powerful white man. Lit from behind by a single spotlight, the actors' silhouettes played out the majority of the action, partially obscuring the details of Hal's violence from the audience. The theatricality of this moment presented a spectacle that had the potential to overshadow the reality of what it was aiming to represent. As Aebischer discusses in relation to *The Murder of Gonzago* in *Hamlet* and the role of represented violence in provoking further violence in *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, the reproduction of images have potential to reinforce false justifications of marginal or underrepresented figures as permissible victims (Aebischer, 2004: 6). Regarding the engendered discourses inscribed in the Player King's murder, Aebischer points out that 'interactions between people [...] only secondarily come to stand for vaster political relationships, just as violence meted out on the human body comes to represent an assault on the body politic' (2004: 8). Even when

obscured by nuances of liveness and subjectivity, the repetitive and decisive nature of theatrical performance and production embody a continued cycle of replicated – and potentially condoned – violence.

As the only Black character in 'Between the Armies', Hotspur's singularity loaded his body and its treatment onstage with the representation of Black experience and racial violence. In 'Black Lives as Snuff: The Silent Complicity in Viewing Black Death,' Rasul A. Mowatt interrogates the commodification of Black brutalisation through consumption of state violence and war online and in mass media. He critiques the identification of Blackness with victimhood, asking 'Are we consciously or subconsciously enjoying the aesthetics of torture? Are we intentionally or unintentionally predisposing ourselves to a pedagogy of pain?' (Mowatt, 2018: 781). The 'we' and 'us' referenced are the viewers and sharers of the imagery Mowatt discusses, provoking a self-reflection and self-questioning of collective and cultural desensitisation to Black victimisation. His discussion reflects the current discourse surrounding representations of marginalised trauma in the arts, with particular relevance to Black, LGBTQIA+ and Disabled narratives.

Chinonyerem Odimba, the writer of *Black Love*, which premiered at Kiln Theatre in 2022, has been at the forefront of the conversation surrounding how Black lives are narrativised in UK theatre and performance. In a feature by Nicole Vassell for *The Independent*, Odimba stated that the musical was motivated by her desire to disrupt the 'collective imagination [...] that most Black people, most Black experiences, come out of dysfunctional situations' (Vassell, 2022). *Black Love* was praised for the celebration of Black joy at the heart of the relationship between two siblings, an underrepresented aspect of Black existence in an industry dominated by white writers and production companies taking ownership of the stories of people of colour. Until the late 2010s, critically acclaimed films like *The Blind Side* (2009), *Precious* (2009), *The Help* (2011), and *12 Years a Slave* (2013) popularised and romanticised the notion of the traumatised, impoverished or criminalised Black protagonist, almost always dependant on a white saviour figure to help them "rise above" their situations, often not engaging with the fact that such situations are created by education, criminal justice and economic systems formed under white hegemony and supremacy. 'Where's the balance in that story we're being told,' Odimba asks, 'not just about ourselves, but the stories that, culturally, are being told about us?' (Vassell, 2022)

The movement centres on a need for greater representations of health, happiness, and empowerment that have historically been denied to Black characters, swaying collective consciousness towards stereotypical generalisations that associate non-whiteness with negativity, ignoring the nuance and intersectionality of such stories. As Mowatt's argument shows, the overrepresentation and appropriation of images of Black victimisation and death are a mode by which such stereotypes are enforced, upholding a hegemonic gaze through which violence against Black, Brown, Indigenous and Global Majority people of colour is normalised and perpetuated. Mowatt cites Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle Smith in *Lynching Photographs* as they question:

> Why take photographs of atrocity and body horror? Who has the right to look at such photos? Is looking a voyeuristic indulgence, a triumphal act, or an experience in shame? The answers to these questions inevitably depend upon who is doing the shooting and the looking, and thus it matters how and where the pictures are presented.
>
> (Apel and Smith, 2007: 43)

The same can be asked of theatre, or performance of any kind, that images the death or brutalisation of Black characters for the spectatorship of others. In 'Between the Armies', with the expression on Katebe's face in darkness, the audience's visual access to the fear, pain, rage, or other aspects of Hotspur's experience was also obstructed, placing responsibility on Katebe's vocal performance to communicate the emotional impact of the moment. The defeat in his voice during Hotspur's final lines, 'No, Percy, thou art dust / And food for –,' cut off by Hal's knife before he could finish his sentence, conveyed his understanding of the situation, and his anticipation of the inevitable (5.4.84-85).

The partial visibility obscured the cold resolve on Hal's face as he carried out the execution (Figure 2.6). In her analysis of Philip Osment and Gay Sweatshop's *This Island's Mine* (1986), Catherine Silverstone discusses how the production's staging of "gay bashing" – or rather, the refusal to do so – in the assault of the young, gay, Black character Selwyn enacted a rejection of 'mimetic violent repetition while identifying its operation and aftermath' (2011: 93). Silverstone recounts how the use of narration to describe the action while Trevor Ferguson, who played Selwyn, reacted to the imagined beating placed emphasis on the character, centring his experience rather than the violence itself. While she acknowledges the power of this moment, Silverstone's discussion also draws on Susan

Bennett's consideration of the violated body as a 'site of memory,' reflecting on how viewership of the whole experience creates a greater possibility for recognition and action (Silverstone, 2011: 93). Noting that Bennett's concept of wholeness requires 'corporeal visibility,' Silverstone suggests that in such visibility 'there lies potential for collective action, social change and resistance to oppression' (Silverstone, 2011: 93). By denying the audience access to Hotspur's emotional expression, the staging (to some extent) avoided making a spectacle of his pain, while maintaining the corporeal visibility that might activate collective recognition and resistance to the violence represented. Yet while the obscuring of Hotspur's murder could be considered a rejection of repeated mimetic violence, the more explicit resistance came afterwards, in the reactions of characters with the potential to influence perceptions of the event.

Where the confined, revenue-based nature of contemporary Western theatre has the potential to create transitory, transactional experiences, performance itself can contribute to the maintenance or disruption of ephemerality or passive engagement with a production's messaging. Mowatt's critique centres on distinctions between passive spectatorship and active engagement, and though his argument relates to online and media discourse, it can also be applied in the context of dramatic performance. While theatre has the potential to encourage action, it can also make an onstage 'statement of our dismay,' while offstage 'nothing changes at all' (Mowatt, 2018: 777). In *Henry IV Part 1*, while Hotspur's death has the potential to deliver a powerful message about the horror of the onstage events, Hal's immediate display of mourning after his death turns attention instead to his own pain, away from the tragedy by which it is triggered. The swift progression affects a subsuming of Hotspur's memory into Hal's victory narrative, using him as the crux for a display of mourning through which redemption, honour and nobility can be gained.

In *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, Tobias Döring explores the function of mourning in Hal's accession to kingship as a process of exchange in which he 'must give and take: emotional display for royal power,' 'the performance of a social obligation' through which he lays claim to power by purging himself of feminine emotionality (2006: 45). Hal's grief is a means by which he lays claim to the position of honour from which Hotspur has been removed. The one-sided nature of this exchange exploits Hotspur's silencing, affecting an objectification of his body with the subsuming of his liveness into Hal's. In rehearsal with the actors, we decided to remove the

monologue of Hal's that immediately follows Hotspur's death to counteract his objectification by retaining the focus on him. Removing all but the line 'For worms, brave Percy,' we attempted to eliminate the redemption obtained through Hal's emotional display (5.4.86).

With this omission, the next lines came from Rumour, who fulfilled a role in the adaptation much like Finnegan's Narrator in 'Fall of Kings', this time embodied by Emily Malloy. Rumour's outfit consisted of a dirty overcoat worn over the top of a yellow dress that also formed the basis of Kate's costume. Just as the Narrator's costume and use of space had contributed to a blurring of the boundaries between her and Finnegan's other characters, Malloy's portrayal of Rumour could be seen to incorporate elements of the other women she played in the production, Kate and Douglas. Rumour's attitudes to these characters reflected Kate's love for Hotspur and Douglas' rage towards Henry, introducing a distinctly antagonistic presence to the gaze through which the action could be viewed. Her direct address of the audience drew on this antagonism throughout the show with the frequent questioning, mocking, and undermining of any loyalties that might be formed for Henry. Previously separated from the main action of the play by her restriction to the stage right scaffold, Rumour now entered onto the stage (Appendix 2.1: 01.32.50). 'We are all diseased,' she spoke in a choked voice, and with that 'we' tied the acknowledgment of her own complicity in Hotspur's killing to the audience as well:

> We see which way the stream of time doth run
> And have the summary of all our griefs.
> Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself
> Out of the speech of peace that bears such grace
> Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war
> Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,
> Your pens to lances and your tongue divine
> To a loud trumpet and a point of war?
>
> (4.1.47-73)

Why, Rumour demanded, do we not only create such destruction but recreate it time and time again in its retelling? Why must violent narratives reinscribe themselves within our literature and upon our stages as they do in our realities? Turning her attention to Hal, she continued,

> There were two honours lost: yours and [this] son's.
> For yours, the God of heaven brighten it!
> For his, it stuck upon him as the sun
> In the grey vault of heaven, and by his light
> Did all the chivalry of England move to do brave acts.
> (2.3.16-21)

Allowing her gaze to fall on Hotspur's body, Rumour's words, taken from a speech of Kate's in *Henry IV Part 2*, returned the scene's focus to him. Without Hal's monologue and Falstaff's subsequent comic interruption, Rumour's speech encouraged the audience to sit with the grief they felt for Hotspur, holding space within the dramaturgy of the adaptation for collective mourning. Her words reinvested his body with the memory of his liveness, a memory concentrated on chivalry and bravery. Although these allusions to the hegemonic masculine traits of the playworld reverted Hotspur's remembrance to qualities valued by its patriarchal paradigms, Rumour's assertion that Hal's honour was also lost engendered the idea that honour could be forfeited as well as gained through acts of violence. The speech presented a rejection of the victory commonly presented in Hotspur's defeat. Instead, her questions demanded reflection from the audience, aiming to provoke active thought surrounding what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable in the contexts of war, and its depiction.

While this intervention did not entirely negate the objectification of Hotspur's body onstage, it subverted the function of his death within the narrative of Hal's victory. Unable to speak for himself, Hotspur remained stripped of his autonomy, unable to determine for himself how his name, body, or the politics of his memory could be used. The grief expressed onstage remained that of a white character – a white woman – rather than Hotspur's own. However, Rumour's speech linked this grief to an interrogation of the events that gave rise to it, framing them within the wider of context of historic, literary, and dramatic representation with her critique of the role "our" books, ink, pens, and tongues play in the reinscription of the violence onstage. Her criticality transformed Hotspur's instrumentalisation in Hal's narrative from a stepping stone in the pathway to victory, to a signaller of the destructiveness of violent masculinity, with a clearly defined victim no longer obfuscated by insinuations of deservingness. Whereas Hotspur has conventionally been characterised as a perpetrator of wrongful violence, the criticality voiced by characters such as Rumour and Falstaff

throughout the adaptation helped present a subversion of what could be considered "good" or "bad." Our interrogation of the violence perpetrated against him through a lens of racial oppression contributed to an understanding of the endemic interpersonal violence in the *Henry IV*s. Hotspur's re-embodiment in Katebe disrupted the (false) racial neutrality of the relationship between Hotspur and Hal as victim and violator, his Blackness exposing Henry and Hal's hegemony as an upholding of white masculine violence and a source through which trauma is sustained, inherited, and enacted.

While Hotspur's undertaking of warrior masculinity demonstrated an attempted assimilation into the hegemonic social economy of the playworld, the private anger, reluctance, grief, and fear that could be glimpsed in Katebe's performance undermined his apparent willingness to do so. This detail contributed to a depiction of his violence as a result of this assimilation, a consequence of the world around him rather than as an aspect of his own being. In the wake of George Floyd's death and the influx of media representing political, ecological, and physical violence against Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Global Majority people of colour, images like Hotspur's death in 'Between the Armies' have the power to evoke cultural and intergenerational as well as personal trauma. Particularly where productions feature white-majority casts or creative teams, the depiction of such imagery constitutes an exercise of that power, which without appropriate care and interrogation can further inflict the violence it portrays.

As I will discuss in the following chapter, representation in performance has the potential to define, perpetuate, or transgress notions surrounding how marginalised identities and bodies can be treated onstage, in media, and in reality. Intersectional and racially conscious casting, dramaturgy and staging are just some of the ways through which cultural or systemic hierarchies or stereotypes can be disrupted in performance, with active criticality toward the messages generated. The reflection on this practice in 'Between the Armies' underscored vital questions surrounding who does, and who should, hold responsibility for representations of marginalised identities. While the masculinity of actors like Scott, Eccleston and Katebe supposedly give them hegemony in the patriarchal spheres of the play and the wider contexts of Western performance, this dynamic was complicated by director-actor hierarchies in the rehearsal room. Navigations of masculinities proved simultaneously to be navigations of race, sexuality, and class. As Brod suggests, these dimensions cannot be isolated from each other 'without oversimplifying and perhaps even falsifying what one is attempting to analyze'

(2002: 164). With the continued exploration of how direction can claim or relinquish power in approaches to performance, *Chapter 3* will consider how this intersectionality is active in my practice as a Queer director from a working-class background informed representations of morality and "common" masculinities in 'The Breach'.

Chapter 3
"Minding true things by what their mockeries be": forming hidden transcripts in 'The Breach'

The staging of 'Fall of Kings' and 'Between the Armies' had revealed a recurring narrative in *Richard II* and the two parts of *Henry IV* in which traumatic masculine violence among male characters reinforces heteropatriarchal values, social codes and hierarchies. The next adaptation of *Henry V*, titled 'The Breach', turned focus to the new King Henry V, formerly Prince Hal, and the ways Henry IV's aggression was translated into his son's kingship. 'The Breach' was set in modern-day England and aimed to draw on the post-colonial, post-MeToo context in which it was developed. Played by Kian Keanu Pollard, Henry V had built an image of himself and his rule based on the hyper-violent principals modelled by his father, distancing himself from Eastcheap and with it any sense of value or compassion for the non-nobles that resided there. While the adaptations were conceived as individual dramas to avoid their comprehension becoming reliant on the previous productions, several actors (Pollard included) were involved in multiple shows and therefore able to draw on earlier iterations. Having played the role of a much younger Northumberland in 'Fall of Kings' and attended 'Between the Armies' as an audience member, Pollard's detailed knowledge of the characters and their portrayals by other actors enabled the integration of their interpretations with his own.

Textually, the Henry V of 'The Breach' was vastly different to Elliott's Hal in 'Between the Armies'; less a subject, more a perpetrator of violence. Requiring an actor to base their performance on the specifics of another only serves to limit the choices they feel able to make for themselves, placing priority on their congruence with those in the past. In Pollard's rendition, Henry's heterosexuality was less a point of contention than the strict upholding of gender conventions, which reflected a similar pattern of stringently enforced virility, hypermasculinity, and the expectation of its outward projection. Though inexplicit, the red and white armband design of Henry's tracksuit echoed the Right-leaning connotations of Eccleston's costuming in 'Between the Armies'. Though the narrative did not directly follow on from its predecessor, 'The Breach's representation of Henry harnessed (for the purpose of the research's continuity across the three productions) the repeated narrative's capacity to underscore the passing of violence from father to son and its cyclicality within the second tetralogy through the King's development from victim to perpetrator. Without the emotional

nurturing that would allow him to identify alternative ways to counter his alienation, Henry sought to dominate, or else destroy, that which he could not control.

In 'The Breach' the subjects of Henry's control took the form of the 'common men' fighting in his French crusade, whose fealty to him could be seen to dwindle as the play progressed (4.8.80). In *Henry V* many of these characters fall victim – literally and figuratively – to the moral and martial victory narratives of Henry and his fellow nobles, who's triumphs at Harfleur and Agincourt are attributed to God, and God alone. 'The Breach' sought to centralise the stories of these "common" soldiers, whose victories and losses are often subordinated or subsumed by Henry's own. Henry's speech outside the gates of Harfleur, in which he threatens murder, infanticide and rape on the town's citizens (3.3) formed an initial point of focus in the critique of how wartime violence and sexual violence are represented in *Henry V*. The moral rhetoric through which the 'rough and hard of heart' soldiers are framed in the Harfleur scene establishes them as another body (alongside France herself) in need of governance, suggesting their subjugation as another step in Henry's path to victory (3.3.11).

Drawing on the Harfleur scene's presentation in Dominic Dromgoole's *Henry V* at Shakespeare's Globe (2012), Gregory Doran's RSC *Henry V* (2015), and Thea Sharrock's BBC adaptation, *The Hollow Crown: Henry V* (2012), this chapter will discuss how the misogynistic treatment of women and feminised figures in the playtext instrumentalises both them and the soldiers on whom responsibility for the violence is placed. In various ways, these selected stage and screen productions serve to replicate, reinforce or disrupt stereotypical notions of what will be considered working-class masculinities, characterised in the French citizens and English soldiers. The repositioned gaze through which the Harfleur scene was presented in 'The Breach' underscored these characters' instrumentalisation, contributing to the performance of surreptitious moments of connection between them onstage. During rehearsals, our creation of a modern-day apartment setting to frame the action of *Henry V* formed a platform from which the production's characters could be seen to challenge the preconceptions placed upon them by the contemporary and Shakespearean worlds they inhabited, breaking from the notion that working-class masculinities are inherently violent.

Darren McGarvey's autobiographical account of growing up in Pollok on the southside of Glasgow in *Poverty Safari: Understanding the Anger of Britain's Underclass* (2017) informed our character and world development in rehearsals. McGarvey's discussion of underclass experience offered a way of considering under- and working-class masculinities in relation to psychological and embodied reactions to violence, feelings of inferiority, and social mobility. The reflections in this chapter will consider different aspects of this approach, and how it helped authorise the exploration of lived experience for the working-class actors involved in the production. In particular, Patrick James Withey's characterisation of Pistol as a young working-class soldier, whose eventual rejection of the military masculinity he was forced to undertake drew on the desensitisation to violence and feelings of disenfranchisement Withey related to his class background. His interpretation contributed to a subversion of the hegemonic moral codes that operate in playtext. Just as the reflection on 'Between the Armies' showed that Connell's masculinities can be applied to racial hierarchies as well as gender, this chapter will examine the relationships between military masculinities, violence and class that manifested in the rehearsal and performance of 'The Breach'.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James C. Scott explores the surreptitious modes of resistance employed, consciously and unconsciously, by subordinate and marginalised individuals against those who hold power over them, examining historical acts among slaves, serfs and other oppressed peoples for whom 'open expression would be dangerous' (1990: 40). Scott's study catalogues instances in which these 'hidden transcripts' occur in the form of fantasies, outbursts in response to microaggressions or injustices, and secretive modes of guardianship over cultural traditions (Scott, 1990: xii). He prefaces his discussion with a question of how we 'study power relations when the powerless are often obliged to adopt a strategic pose in the presence of the powerful' (Scott, 1990: xii). Guided by this question, the prioritisation of working-class characters within the textual and visual dramaturgy of 'The Breach' led to the performance of hidden transcripts among marginalised characters onstage that were forged as a result of the lens applied.

Our interventions in the script editing and staging of the show led to revelations surrounding the influence of intended audiences on the adaptation. Under working-class direction, directorial hegemony was co-opted as a means of disrupting represented hegemonies in performance, investing energy in providing permissibility and space for the

centralising of marginal masculinities. Our work in the rehearsal room contributed to a deeper understanding of the class-based power that operates beyond performance contexts, which could then be challenged through creative practices that confronted harmful stereotypes and ideologies. As the reflections in this chapter will explore, the moments of connection between the characters of 'The Breach' offered an alternative way of knowing the events represented onstage.

Military masculinities and moral commentary

The term working-class is frequently used in reference to individuals whose socioeconomic benefits or skills are considered less than those of upper and middle classes, often as an umbrella encompassing various forms of benefit-, houseless-, migrant- and underclassness, with the implication that class identity is transcendable with the acquisition of material assets or intellectual education. For many working-class individuals, it is an experience, felt most in relation to classes they are deemed less-than, and continuing even – sometimes especially – when social mobility is attained. Patrick James Withey, who played Pistol in 'The Breach', defined his working-classness by way of his consciousness of those around him 'who were on different rungs of the ladder' (Appendix 4.3, p.8). Similarly, Luke Hardwell, who played Fluellen, described being avoided as a teenager because of the "rough" school he went to, despite the reality that the fights in the carpark and smoking behind the P.E. shed that earned this reputation occurred in every school.

In places like the London Borough of Bromley, where I grew up in the 1990s, white working-classness had high visibility on account of severe cuts to youth, benefits, and other public services due to austerity, increased unemployment as a result of deindustrialisation, and the proximity to more affluent commuter demographics (in contrast to the large Traveller populations who also lived in the area). As Reni Eddo-Lodge observes in episodes three and four of her podcast *About Race: White Season part 1* and *White Season part 2* (2018), whiteness in discourses surrounding British class politics is a key aspect around which contemporary understandings of cultural heritage have developed. Concerned primarily with sociopolitics around race, Eddo-Lodge's podcast builds on the conversations in her bestselling novel *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* (2017),

considering in her *White Season* episodes the intersections of white supremacy and class division.

Using the Borough of Barking and Dagenham during the 1990s as a case study, Eddo-Lodge considers the rise of the far right in working-class areas of the UK and the '"white working class versus multiculturalism" myth that working class people who are not white are still having to deal with,' publicly endorsed at the time by political and institutional bodies such as New Labour and the BBC (Eddo-Lodge, 2018). These divisive politics, which occurred around the time of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that were eventually reflected in 'The Breach', contributed to a growing homogeneity in white working-class areas, and the ghettoisation of minoritised groups in racially coded "inner-city" communities. Later informing our approach to conceptualising the world of the adaptation, our approach lent strongly on these sociological and experiential ways of considering working-class masculinities, using it as an in-road to disrupting the middle and upper-class hegemonies often at play in theatrical spaces, including the rehearsal room.

Figure 3 Production photograph of 'The Breach' (Turner-McMullan, 2019) Patrick James Withey as Pistol (right) offers a Jelly Baby to Kian Keanu Pollard as Henry V (left). Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

Patrick James Withey was eighteen when he took on the role of Pistol in 'The Breach'. The casting of such a young actor intended to explore how this re-embodiment might enable a disruption of the moral degradation across the course of the play that sees him turn from his life in the military to that of a cutpurse. With minor textual alterations, 'Ancient Pistol' was transfigured into a naive young soldier, eager to escape the monotony of Eastcheap (2.1.3). With playful costume and prop choices such as a backwards-worn baseball cap and a bag of Jelly Babies that made intermittent appearances throughout the show (Figure 3), we drew attention to Withey's youth, and to specific events that led to his moral breakdown toward its end. The emphasis of these moments and the focus on Pistol's relationships with characters who appeared as friends, enemies or father figures constructed a narrative in which his experience of war, devoid of the world-weary age conventional in Pistol's portrayal, was the major influence in his decision to turn away from soliderhood. Most prevalent among these relationships was Fluellen, played by Luke Hardwell, who fulfilled the role of surrogate father and mentor to Pistol.

In rehearsals, discussions surrounding working-class upbringings and the construction of martial masculinity with Withey and Hardwell showed the actors' experiential understandings to be particularly constructive in their characterisations of Pistol and Fluellen. Also played by Withey and Hardwell, their mirrors on the French side, the High Constable and the Dauphin encounter similar fears, grief and political division to their English enemies. Unlike Pistol and Fluellen, however, their experiences of war are mitigated by the protection of privilege and nobility. Withey's portrayal of the Constable emphasised his emotional immaturity and lack of experience in military engagement. For Withey, the character's naivety and underconfidence was intertwined with his class background and the 'sheltered' experience of peacetime nobility (Appendix 4.3, p.10).

Figure 3.1 Rehearsal photograph of 'The Breach' (Turner-McMullan, 2019) Toby Gibbs as Burgundy (left), Patrick James Withey as the High Constable (centre), and Luke Hardwell as the Dauphin (right) in "the Jack Daniels scene."

Reflecting on his portrayal of the Constable, Withey recalled "the Jack Daniels scene" in 'The Breach' (Figure 3.1), an amalgamation of various scenes set in the French camp, nicknamed for the bottle of whiskey that was passed between the characters throughout it. The scene aimed to accentuate the mirroring of the French and British armies, attempting to capture the sense of growing tension among the soldiers on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt. The Constable began the scene panickedly gathering his things in preparation for battle, his fear illustrated in the images his lines built of the English: 'they will eat like wolves and fight like devils' (3.7.149-150). For Withey, the Constable's nobility had protected him until this point from experiencing war as anything more than a 'conceptual thing,' a 'political statement' or a 'patriotic' sense of duty (Appendix 4.3, p.6). Pistol's relationship with violence was inherently more direct, integral to the construction and enactment of his masculine identity. For the majority of the production's working-class soldiers, their experiences of violence were not so easily compartmentalised into war-versus-peacetime concepts.

For Withey and Hardwell, who both identify as working-class, the memories of British Army campaigns, promising career prospects and social mobility beyond anything the adjacent rhetorics claimed was achievable, were all too familiar. Character development meetings with both actors involved numerous tangents on the online social networks and streaming services that featured (and still feature) army recruitment adverts targeted at underprivileged men and boys; the recruitment teams that visited career fairs to promote the training, comradery and helicopter rides made possible by British Army employment; and the cadet regiments that operated as a form of after-school care for many working-class teenagers. These conversations formed a backdrop against which we imagined the soldiers of 'The Breach' following Henry to war because they perceived little or no alternative course of action, immersed in the falsehood that this path of culturally condoned violence was the only way of escaping their current prospects.

In *Poverty Safari*, Darren McGarvey draws on his lived experience as the basis for a cultural analysis of British underclass identity. Growing up surrounded by violence, he explains, a person can become 'adjusted to the threat of violence. In some ways, violence itself [is] preferable to the threat of violence' (2017: 11). McGarvey describes his experience of the hypervigilance that can become a psychological default when the exposure to violence is constant: 'if you are not safe in your own home, under the care of your own mother, then where else could you possibly drop your guard?' (McGarvey, 2017: 13). Though there is no explicit language in *Henry V* that describes this experience, the hypervigilance exploited by the campaigns Withey and Hardwell recalled was key to our consideration of Pistol and his fellow soldiers' roads into the military as an indoctrination into violent masculinities.

In a character development rehearsal, we worked with an extract from *Poverty Safari* in which McGarvey describes an event that occurred on his way to a therapy session in an affluent area of Glasgow as a teenager. The actors listened to the extract, imagining themselves into his position and considering how they might characterise the emotions his account evoked in terms of their position and feeling within the body. He reflects on an interaction with a group of boys he passed on the street, describing how he marvelled at their expressiveness and inhibition, how 'they were using the kind of words that I always had in my head but felt too inhibited to speak,' and how they 'suddenly went quiet' as they passed him (2017: 27). McGarvey recalls understanding clearly in the moment that this response was

‘a way of showing deference to a potential threat’ (McGarvey, 2017: 27). He discusses how this encounter and others like it eventually led him to adopt the assumed identity that was imposed on him by people of “higher” social classes, internalised in his own perception of himself. As bell hooks discusses, the messaging we receive from our surroundings informs our knowing of ourselves. When the world around us sustainedly tells us we are violent, we eventually begin to believe it. In McGarvey’s case the responses of the other teenagers were anticipatory rather than reactive, constructing a belief that the violence they expected from him was innate, regardless of his actions.

His reflection bears similarities to Eccleston’s observations in *Chapter 1* about his internalisation of messages from those around him that ‘told’ him who he was as a young man (Appendix 4.1, p.2). Growing up, the meanings ascribed to body composition, height, weight, shape, posture, the breadth of a person’s shoulders, the length of their hair, colour of their skin, size of their breasts, the clothing they wear, the gender they are assigned at birth, and the identities implied by these traits preordain the roles and regulations by which they are bound before their private selfhood may even be known. hooks suggests that ‘poor and working-class male children and grown men often embody the worst strains of patriarchal masculinity, acting out violently because it is the easiest, cheapest way to declare one’s “manhood”’ (2004: 71). However, as demonstrated in *Chapter 1*, there are other, less overt forms of violence; with the applied lens of Connell’s framework, physical lashing out can be seen as a reaction to feelings of threat or insecurity.

As discussed in *Chapter 2*, states of safety and unsafety can be formed through the projection of acceptance or hostility by hegemonic masculinities. When cultures of fear are formed around certain groups of people, they are disenfranchised from their ability to combat their marginalisation. As McGarvey shows, the dominant gaze by which working- or underclass men are deemed dangerous or Other can construct psychosocial barriers between them and the opening of cross-cultural dialogues that might disrupt these prevailing rhetorics. His awareness of his underclassness was strongest in proximity to forms of power (financial wealth, with the acceptance and inhibition it enabled) that were unattainable to him. The projection of identity is multi-directional and, as he suggests, in hostile social climates, ‘violence is not only a practical demonstration of brute force, but often a form of communication’ (McGarvey, 2017: 4). Intimidation is an effective defence mechanism against those we perceive ourselves as – or are made to feel – less-than. So was it for the

working-class characters of 'The Breach', leading them down a path of formalised violence that promised financial and social reward in return for an experience they had come to expect in everyday life.

Figure 3.2 Production photograph of 'The Breach' (Turner-McMullan, 2019) Patrick James Withey as Pistol holds his knife high in fear during the Battle of Agincourt.

A similar form of disenfranchisement can be read in the performance history of *Henry V*, in which the negative view of the play's non-noble soldiers is instrumental in the construction of Henry's victory narrative during the siege of Harfleur (3.3), where he threatens rape, senicide and infanticide on the townspeople in a speech aimed at their Governor. In *Engendering a Nation*, Howard and Rackin demonstrate how militaristic violence operates via the sexualisation of the play's few female characters, discussing how the Harfleur scene emphasises the French men's ownership of women, the bodies of whom 'become a crucial terrain where the battle is played out' (1997: 5). In performance, it is possible to perceive a similar treatment of the non-noble English soldiers in how they are used by Henry to gain victory.

In Doran's RSC production (2015), Alex Hassell, as Henry, is the sole occupant of the stage against the smoky backdrop of Stephen Brimson Lewis' minimalistic design. Rooted in the same upstage centre position throughout his speech, Hassell speaks directly to the audience, a choice that is repeated during many of Henry's monologues in the production. In the Arden Shakespeare third edition, Craik notes that the earliest versions of *Henry V* do not include the Governor's entrance at the beginning of the Harfleur scene; rather the stage direction first featured in Capell's 1783 *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare* (Craik, 1995: 215). Hassell's aloneness onstage is therefore not a directorial intervention but leans into the direct audience address implied in the earliest editions.

The static staging gives emphasis to the play's language and the tone of Hassell's voice, his steadying breaths and teeth gritted around each consonant, conveying the apparent sincerity of the King's threats. The women, children and elders who are the subjects of his promised violence remain at the mercy of the man who speaks about and for them, while their physical presence is eliminated. Without them, Henry's threats are disembodied and passivised; his would-be victims are rendered invisible and the potential for empathy made more possible with their visible presence onstage is obfuscated. As is the case with the soldiers who are instrumental in the described brutality. Though it is the 'fleshed soldier' by whom the violence Henry threatens will supposedly be carried out, they are also absent from the scene (3.3.11). Doran's adaptation does little to avoid the speech's more visceral imagery, nor does Hassell's performance shy away from the less valiant aspects of Henry's kingship. The script retains the majority of Henry's threats against the Harfleur citizens. It does, however, omit one key set of lines:

> What is it then to me if impious war,
> Arrayed in flames like to the prince of fiends,
> Do with his smirched complexions all fell feats
> Enlinked to waste and desolation?
>
> (3.3.15-19)

By bringing into closer proximity the images of 'fresh fair virgins' mown down like grass and 'pure maidens' in 'the hand / Of hot and forcing violation' the cut underscores the speech's brutal nature (3.3.14-21). However, with the echoed 'What is it to me' removed, the deliberate nature of Henry's choice of words highlighted through their repetition is obscured.

Instead, the retained ‘What is it then to me, when you yourselves are cause’ displaces responsibility for this violence onto the townspeople themselves (3.3.19).

Dominic Dromgoole’s Shakespeare’s Globe production (2012), goes further in the omission of both of these phrases. The lines that remain centralise the danger posed by the English soldiers and the precariousness of their containment:

> Take pity of your town and of your people
> Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command,
> If not, why in a moment look to see
> The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
> Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters.
>
> (3.3.28-35)

The omission furthers Henry’s absolution, depicting him as Harfleur’s saviour and instating blame on the ‘common men’ of whom an irrepressible, grotesque and sexually volatile image is shaped (4.8.80). Through such imagery, the violence Henry promises is encoded in the play’s representation of commonality, distancing the royal and noble classes from the brutality enacted in the name of their war.

In ‘The Breach’, Pistol and his narrative framing were key to the disruption of this hegemonic discourse. The immaturity and vulnerability Withey brought to his portrayal (Figure 3.2) resisted the self-determination that conventionally characterises Pistol’s journey toward cut-pursary in the play. This aspect of his performance was most apparent in the relationships between Pistol and his commanding officers, whose contrasting experience and authority made clear the outweighing of their personal and militaristic power over him. Prominent among them was his relationship with Hardwell’s Fluellen, in which it was possible to perceive a pseudo father-son dynamic up until the point of Bardolph’s execution (3.6). In *Henry V*, Pistol’s approaching Fluellen to beg for Bardolph’s life, after he is sentenced to death for stealing a pax, implies a relationship of trust between them. In ‘The Breach’, Withey hesitantly approached Hardwell as he arranged the furniture into what would eventually become the setting for the execution (Appendix 3.1: 00.40.06). On Fluellen’s refusal to help Bardolph, Pistol aggressively shrugged off his touch, defiantly crossing his arms over his chest as the Captain attempted to justify his decision. For Withey, this was

Pistol's first experience of seeing the violent system to which he was indoctrinated work against him. Later, forced to bear witness to Bardolph's death at Fluellen's hands, the hard-given trust Pistol had instilled in his captain was broken, igniting a defiance that would define his journey from then until the end of the play. This journey, which culminated in his decision to reject the martial codes to which he ascribed and turn 'cutpurse' as a means of mending his 'cudgelled scars,' exposed a resistance to hegemonic violence in Pistol's character arc (4.8.87-89).

In the scene leading up to his final moment of rejection in 'The Breach', Pistol was written in by allocating him the Herald's job of listing the English dead (4.8). Reading from a piece of paper, Withey's sarcastic emphasis on the full names and titles of the nobles (Appendix 3.1: 01.25.27) underscored the namelessness of the working-class dead among them:

> Edward the *Duke* of York; the *Earl* of Suffolk;
> *Sir* Richard Keighley; Davy Gam, *esquire*;
> None else of name, and of all other men
> But five-and-twenty.
>
> (4.8.104-107)

Coming from Pistol, who might easily have suffered the same fate as the unnamed soldiers whose deaths are made incidental in this moment, the rage that had simmered since Bardolph's execution could now be felt in the venomous gaze he levelled at the King as he spoke. With the addition of a comma between 'None else' and 'of name' in his script, Withey was afforded a brief interruption in the middle of the line, emphasising his implied understanding that the commonality of the unnamed soldiers would undoubtedly erase them from history. Their lack of nobility, in the eyes of those with the power to determine their remembrance, equated them to nothing, and of this Pistol was now inescapably aware.

By this point in the play Pistol had captured the French Soldier and, unable to bring himself to kill her, brought her to Henry as a prisoner of war. When ordered to execute her, he refused, dropping his knife to the floor and relinquishing his trembling grasp on her jacket. The moment coincided with Henry's realisation that his control of his soldiers, and victory, was beginning to slip; seething and unable to coerce either Exeter or Fluellen into killing the French Soldier, Henry took up the knife and did the job himself. Turning away as Henry

plunged the knife into her stomach, Pistol shut his eyes tight against the scene, opening them again as the Soldier fell dead to the ground at his feet. Unnoticed by the characters around him in the heat of their campaign but available for the interpretation of audiences, this emotional thread constructed a narrative of surreptitious rejection that concluded with Pistol's quiet slipping away from the military and turning to a life of crime.

Left alone onstage with yet another lifeless body towards the scene's end (Boy was carried in and laid tenderly on the sofa centre stage earlier in the scene) Withey lingered on the periphery of the space. His final speech was fronted by lines taken from one of Boy's earlier in the play: 'I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart; but the saying is true, 'The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.' Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than this roaring devil' (4.4.67-70). Originally spoken by Boy about Pistol himself, the recontextualisation of these lines subverted the moral commentary central to *Henry V*'s critique of "common" military masculinities. On 'this roaring devil,' with a roar that mimicked the phrasing in the text, Withey ripped off his cap and threw it in the direction of Henry's exit, making it clear who he deemed responsible for his loss (Appendix 3.1: 01.27.44). Pistol's rejection of the violent masculinity forced upon him as a young working-class man disrupted the narratives of indoctrination hooks describes, which position boys as instruments of 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' and form cultures of acceptance around the expendability of subordinate lives and bodies in the pursuit of power (2004: 71).

Within the overarching narrative of 'The Breach', Pistol's actions distinguished a definable pathway from disenfranchisement to action, a depiction of what Scott describes as 'a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant' (1990: xii). Withey's tragic characterisation undercut the triumph of Pistol's final moments in the play as they are conventionally portrayed. His youth made palpable the unsurety and vulnerability underlying his and his fellow soldiers' situation throughout the play, highlighting the unresolvedness of their storylines and the precarity of their positions within the systems that exploited them. Withey's lived experience and the emotional understanding that arose from it helped break down the class barrier that might obstruct a compassionate view of his character, potentiating a critique of the moral codes upheld by Henry's military culture rather than of Pistol himself.

Destigmatising class difference

The disruption of the hegemonic victory narrative in 'The Breach' began with the disruption of class-based hegemonies in rehearsals for the show. The conflation of 'working class' with ideas of less-ness and commonality is embedded in a wide-ranging array of stereotypical representations and notions of low-income lives and socioeconomic disadvantage, including in productions of *Henry V*. In Dromgoole's Shakespeare's Globe *Henry V*, Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph are hyper-clown-like, pulling the boots from a fleeing French citizen even as they lament the battles from which they are seen to profit (3.2). This extra-textual characterisation plays against the very naturalistic fear belied by lines such as Boy's 'I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety' (3.2.12-13). The tone of the scene, before the soldiers are pressed on to the breach by Captain Fluellen, contrasts those around it; the drums and pace of the battle dies out, with the majority of the dialogue carried out while the characters are seated on the ground. With this comes a suggestion that they are somehow apart from the battle being fought by the nobility, their marginalisation legitimated by the reduction of their deeds in battle to petty criminality and in-fighting.

The conflicting images of laziness, theft, cowardice, and comfortability in Dromgool's production contribute to a dramaturgical incoherency that has the potential to alienate audiences from these characters, coded into a form of caricature commonly reserved for the Other. They are simultaneously to be feared and to be laughed at, incapable in battle yet perfectly capable of enacting horrific violence on the French. While absorbed in their superficial digressions, the characters are deprived of direct dialogue or even eye-contact with one another, and with it their potential for disrupting their stereotyping through sincere or dignified commentary on their situation. Audiences receive little information on which to base their assumptions of the characters, placing greater weight on the disdainful image built of them by Henry and his fellow nobles. Such misrepresentations reinforce the hegemony of the white, imperialist, ruling-class perspective, while limiting views of the broader context that might contest it.

Figure 3.3 Production photograph of ‘The Breach’ (Turner-McMullan, 2018) Alexandra Ricou (left) and Matilda Dickinson (right) flick through a magazine during the pre-set. Reproduced with permission from Joe Samuels (photographer).

Without stripping the characters of their flaws entirely, ‘The Breach’ attempted to revise the rhetoric surrounding respectable citizenship, law and order most palpable in the depictions and narrative arcs of Pistol, Bardolph and Nym. To do so we created a contemporary setting to frame the action of the play, which eventually came to be known as “Flat World.” Quite literally, Flat World was a modern-day apartment setting above a fish and chip shop somewhere in East London, inhabited by a group of working-class characters created by the cast as the basis from which an explicitly reimagined rendition of *Henry V* could be portrayed. In the same way the prison setting and characters such as Sharde and Hannah in Phyllida Lloyd’s Donmar Trilogy *Henry IV* (2014) formed a lens through which the action could be viewed in the productions, Flat World established a frame that book-ended the action of *Henry V* in ‘The Breach’.

As with Falstaff in ‘Between the Armies’, we intended to instil in the characters the ability to acknowledge and resist their marginalisation. Central to this was the collaborative creation of multidimensional Flat World characters that could combat the stigma and stereotyping of

working-classness. Of the fifteen individuals involved in the production, five identified as working-class or coming from working-class backgrounds (myself included). Of the eight actors, two openly identified with the class background of the Flat World characters they created, or the Shakespearean characters that were their mirrors. To avoid the experiential dissonance between characters and actors that could result in alienation from the characters, it was vital that the development process circumvent assumptions that might stereotype, dehumanise, or Other them.

As discussed in *Chapter 1*, the male gendering of the Chorus in *Henry V* forms a patriarchal perspective through which the action of the play is traditionally viewed and understood. While Matilda Dickinson's performance of the Chorus in the 'The Breach' was distinctively feminine, the production's disruption of the hegemonic male gaze began in a pre-set devised by the company. The apartment itself comprised the set for the production, made up of two shelving units that stood against the walls, an airer loaded with laundry, with a battered yellow sofa and wooden coffee table at the centre. Throughout the show this furniture moved about the stage, rearranged into distinctive configurations that signified the French and English courts, the battlefields of Harfleur and Agincourt, and the home of Nell Quickly in Eastcheap. In the Flat World characters' reimagining of *Henry V*, Nym, Bardolph, Pistol and Boy were young soldiers, gathering in Nell's living room before embarking together, eager and anxious, for their first operation overseas. When the show was performed, the set and costuming (Figure 3.3) garnered comments from audience members for whom the play evoked images of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s. This temporal alignment made it possible to view the working-class characters in relation to the trauma associated with modern warfare, breaking from the comic depictions that often undermine the deeply tragic aspects of their loss, violation and erasure.

As a means of introducing the Flat World characters, the cast were already onstage as the audience entered the theatre, flicking through the pages of magazines (Figure 3.3), playing a game of Mario Kart on the Nintendo Wii, and bickering over a copy of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* pulled from a nearby shelf that would act as a springboard into their performance of the play (Appendix 3.1: 00.00.07). Tiffany Rhodes, who played Nym, noted in her reflection on the production that the breaking-down of working-class stereotypes began with the pre-set's establishment of the normality and positivity of this environment: 'it might be a little bit rundown now and it might be council-owned and things but it's a home with

music and fun and friends' (Appendix 4.4, p.13-14). The character relationships visible in the pre-set helped disrupt the association of violence to working-class identity; Flat World was established as a place of mutual affection and community (even when punctuated by bickering), which could be seen to deteriorate with their entanglement in the politics of the war. The setting provided a current-day anchor that could be returned to, often abruptly and unexpectedly, as a means of disrupting the flow of the *Henry V* text, creating tension between it and the contemporary setting or allowing the inhabitants of Flat World commentary on the events.

The pre-set's development occurred interconnectedly with the imagining of Flat World, which began with an exercise in conceptualising the characters' everyday lives, holding space for the interrogation of problematic assumptions. Among the issues addressed, it was important that the racial dynamic of the cast be acknowledged in our reading of *Henry V*, a commentary which began in part simply with the presence of an all-white company onstage. The fact was rationalised with our imagining that the apartment was located on the periphery of East London (zones five or six perhaps) where the white working-class often account for higher percentages of the population as a result of the sociopolitical climate described by Eddo-Lodge (2018). With regular attempts to foreground the negative impacts of such homogeneity to avoid our consideration becoming a justification or Black or Brown erasure, the knowledge of racial isolation in working- and underclass communities helped inform the questions with which we approached the development of our collective vision of Flat World.

Collectively, the actors were tasked with answering questions I posed to them, from which details like Nell's tenancy in the Flat World apartment and its placement above the fish and chip shop arose. Included in this were questions such as, 'What kind of shops are there on the high street?', 'How far is the nearest doctor's surgery or library or shopping centre?' and 'Are there any parks or green spaces nearby?' The subtext to these questions were issues of access to public services and amenities that can sometimes be taken for granted. The answers included descriptions of empty shop fronts and businesses driven away by high rents, with only charity shops, hairdressers and betting shops, or retailers such as Poundland or Shoe Zone remaining. Jokes about the numerousness of the shoe-repair and key-cutting providers Timpson's later turned into an acknowledgement that these businesses would likely be a source of employment and thus an important presence in the community. Between them the cast decided there probably were some open spaces but that the town did not have a library or

doctor's surgery; their characters would have to travel to the next town over to access employment, education or medical services. Most of them could, however, afford the bus fare, and did not face the barriers to public healthcare or education that many migrants, refugees or houseless individuals do. Nell, at least, had her own property, and access to Wi-Fi meant that internet job searches and communal Mario Kart sessions remained possible.

With these ideas established, the questions turned to topics such as how many of them had remained in school until the age of eighteen: only a few, since most had to work to contribute to rent, bills, food, or childcare duties. How many had jobs: the majority, though many were frequently in and out of precarious employment and most jobs were considered "unskilled" or paid at minimum wage. Patterns that emerged in the actors' answers gradually formed an overarching image in which there were numerous obstacles to higher education, few employment prospects, and little to do other than socialise through gaming, drinking, and getting involved in one another's business. The individuality of the imagined experiences that emerged contributed to a disruption of the homogeneity that can result in stereotypical or generalised characterisation. The working-class masculinities of Flat World, which would later inform the performance of the characters in the "Play World," were not *all* poor or uneducated or violent. Though they may have been some of these things, they were also pacifistic, Queer, and emotionally invested in defending or escaping their disenfranchisement.

In addition to forming a creative image of their characters' everyday world, the process attempted to affirm for the cast an understanding of economic and socioeconomic deprivation not simply as a state of poverty but a systemic lack of amenities and prospects. Through this approach to the play, the beneficiaries of such systems (the nobility) were identified and could thereafter be understood in the rehearsal room through a perspective that had the potential to counter their hegemony. Such exercises in compassion not only developed the actors' understandings of the lives they were attempting to represent but brought them closer in their perceived proximity to subjects who are regularly diminished or conceptualised as Other within wider artistic processes. At the very least, the approach contributed to a space of safety, in which compassion – not just psychological, semiotic or conceptual scrutiny – could be fostered and applied in the process of development.

For the actors for whom the ideas explored were or had once been routine aspects of daily life, it validated their experiences and substantiated the power of their epistemic knowledge

and its value in the production's world and character development. In an interview reflecting on 'The Breach', Patrick James Withey described the experience of beginning to come to terms with his class identity while playing Pistol (Figure 3) and the Constable:

> I've always been a little bit ashamed [...]. Everyone used to take the mick, you know [...]. I don't know whether 'The Breach' influenced the way I was feeling or whether the way I was feeling influenced the way I looked at 'The Breach', but I finally started to admit to myself that I was working-class and be okay with that.
>
> (Appendix 4.3, p. 6-7)

Withey's reflection suggests that the collaborative building of Flat World helped destigmatise the dialogues surrounding class and economic status in the rehearsal room. In her introduction to *Brutus and Other Heroines*, Harriet Walter states that the intimacy developed between actor and character has the potential to 'bring something out in us that will never go back in the box' (2016: vii). While Withey's involvement in 'The Breach' may not have been solely responsible for his starting to be okay with calling himself working-class, putting a name to his experiences contributed to a process of recognition that brought him closer to the acceptance of this identity. The non-judgemental approach to the development of Flat World and its characters disrupted the prevailing experience of ridicule and shame that he had come to associate with his class identity.

Whereas the experience of playing Pistol was generally one of recognition and acceptance for Withey, for the actors who did *not* identify as working-class, it was more uncertain. Tiffany Rhodes, who played Nym among other characters, described feeling like 'a bit of a fraud' taking on the role (Appendix 4.4, p.12). Explaining the pressure she felt to present Nym as a 'full and rounded' person, Rhodes expressed how important it was to her that the character's class and the oppression with which it was associated in the production didn't come to define her whole identity; she likened the idea to 'the voices of Black creators in the media' and 'how tired people are with seeing this idea that if it's a story predominantly with a Black cast, it's about slavery or oppression' (Appendix 4.4, p.9). Rhodes' comments demonstrate her awareness of the dissonance between her character's working-classness and her own middle-class background, stemming from her understanding of the position she was in to exert power over another's marginal identity.

In 'Empathy and the Ethics of Entitlement,' Ronald J. Pelias explores the question of how approaches to performance might avoid laying claim to and speaking for the Other (1991: 143). Pelias argues that performances which profess to speak on behalf of others can remove their right to speak for themselves.

> By performing others, actors define. They stakeout others, filling in the aspects of others they desire. They make maps for public viewing, planting their imperialist flags in the hearts of those they enact. This linguistic naming sets others, creates meaning and, in essence, silences those they claim to represent.
>
> (Pelias, 1991: 143)

He suggests that by simply standing as 'witnesses' to the experiences of others, performers may instead contribute to an ongoing 'exchange with alternative visions, exchanges between [...] various historical contexts, between distinct cultures, between various ideologies and values' (1991: 149). The feeling of fraudulence discussed by Rhodes echoes marginalised artists' accounts of their entry into hegemonic spaces. Discussing her work beyond her and Linton's all-women of colour *Richard II* (2019), Adjoa Andoh described the feeling of everyone 'watching you, waiting for you to mess up' (Aughterson and Grant Ferguson, 2020: 67); and McGarvey recalls his belief that 'the only thing that qualified my opinion was the fact that I had been poor' when beginning his career as a class activist (2017: 104). The pressure to live up to or transcend expectations that comes with entry to such spaces can perpetuate feelings of non-belonging and marginality.

Demonstrating a similar juncture of space, masculinities and power, many of the approaches to performance discussed throughout this study indicate various forms of awareness, in the productions' rehearsal stages, of the audiences by whom they might be experienced. During a discussion of how his portrayal of Hotspur might have been affected by a deeper exploration into the character's racial identity, Katebe raised the issue of how knowledge of 'where you're performing' can provide or deny permission to enter into discussions of identity (Appendix 4.2, p.13). The 'where' in the case of 'Between the Armies' was The Rondo Theatre in Bath, before a majority white, middle-class audience. For Katebe, the decision to apply a racial lens in performance was mediated by a complex set of questions surrounding the politics of the gaze through which it might be viewed.

> It's whether the audience would understand these things, or whether it's... It's a bad thing to say, "Whether it would be lost." But I mean, like, if the audience would be, "Oh, that came out of nowhere! I don't see why it matters to him!" You know what I mean? It's something that you need to approach cautiously, or approach with intent.
>
> (Appendix 4.2, p.14)

Katebe's deliberations foreground the issue of audience cultural consciousness and (anticipated) contexts that can limit performance. Should such a large portion of an actor's process be occupied with navigation of the boundaries between which embodied realities are acceptable to an audience and which are not? Should it fall to him to articulate his expression in ways permitted by white hegemonic subjectivity, relying on the availability of space for this exploration within the confines of the director's vision? Or should audiences of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds have the ability to accept and empathise with such depictions even when they fall beyond normative cultural scopes? The dialogues Pelias discusses require the acknowledgement of all forms of participation in their construction, including that of the actor, writer, director, the represented others whose voices they are in dialogue *with*, and those who bear witness to the performance.

Under working-class direction, the play and the spaces in which it was rehearsed and performed were claimed as spaces for the marginal. By holding the play's hegemonic characters to account, our approach fostered an awareness of the gendered, racial and class-based power held by the artists in the playworlds and realities beyond them. Rhodes' awareness of the power wielded through her class suggests a de-naturalising of the hegemony middle- and upper-class masculinities can hold in creative processes. Where the representations of *Henry V*'s marginal characters in Doran and Dromgoole's productions indicate a claiming of "common" identity for the purpose of performing hegemonic victory, 'The Breach' attempted to speak *through* rather than for them. Rhodes' will to do justice to Nym's representation demonstrates the understanding of her own authority as an actor, also pointing to an acknowledgement of the audience by whom her performance would be experienced. In particular, an assumption, or hope maybe, that they would recognise the fullness she was attempting to bring to the character. To Rhodes, the show was *for* people who might not be able to afford to pay 'fifty pounds a ticket' and her approach showed a willingness to be held accountable by those who might 'see themselves' in Nym (Appendix 4.4, p.11).

This accountability began in the direction that combined personal experience of working-classness with the power to dictate how empirical knowledge could be employed in rehearsals, authorising the production's advocacy for characters like Nym and Pistol. Where Katebe's awareness of the likelihood he would perform before a predominantly white audience presented a barrier to his practice, the safety established through the de-stigmatisation of class discussions in the rehearsal room of 'The Breach' generated a system of support that was continued in the context of performance. The process aimed to instil the characters with a similar sense of shared understanding, respect, and solidarity that could be carried onto the stage with them. For if someone can see themselves represented in a character who is shown as deserving of deep and meaningful respect in spite of their background or appearance, they may begin on a path toward deep and meaningful respect for themselves.

Hidden transcripts

The socioeconomic privilege required to access creative spaces like the rehearsal room in which 'The Breach' was developed or the theatre in which it was performed can form a barrier by which working- and underclass people are rendered a minority in dramatic processes. In small-scale and fringe theatre, smaller budgets can result in lower pay figures for actors, limiting the involvement of artists without the pre-existing financial stability to support their work. In the rehearsal room, identity regularly comes under scrutiny in the exploration of character backstory, disposition, posture, body language, and accent. With the absence of experiential understanding surrounding the social factors of working-class masculinities, stereotypical representations of brutishness, unintelligence or criminality can be difficult to break from. Even when marginalised groups *are* represented they are generally the minority, placing pressure on individuals to combat the hegemonies through which such stereotypes are created without support. The experience is similar for artists who find themselves the only person of colour, the only migrant, or the only Disabled individual in a process. As Andoh states in relation to *Richard II* (2019), 'I don't go around thinking 'hey, I'm a black woman!' I only think about that when someone throws it at me or when it is made an obstruction' (Aughterson and Grant Ferguson, 2020: 71). Her observation underlines

the pressure that is continually placed on individuals to represent entire spectrums of experience, psychology or behaviour.

Reflecting on ‘Between the Armies’ with Njeko Katebe, his comments surrounding his experience of being the only Black actor in the production (an experience with which he is unfortunately familiar) echoed Andoh’s assertion that marginal identity only forms a barrier when it is made so, often by those with decision-making power. For Katebe, the experience goes beyond performances of race; he described struggling with how frequently he is required to engage with violent characterisations, which appear to stem from his height and build. Discussing the difficulties of being typecast in intensely aggressive roles, he recalled feeling ‘just straight out uncomfortable’ at points during rehearsals (Appendix 4.2, p.9). One such occasion occurred during a rehearsal of a confrontation between Hotspur and Owen Glendower in ‘Between the Armies’ (3.1). Katebe recalled a moment in which he was required to square up to Ross Scott, who played Glendower, in the scene:

> I really struggled with it, particularly because I love [Ross] so much and I’d just look straight in his face and I’d be like, “I can’t do this. I am finding it very, very hard to play this role.” [...] It’s not like I never get angry or I would never square up to someone, but in that sense that it’s far from the way I would operate.
>
> (Appendix 4.2, p.9-10)

Elaborating on his point, Katebe described a conversation with Scott in which they discussed the strain of roles requiring extreme levels of anger and aggression in which they regularly find themselves. His reflection underscores the damaging assumption that actors who are physically capable of embodying violent roles will find the psychological aspects of their performance equally as straightforward. In Katebe’s case during ‘Between the Armies’, the assumption impeded his navigation of the scene, forming an ‘uncomfortable’ obstruction in his performance process.

Katebe’s ability to articulate this discomfort, however, arose in part from the parallels between his and Scott’s experiences. Their shared understanding opened up the pathway for collective examination and connection, afforded (possibly) by the critical space in which our explorations of violent masculinities were situated. Such connection can foster channels of communication and open dialogues surrounding issues that might otherwise remain

unchallenged. Where directorial authority in ‘The Breach’ had provided the permissibility for Withey and Hardwell to engage with their lived experiences, a similar process of authorisation might have been possible for Katebe. The employment of a Black co-director, assistant director or dramaturg, or the casting of another Black actor opposite him could have provided the possibility for deeper, more detailed connections between actors and their characters.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott characterises such forms of connection by way of their ability to surreptitiously challenge hegemony, deriving ‘emotional resonance from the impulses and assertions that are censored in the presence of power’ (1990: 23). While hidden transcripts do not speak in the face of authority, the secret power garnered through them rejects the need for authorisation by the dominant. The process of forming hidden transcripts between working-class characters in ‘The Breach’ aimed to subvert hegemonic commentaries and perspectives with the potential to impose judgement on working-class characters through their representation in performance. As I have discussed, performances of “common” military masculinity in *Henry V* since the early 2010s have perpetuated stereotypical notions of working-class men as subjects of fear and ridicule. As can be observed in Doran’s RSC *Henry V* (2015) and Dromgoole’s Shakespeare’s Globe *Henry V* (2012), such stereotyping can revolve around what audiences are given access to and what is withheld. Our attempts to disrupt these hegemonic notions in ‘The Breach’ focused in particular on the Harfleur scene, in which the absence of the would-be victims of Henry’s threats and the soldiers by whom his promised brutality is to be enacted has the potential to obscure the perspectives of these unseen characters.

Figure 3.4 Production photograph of 'The Breach' (Turner-McMullan, 2019). The citizens of Harfleur, played by Patrick James Withey (left), Charlotte McEvoy (centre) and Toby Gibbs (right), hide behind their furniture from Henry's assault.

In '"Vile participation": The Amplification of Violence in the Theatre of Henry V' (1991), Joel B. Altman discusses Shakespeare's intermediation between Elizabethan audiences and the wartime context in which the play was written and viewed. Altman explores the function of audience spectatorship as a form of by-proxy participation in nationalistic cultures of violence and chivalry, at a time when England was struggling to maintain control of its Irish territories. He argues that the 'erotic economy' established between the audience and Henry via the play's 'sustained verbal images' and the Chorus' use of active language, such as '"behold," "follow," "grant," "place"' in its opening insists on this participation (Altman, 1991: 19-20). If, as in Doran and Dromgoole's Harfleur scenes, the emotional worlds of the King and the commanding officers who stand alongside him are prioritised, the narrowness of this perspective can obscure the traumatic nature of Henry's words for those who might see – or rather, not see – themselves reflected in the images evoked.

In discussions of the Harfleur scene with the actors, many found the images of sexual violence difficult to engage with. In particular, the women and gender-noncomforming actors

among them struggled to approach the scene and other representations of sexual violence throughout the play objectively, or even creatively. During a post-show discussion, Alexandra Ricou described feeling 'cold' while reading *Henry V* in preparation for their roles (Appendix 3.3: 00.03.55). In Silverstone's introduction to *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance*, she draws on Caruth's exploration of the simultaneous states of knowing and not-knowing produced by trauma. Silverstone discusses in relation to performance the paradoxical nature of trauma that resists representation even as it repeatedly draws the subject back to the moment in which it was sustained. In performance, like in a flashback when the feeling of a moment may be re-experienced, 'the repeated return to the crying wound marks the way in which the traumatic response demands that the wound be known, even as it defies the possibility of knowing it fully' (Silverstone, 2011:13). While sexual violence is not an exclusively non-male experience, it is a threat that permates the lives of many women and gender-nonconforming people, a form of 'knowing' that can be called to the forefront of reader or audience consciousness in ways that can evoke personal, intergenerational or cultural trauma. In her approach to the "wooing" scene (5.2) as Katherine, Dickinson found her understanding of sexual threat key to accessing the emotion required for her performance. However, while the employment of embodied understanding can be effective (with appropriate safeguarding), it can also pose a barrier in performance as well as its viewing. As Silverstone states, trauma defies representation in performance; though we can attempt to portray the events through which it is sustained, there is no universal language for discussing embodied trauma, especially when language and forms of understanding available are shaped by hegemony.

In an interview with Liz Hoggard for *The Guardian* online (2015), Alex Hassell, who played Henry in Doran's production, stated that the decision to place him alone onstage during his Harfleur speech arose from a desire for heightened intimacy between himself and the audience: 'The aim is to make them question what would they do in this situation – would they want to follow me or not? I don't care about Henry being liked by the audience. But I want them to come out debating his actions' (Hassell, 2015). Hassell's desire for viewers to engage with the moral dilemmas of the play is problematised in the Harfleur scene. With the scene's intimacy intended to engage audiences in questions of moral responsibility, who are they to imagine they are? The English soldiers, considering the lengths to which they would go to achieve victory? The Governor of Harfleur, facing the decision of whether to surrender or continue to resist the invasion? Or perhaps the 'men of Harfleur' who have fought until

now to protect their loved ones (3.3.27)? Yet the implication of agency in the participation imagined by Hassell undermines the realities of power in the scene, which presents a systematic removal of consent and a metaphorical violation of the feminised body of France. For many, the theme of sexual violence is not a debate but a reality with which they are confronted daily. When the language to articulate and the power to be heard in the naming of sexual violence is often denied in patriarchal cultures, the ability to *know* in the way described by Silverstone can also be obstructed. More often than not, the power to include or erase victims in representations of violation lies with those who also hold hegemony in the systems that perpetuate its reality; their decisions can reinforce the lasting exclusion from decisions around what can be – and is – enacted upon subjugated and marginalised bodies, even in performance.

Despite heavy cuts to the Harfleur scene in *The Hollow Crown: Henry V* (2012), Sharrock and co-writer Ben Power's adaptation rejects the erasure common in performances of the scene. By cutting lines describing 'the leviathan' and 'licentious wickedness,' they omit some of the speech's more impervious imagery and amplify the themes of sexual violence (3.3.22-26). Sharrock incorporates a range of counter perspectives throughout the speech, with reaction shots of the military captains' questioning faces implying its improvised and unplanned nature. In Altman's discussion of violence in *Henry V*, he suggests that amplification, achieved through the division and presencing of images, presupposes participation. The 'oxymoronic capacity to enlarge something by cutting it up,' as with the violent imagery of Henry's Harfleur speech, creates a 'dismemberment that [...] lingers in the imagination amid more fearful echoes to foster ever-expanding fantasies of vulnerability and savage projection' (Altman, 1991: 18). The language used by Altman reflects the voyeuristic process of consumption activated by the play's amplification, whereby the imaginative power of viewers is co-opted for the creation of this illusory violence.

Sharrock's Harfleur fulfils a similar function in the presencing of the citizens alongside the English captains. With their whimpers permeating the aural backdrop of the scene, the expanded perspectives through which the action can be interpreted disrupt the singular gaze and its patriarchal fantasy of militaristic violence. With this fragmentation, the modes of participation fostering audience desire for absolution, diplomatic or corporeal power affect a version of Harfleur's invasion that incorporates the embodied lack of autonomy of the marginalised characters. 'The Breach' aimed to achieve a similar disruption by creating

access to hidden transcripts of fear and resistance among Harfleur's citizens. Appearing alone opposite Henry, the Governor's acquiescence to his demands creates the illusion that an alternative option exists. Similar to how Sharrock's inclusion of the townspeople points to the fear evoked by Henry's threats, a more detailed narrative surrounding Harfleur's yielding had the potential to disrupt the illusion of consent and underscore the lack of choice afforded to them. To do so, the adaptation included a repetition of the Harfleur scene, placing the first iteration towards the beginning of the play, directly after the Prologue.

The Chorus' monologues occurred in an ambiguous setting that bridged the divide between Flat World and Play World, making the first Harfleur scene audiences' primary introduction to the environment that would house Shakespeare's action. Having transitioned straight from the pre-set into her prologue, Dickinson ended it standing atop the coffee table centre stage before she was suddenly interrupted by a thunderous knock at the door (Appendix 3.1: 00.12.14). With a gasp, she removed the pink hoodie that was her Chorus costume, bundled it into a ball, and cradled it against her chest, imitating the sound of a baby's cries as she clambered hurriedly down from the table. Arriving by her side, Toby Gibbs led her to the clothes airer and threw a blanket over her as she crouched beneath it. As they did so, other cast members entered as the citizens of Harfleur, rearranging the furniture to fashion hiding places for themselves (Figure 3.4). After blockading the door with a cabinet from the corner of the room, Tiffany Rhodes, as the Governor, ordered everyone to hide before crouching with them behind the sofa.

As this happened onstage Kian Keanu Pollard, as Henry, began speaking from the other side of the apartment door. Although the Harfleur scene's action occurred in Play World, it shared the same living room setting as Flat World, differentiated through a darkening of Joe Samuels' stage lighting. While Henry's threats sounded from offstage, the faces and actions of the unnamed characters hiding behind their furniture told a story: McEvoy held Withey close as he whimpered into her shoulder (Figure 3.4); Alexandra Ricou lay curled in a foetal position with her face buried in a beanbag; and Dickinson tried desperately to hush her baby's cries from beneath the blanket. Flinching with each aggressive knock at the door, Rhodes' Governor exchanged helpless glances with those around her before hesitantly approaching the door and removing the blockade. Entering the apartment, Henry proceeded to demonstrate the sincerity of his threats, dragging Withey across the floor and placing a foot upon his throat, before pulling the blanket from Dickinson and the crying baby on the line, 'Your

naked infants spitted upon pikes' (3.3.38). In the contemporary setting, with the characters in casual clothes, Henry might have been a debt collector intimidating the apartment's residents into paying up (Appendix 3.1: 00.13.53). As he did so, the shared glances and consoling embraces between the citizens continued to tell unspoken but perceptible tales of silent reassurance, secret promises, and collective powerlessness in the face of their enemy.

Left to the imagination, these moments, the relationships, and the humanity implied in them can remain obscured. Reflected in the citizens' reactions, the extremity of Henry's threats attempted to express how such brutality can operate to strip victims of autonomy or choice. Later, when the scene was repeated from the other side of the door, with only Henry, Fluellen, and Lady Exeter (played by McEvoy) in view of the audience, the image of its first iteration was echoed in the sound of Henry's open palm against the door and Exeter and Fluellen's flinches as they listened to his threats (Appendix 3.1: 00.33.08). The repetition intended to impact perceptions of the speech, and of Henry throughout the rest of the play. This scenes jarred both with the historical imagination of Henry's "Greatness" and contemporary imaginings of rape culture as an isolated modern phenomena. Through the scene's fragmentation, Henry was at once 'unmistakably Shakespearean' yet re-characterised through an unfamiliar, multidimensional lens (Marowitz, 1991: 30). When Rhodes appeared in the open doorway as the Governor, the fear on her face echoed the expressions of the citizens earlier in the play, inviting a shared 'knowing' of their trauma (Silverstone, 2011: 13).

In the context of the production and its aims, the *possibility* for knowing potentiated by this approach created a hidden transcript, through which feminine and working-class power could be created and claimed. The processes of how this possibility was constructed beyond Harfleur takes up much of the following exploration of the "wooing scene" in 'The Breach'. As a working-class, non-male director, embodied knowledge of the class- and gender-based trauma represented in the scene was instrumental in its conception and staging. Whereas the previous adaptations relied heavily on actors' portrayals as the basis for explorations of masculinities, approaching them from a position of objectivity, the use of experiential understanding in directing 'The Breach' instilled in it an 'emotional resonance,' derived from a personal need to speak in the face, or behind the back, of hegemony (Scott, 1990: 23). The adapted script deviated further from *Henry V* than the ones that preceded it, with added stage directions that detailed the intended movement between and within the scenes, a material

insertion of present resistance into an object of the past. While the script preserved some of Henry's speeches so as to not erase his multidimensionality, the cut focused on leaning into the severity of his violence to present a hyperbolised representation of hegemony as a form of direct confrontation. While the Harfleur scene could not give the citizens a physical voice, their bodily presence potentiated a physical language with which to call attention to the violence it presented.

Resistance and the actor's body

By allowing 'The Breach's adaptation and direction to be guided by understandings of the traumatic circumstances we were attempting to represent, our navigation of the play's themes of sexual violence could be carried out in consensual and collaborative ways. Informed by the decision to foreground the Harfleur scene's rape imagery through its repetition and staging, the "wooing scene" (5.2) between Henry and Katherine presented an opportunity to drive the production's messaging around this subject home. Adapting *Henry V* in 2018, in the direct aftermath of the MeToo and Time's Up cultural movements, there seemed an additional pressure to confront issues of nonconsent in the scene directly and unambiguously. The approach relied heavily on the shared knowing between director, actor and audience to effectively communicate ideas that defy representation. In contemporary performances of institutional and patriarchal texts, histories of harm are often interpolated through extra-textual visual or aesthetic representation. As the latter pages have considered, knowing can arise from an intentional projection of empirical understanding into dramatic processes in such a way that the personal or private meaning of a text is shared – and in doing so, recreated in a public form. In Silverstone's words, that which is 'unknowable by the virtue of its magnitude' takes on the capacity to be known through bearing witness and, through performance, embodying another's understanding (2011: 13). By laying personal meaning at another's feet, space is created that invites them to do the same and, 'in the repeated return to the wound [...] some understanding of [thing] itself' might be gained (Silverstone, 2011: 13). In doing so, we make public what was formerly private, with the possibility of reinventing for ourselves our knowing of the private thing.

Such processes, of course, have the potential to trigger past or generate new trauma. Silverstone considers examples of approaches or processes of preparation, often linked to

misplaced thematic or aesthetic decisions in relation to the contexts of production, that serve to amplify the traumatic effects of performance, appropriate, distort or erase the experiences of others, or present 'generalisations about the nature of violence and its effects,' creating and silencing others in ways similar to those Pelias discusses (2011: 43). It seems inevitable that discomfort will arise in the rehearsal or performance of traumatic subjects. Yet with the sharing of this discomfort and the knowing that precedes it, space and time can be dedicated to fostering the understandings that arise from returns to our wounds in contexts of safety.

In rehearsals for 'The Breach', moments of discomfort arose for both the actors who portrayed victims *and* their violators. In a post show discussion, Charlotte McEvoy described how 'threatening' and 'scary' it felt to be 'stood onstage as a woman' during Henry's 'band of brothers' monologue, in which he could be seen to coerce Exeter's assent through intimidation (Appendix 3.3: 00.04.25). Working in the wake of MeToo and Time's Up, the mainstream media industry's confrontation of sexual violence had not yet yielded standardised practices beyond generalised consent-seeking and care-centred approaches to bodily intimacy. In 2023, director collaboration with intimacy directors is becoming standard practice in attempts to banish the exploitation that gave rise to the movement against sexual violence in the performance industries. As with much emerging practice, intimacy direction continues to develop and be embedded in industry, yet is at risk of becoming a one-stop fix through which all systemic exploitation is considered to be exorcised. Even practised effectively, the presence of an intimacy director evinces the spectre of violation (and violator) from which (and from whom) it is their purpose to shield. As Connell suggests that gendered practice

> never occurs in a vacuum. It always responds to a situation, and situations are structured in ways that admit certain possibilities and not others. Practice does not proceed in a vacuum either. Practice makes a world. In acting, we convert initial situations into new situations. Practice constitutes and re-constitutes structures.
>
> (Connell, 2005: 65)

While intimacy direction has developed to mitigate the wrongful exercise of gendered or sexual power in performance industries, its counteractive scope is limited. Rather than reconstruct an industrial framework in which sexual violence has no standing, we have simply added to a scaffold built on its foundations, creating a scapegoat mechanism and an

evermore complex set of negotiations for potential victims. It is, however, a set of steps toward a more generalised practice of accountability and intentional safeguarding, a practice with the potential to yield wider possibilities for tackling systemic exploitation, and one which trauma-informed production, direction and performance might learn from and support.

Intimacy directors are negotiators of hierarchical dynamics, mitigating production and performance processes by which personal agency may be removed or obstructed. Their presence ensures that performances of intimacy, simulated sex or violence are conceived and choreographed on the basis of the performers' expressed consent. Intimacy direction is a practice of creating permissibility through which actors are placed in control of what may be performed and how it may be handled in rehearsal, holding focused space for defining and maintaining boundaries. During our preparation for 'The Breach', giving actors permission to take a clearly defined stance in their performed opposition aimed to foster a culture of openness across the scope of the production, in which our explicit confrontation of sexual violence could be reflected in the rehearsal process. By ensuring the intention to explore this theme was explicit in the production's open casting callout, actors of all genders were able to apply with the knowledge and expectation of this oppositional stance.

As I have observed in Doran and Hassell's engagement with the moral dilemmas of Harfleur's rape and pillaging, simplified espousals that "rape is bad" or "coercion is wrong" risk alienating audiences who are already brutally aware of these facts. Refusing to stage the scene altogether would be to obfuscate the historical realities of sexual violence as a weapon of governance. Though, in light of Silverstone's analysis of Selwyn's assault in *This Island's Mine*, there is a balance to be struck between physicalisation and representation that avoids 'mimetic violent repetition while identifying its operation and aftermath' (2011: 93). The transcript of Katherine's nonconsent is frequently hidden through the staging and dramatic flow of the "wooing scene" in twentieth and twenty-first century productions of *Henry V*. The interpretation of her willingness to engage in Henry's courtship must, through ignorance or intention, reject the stark language of nonconsent that is very much present in the text. One only need look at the organisation of the dialogue to see how strikingly the weighting of Henry's speech overwhelms Katherine's. A wide array of feminist scholarship, including Howard and Rackin's *Engendering a Nation*, has drawn attention to the ways that rape is threaded through *Henry V*, affecting the 'modern status' of 'male heterosexual dominance' on the basis of sexual power and conquest (1997: 201). Howard and Rackin's discussion of

‘performative masculinity’ draws on Susan Jeffords’ ‘After a Few Times You Won’t be Afraid of Rape at All’ (1991). Jeffords focuses on ‘war as an arena in which the terms of the gender hierarchy are renegotiated’ in her exploration of rape as an act, or threatened act, through which governmental exploitation, control and exclusion are carried out, drawing attention to “the body as the site of difference” (1997: 197).

In *Henry V*, violated feminine bodies are at the mercy of men who begin and, for the most part, end the play in positions of power, a narrative through which violence based on sexed bodily difference is transcribed into cultural history and perceived reality. As the MeToo movement brought to global attention in 2017, male dominance in the performance industries has long depended on the same threat to exert control over the bodies of women and disempowered people. In the second tetralogy, where war is characterised through a lens of early modern nostalgia as an up-close-and-personal exploit, masculinity is lodged in this capacity for bodily domination: a masculinity, to use Connell’s terms, ‘equated with the exercise of power in its most naked forms’ (2005: 42). Jeffords’ title, taken from a line in the 1986 film *Opposing Force*, which depicts the rape of a female trainee in the American Air Force by a superior officer, is disturbingly pertinent both in the cases of the military and performance industries. With sustained threat, and its normalisation through repetitive imagery that fails to directly confront it, comes desensitisation. Yet the suggestion that fear goes away is a myth, part of a wider patriarchal pedagogy that convinces people of all genders to accept and live in a constant state of being afraid.

Despite the various scholarship that explores the negative aspects of Henry’s kingship, performances of *Henry V* seem reluctant to stage the “wooing scene” in ways that establish any permanence to disavowals of his “Greatness.” Though Doran’s *Henry V* (2015) attempts to delve into Henry’s more sinister choices, vulnerability and comic fumbling are primary features of his courtship. Jennifer Kirby, as Katherine, stands rigidly still throughout the scene’s opening, her face set in an uncomfortable yet determinedly polite expression, speaking (when she does) with a clarity that comes together with her physicality to give her command over the stage space. The laughter Henry’s poor attempts at French eventually elicit from her appears to be the turning point of the scene, building to prominent moments that portray her acceptance, first through her agreement that their marriage ‘sall also content me’ and later her initiation of a kiss between them (5.2.247). The scene takes a similar shape in Sharrock’s *The Hollow Crown: Henry V* (2012) with Hiddleston’s accentuation of Henry’s

hesitancy and self-deprecation. The sincerity that is undermined in the Harfleur scene remains undisrupted in his wooing, his motives unchallenged by the questioning faces of surrounding soldiers, suggesting that *this* is the version of Henry to be believed. An instrumental underscore fades in and out, producing peaks in the romantic atmosphere between them, which once again begins with Henry's ability to make the princess laugh. As Katherine, Mélanie Thierry's eyeline remains lowered throughout much of the scene, her hands clasped neatly before her at all times and purposefully placed breaths giving meaning to her silences.

Though their performances bear marked similarities, the dynamics of power in Kirby and Thierry's scenes vary. In both, Henry follows Katherine around the stage. Yet, while Kirby leads with quick, decisive motions, Thierry's is responsive, a slow backing away as Hiddleston moves towards her. Kirby is resolute in her tone, commanding Hassell with the few lines she has, while Thierry is muted, first contemplative and later with a giggle in her voice. The embodied aspects of Katherine's tension, confusion, conflictedness and softening are often clearly visible, the lack of text with which to communicate vocally necessitating a reliance on physicality. However, there is often little change in Henry. Though there are undulations in the emotional trajectory and pace of the scene, the only tangible change for Henry is that he begins with the mission of winning Katherine and ends having succeeded, whether through courtship or the acquiescence of her father – and it is this outweighing of power that is regularly glossed over. The result is a half-statement, a violent mimetic repetition without 'identifying its operation and aftermath' that fails to define the wrongness of Katherine's situation (Silverstone, 2011: 93). In this performance tradition, Henry is reaffirmed as a steady, dependable leader while the actor playing Katherine must undertake the complex task of navigating, then communicating for an audience, the trajectory of her consent with the very few lines available. Katherine's yielding becomes an expectation, even when her body language, her stifled speech and the circumstances of her meeting with Henry contradict its dramatic logic.

Two recent productions have taken more explicit stances on the play's ending. In Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory's *Henry V* (2018), directed by Elizabeth Freestone, Ben Hall played Henry opposite Heledd Gwynn as Katherine. Merged with the Dauphin in Freestone's adaptation, Gwynn's Katherine was first and foremost a soldier, confident in her command of the French troops and her understanding of the politics driving their resistance.

Carrying the rage of her army's defeat at Agincourt along with the grief of losing her lover and fellow soldier into the scene with Henry, Katherine put up the kind of fight to be expected of a trained soldier. Claire Hayes' review of the production found 'no simple capitulation' between her and Henry (2018). Yet when he forced his kiss on her, all of Katherine's command disappeared, the image of 'their two shaven heads locked together in eventual embrace' seemingly a symbol of two damaged individuals beginning to reconcile with one another and themselves (Hayes, 2018).

This version of Katherine as a politically active force recurs in Max Webster's *Henry V* (2021) at the Donmar Warehouse, starring Kit Harrington, in which Henry's imperialism was foregrounded by casting Black actors in the roles of all the French characters. Through the translation of dialogue in the French court scenes into French, Anoushka Lucas' Katherine was no longer set apart as the only member of her family speaking entirely in her own language. Lucas' Katherine was an active participant in decisions about the war, and with the coinciding of her English lesson with a round of boxing practice (arming herself linguistically and physically against her enemies) her personal choices were made into political ones, positioned in relation to her royal authority and responsibility. In her review of Webster's production, Hipkiss observes that the 'final shot of Katherine showed her with a plastered-on smile, performing a royal wave, forced into the form that Henry wanted her to be as the new Queen of England' (2021: 417). In Webster's "wooing scene," while Hipkiss observes that 'Katherine's strength [could] not save her from Henry's overwhelming martial (colonising) power,' her acceptance of his proposal is re-characterised as an exercising of political autonomy, fulfilling a responsibility to her country and family (2021: 417).

Freestone and Webster's commentaries on loss, intergenerational violence and colonisation destabilise the politics of male domination at play in the "wooing scene," Freestone's through the emphasis of both Henry and Katherine's vulnerability as a means of levelling the emotional playing field between them, and Webster in the elevation of Katherine's autonomy with displays of physical and political strength. In all versions of the scene, however, it is Katherine who must yield so Henry's "Greatness" may remain intact. In Doran and Sharrock's productions, her yielding is an emotional winning over, in which belief is instated in Henry's romantic and sexual potency through her acceptance. In Freestone and Webster's, the illusion of consent is created through the insistence that Katherine needs Henry as much as he needs her, or that she is exercising power through acceptance as a

political act. However, none of these performances do so without resistance, and it is the actor's body – Kirby's tension, Thierry's lowered gaze, Gwynn and Lucas' physical fortification – in which this resistance is lodged.

Dramaturgically, Henry's prolonged courtship can only make sense if some form of unwillingness is established and sustained in Katherine. Though the line '*Laissez, mon signeur, laissez, laissez*' (5.2.250) has no accurate English translation, in contemporary French and English terms the word *laissez* roughly translates to "let." With the context of the line 'Upon that I kiss your hand, and I call you my Queen' (5.2.248-9) that precedes it, and '*je ne veux point que vous abaissiez votre grandeur en baisant la main d'une de votre seigneuie indigne serviteur*' – 'I do not want you to lower your greatness by kissing the hand of one of your unworthy servants' – that follows, the phrases' translation as "let be" by various editors is consistent with the dialogue's advancement of the scene and tone of its delivery (5.2.251-3). Alternatively, *laisser* in modern French, meaning "to leave," shares the phonetic delivery of Shakespeare's phrasing, bringing the translation closer to the realm of *laisse*: "leave alone." Imagining the action that might be layered over this dialogue only goes further to underscore Katherine's unwillingness to be held and kissed. The suggestion that the actor playing Henry should take, or attempt to take, Katherine's hand in the line 'Upon that I kiss your hand' (5.2.248-9) seemingly calls for the delivery of '*Laissez, mon sineur, laissez, laissez*' with her hand held tightly in his (5.2.250). Not just once but three times does she plead him to "let be" or "leave alone," implying that her first and second requests are ignored, with the tendency of editors to add an exclamation mark at the end of the line (Craik, 1995; Loughnane, 2016; Greenblatt et al, 2016) serving to amplify the increasing sense of desperation.

If this could be ignored, the next words Katherine speaks, '*je ne veux point*' (5.2.251), quite literally translate to "I do not want," followed a sentence later by '*je vous supplie, mon très-puissant seignuer*' (5.2.253-4): "I beg you, my most powerful lord." The decision to downplay Katherine's resistance, therefore, moderates the anxious femininity entangled with the threat of rape throughout the play, an intervention in the sexual politics that reaches a crossroad in this final scene. The embodied dramaturgy of post-MeToo performances appear to signal this contextual and cultural differentiation, following the textual trajectory of Katherine's resistance more overtly than Doran or Sharrock, in whose iterations it is Henry's charm, not the extenuating circumstances of her situation, in which her yielding is rooted.

With Katherine's French speaking rendering her effectively voiceless before non-French speaking audiences, body language becomes a primary and amplified mode of communication. The issue, then, is perhaps one of permissibility, of which bodies are permitted to express nonconsent in performance and how they are permitted to express it – for whom nonconsent is allowed to be explicit.

In *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, Bulman explores Anthony B. Dawson's ideas of the 'audience's experience of [the actor's] body,' which 'confounds critical claims about the actor's power of cultural signification' onstage (1996: 6). He builds on Dawson's statement that bodily materiality cannot be unbound by the sheer "physical and emotive force of acting that resists inscription" when performances are bound to preconditioned interpretations of the body (1996: 42). Yet, as this project has explored, the text can be put to work to rematerialise signification, reconfiguring the points of contact by which direction and performance are underpinned and *re*conditioning the body's possible interpretations. In the aforementioned productions, consent is inscribed on the body through directorial intervention, which alters the text through the embodied dramaturgy of Katherine's resistance and yielding.

I wanted to see a version of Katherine who did not yield, in which the text could be used to blockade against the expectation of consent. With the omission of 'Den it sall also content me,' it was possible to read an unbroken thread of nonconsent running through the scene, removing the closure and implicit acceptance of Henry's proposal by which Katherine's waning resistance is permanently shut down (5.2.247). Arguably, this omission is unnecessary, since vocal and physical performance may be enough to divest the line of any apparent truth. Yet, to do so would be to complicate the emotional track of Dickinson's performance even further than the scene's requirements already do. Dickinson's Katherine, though dressed in a costume evocative of the Chorus, was childlike in her vulnerability and playfulness. By placing her in the background of the French court scenes in the lead-up to her English lesson (3.4) we implied her understanding of her country's position, including what this might mean for her. The weighted pauses interdispersing her and Alice's laughter over the English words during her lesson betrayed the fear behind her desire to learn. The final scene between her and Pollard was highly physical, with direction prompting Dickinson to lead their movement around the stage, encouraging her to act on instincts to back away, physically resist, or ridicule Henry with the full force of her voice. In doing so, lines such as

‘*Sauf votre honneur*, me understand well’ (5.2.132) made vehemently clear that Katherine understood her lack of control, her unwillingness made clear in her attempts to avoid him on ‘Dat is as it sall please *le roi mon* [*mère*]’ (5.2.244). Employing techniques from stage combat, in which the victim maintains command of the action at all times and gives consent for each coming move through the use of eye contact and other bodily cues, Dickinson was placed in control of the scene at all times.

Yet Pollard’s performance was also instrumental in subverting the narrative expectations of the scene. In order to present an explicit image of her nonconsent, it had to be undeniably clear *what* Katherine was resisting. In Doran and Sharrock’s versions of the scene, the issue is not so much that Katherine’s discomfort is imperceptible but that the danger she is responding to is not; while she can clearly be seen to yield to Henry’s charm, by downplaying the bodily threat he may pose, the grounding for her resistance is undermined. The scene’s choreography therefore aimed not only to amplify Dickinson’s body language to replace what is denied by the text – or by the obstructive interpretations enabled by her French speaking – but to draw out the sexually domineering imagery of Henry’s dialogue through Pollard’s physicality. Utilising the actor’s characteristic sincerity and emphasising lines such as ‘for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it,’ we underscored the gravity of Henry’s desire for domination (5.2.73-74). The unpredictability of his movements contributed to a growing sense of volatility: as he exclaimed, ‘If I could win a lady [...] by vaulting into my saddle,’ Henry sprung onto the coffee table at the centre of the stage, then off again, thrusting his hips in Katherine’s direction as he concluded, ‘I should quickly leap into a wife’ (5.2.138-140). The aggression implied in his movements was quickly confirmed when he roughly grasped Alice, played by Tiffany Rhodes, by the back of her neck and demanded, ‘Can any of your neighbours tell, Kate? I’ll ask them,’ his physical force foreshadowing the kiss he would later plant on Katherine (5.2.194-195).

In the process of developing this choreography, frequent check-ins ensured Dickinson and Rhodes maintained control of the action and the direction it took. But it was Pollard who struggled most with the disformort of what the scene required of him. Evoking this representation required an intensified sense of the violence that can be glimpsed in Henry’s war tactics. Though Pollard had opportunities to expose Henry’s private anxieties and frustrations, the majority of these moments occurred when he was alone onstage and the overarching narrative required that the character’s acts of brutality outweighed the contrast of

his private revelations. While the “wooing scene” in ‘The Breach’ fit with the trajectory of Henry’s violence at Harfleur and his escalating desperation throughout the Battle of Agincourt – which took on a frantic energy that remained even once the war was won – the force of this closing image is such that it precludes a nuanced view of Henry’s kingship. The effect of these altered dramatic dimensions was to isolate the character within the narrative of the play and the visual dramaturgy of many scenes. Though he remained in some ways central, this centrality served to expose his role as the originator of the violence that divided him from the other characters, marked by their hostility towards him.

With attention on mitigating the traumatic impacts for actors who must portray the victims of violent action, it is possible to misjudge the effect such performances can have on those who must embody its perpetrators. Though Pollard was committed to realising the adaptation’s intentions for his character, he expressed repeated resistance to the version of Henry he was required to portray. It is possible that Henry’s absence from many of the production’s ensemble moments and the one-to-one rehearsals needed to stage his longer speeches intensified this sense of isolation, disrupting the trust among company members vital to dramatising potentially traumatic subjects. In rehearsals for the “wooing scene” in particular, Pollard’s self-consciousness presented a barrier to his performance of the character’s sexual aggression. While he could rationalise the verbal intimidation he wielded in other scenes, Pollard struggled to reconcile the overt, verging on grotesque, sexual threat Henry posed with the sense of Greatness he held in his mind. Despite its subversion of dominant pre-MeToo interpretations, our representation of Henry could not escape what Bennett terms the ‘authority of tradition’ by which his Greatness is held in place (1996: 12). As Worthen suggests, ‘the range of “possibilities” that the performance ensemble can engage is finally grounded in the already-authorized meanings left open by the text’ (1996: 17). Yet, as Bennett argues, the text is itself culturally produced: a ‘superficial’ construct of the “habitual memory of the past [...] sedimented in the body” of the plays and the actors who perform them (1996: 8-9). The sexual ‘excesses’ in our adaptation of the “wooing scene” activated a widening of the ‘gaps’ between this cultural imagining of the text and its performance (1996: 2).

Although the parts of the text altered directly through editing or embodied intervention posed a resistance to the play’s historical record of Henry’s Greatness, disrupting the impression of this memory on individuals is an entirely different negotiation, since “images

of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order" (Connerton in Bennett, 1996: 8). Not only does the confrontation of Henry's violence call into question Medieval or early modern masculine practices, it bears witness to the echoes of these practices in the present, modelling modes of *de*-legitimation and rejection that threaten this order. In holding onto the Greatness in characters like Henry, society – and actors – can cling to an enduring defence against their own reckoning with patriarchal violence. Pollard's revulsion at Henry's sexual aggression manifested in an inability to internalise the character's impulses in his performance. The reaction constituted an embodied resistance to the role's 'inscription' of a masculinity from which Pollard had previously viewed himself as separate (Worthen, 1996: 21). The sexual violence that had once appeared as Other to the 'star of England' was now made exteriorly and unavoidably present (Epilogue: 6). The process invited Pollard to share in an alternative knowing of masculinity, producing a '"transgressive knowledge" that would disarticulate the terms under which tradition gains its authority' (Bennett, 1996: 12).

This knowledge transgressed both the boundaries of what Pollard had formerly understood his body to be capable of and the character's possibilities within the narrative scope of the play and its historical record. To practise Connell's call for 'different ways of using, feeling and showing male bodies' in this way overturns not only the image of Henry onstage but the familiarity and comfort associated with performances that emphasise his Greatness (2005: 233). As Connell suggests, resistance does not necessarily constitute opposition. It does not bring 'new social arrangements into being' as opposition does (Connell, 2005: 229). Rather, the production's feminist opposition to the acceptance of *Henry V*'s rape imagery brings to light 'new cultural forms' in the uses to which the play is put, born from the post-MeToo context of it's development and present in the cultures of opposition fostered in the rehearsal room, by which (male) actors were able to formulate new perspectives on masculinity (Connell, 2005: 229).

The weight of the final scene through this lens, however, did not sit well with the intention of avoiding 'mimetic violent repetition' (2011: 93). Perhaps one of the reasons past renditions of the "wooing scene" have avoided confronting Henry's sexual violence is because, dramaturgically, it is so complex a statement to make and strikes a tone so difficult to come back from in the final moments of the play. As I have explored, sociologically attuned dramaturgies may provide a foundation for direction that activates rehearsal and performance spaces in trauma-informed ways. The text is one of these spaces and, as such, may likewise

be animated or reanimated as an object by which actors are empowered to resist the potentially traumatic impacts of performance. *Henry V*'s original Epilogue revisits the wry, apologetic tone of the Prologue, declaring the 'rough and all-unable' nature of the author's pen and its 'mangling' of mighty men's 'glory' (Epilogue, 1-4). Whereas Shakespeare's deference here is to Henry V, in contemporary contexts, in particular the context of adaptation, it may appear a deference to Shakespeare. Though the adaptation may indeed, for some, have mangled the play, to strike this apologetic tone in the aftermath of a scene depicting sexual violence would risk undermining its challenge to the cultures of rape and class violence it represented. In speaking through the plays' marginalised characters, 'The Breach' sought to speak *to* the members of these communities in its audience. To apologise for the representations or confrontations posed by the characters onstage would therefore be to suggest that responsibility for smoothing over the effects of violence lies with its victims. In the context of the adaptation, to declare the feminine, Queer or working-class individuals responsible for bringing these depictions to light 'all-unable' implies an inadequacy in their ability to speak or act for themselves, working to deauthorise marginally-derived narratives and defend against the 'mangling' of hegemonic representation at their expense (Epilogue: 1-4).

In anticipation of the emotional weight of 'The Breach's final scene, the script drew on the opening of *Henry VI Part 1* at the funeral of Henry V (1.1) to replace the Chorus' Epilogue with a new one, composed from the lines of various characters (Appendix 3.2, p.57). Where *Henry V*'s Epilogue reifies his position as the 'star of England,' the Epilogue in 'The Breach' affected a shift from this tone of celebration to one of mourning (Epilogue, 6). Performed by the Chorus, by the same actor who embodied Katherine moments before, the Epilogue's opening appropriated the Duke of Bedford's grief for Henry to unfold the pain of her own situation:

> Hung be the heavens with black. Yield day to night.
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky
> And with them scourge the bad revolting stars.
>
> (1.1.1-4)

To maintain this defiant tone, Dickinson's delivery took on an atmosphere of sarcasm in the lines that followed, which began to veer back toward a celebration of Henry's deeds. Yet in the language depicting Henry's 'sparking eye, replete with wrathful fire,' (1.1.12), as a king that 'ne'er lift up his hand but conquered' (1.1.16), Dickinson found the violent imagery needed to emphasise not only the wrongness of his conquests but his glorification as well. With the escalation of these images, the Chorus' sarcasm turned to anger, building to her own version of wrath as she cried 'King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long' (1.1.6). As Katherine's mirror throughout the adaptation, the Epilogue gave her and the Chorus the lines that the "wooing scene" denied her, through which she could make her resistance heard and her nonconsent explicitly known.

But even by this logic, the experience of embodying this journey is an uncomfortable one. To perform resistance, actors must imagine or draw on the empirical knowledge of experiences in which resistance is necessary. There is a danger, as Silverstone observes in Jennifer Woodburn's performance of Lavinia in Doran's *Titus Andronicus* (1995), that actors will read themselves 'into the trauma of others' or allow their own images to be 'occluded by the images of others' (2011: 46). While the Epilogue gave space to a transgressive perspective of Henry's actions, it risks 'the traumatic narrative [operating] as a remainder, a surplus' that is forced on participants, creating an excess that is not constructive in advancing the adaptation's purposes (Silverstone, 2011: 39). Knowing the intense emotional energy the "wooing scene" generated for Dickinson, to request that she navigate its emotional fallout alone before the audience felt too much like abandoning her to these feelings. When we are alone onstage, we appear objectively to audiences (a particular effect of proscenium arch stages). Solo performance works to draw attention to the dramatic relationship between actor and spectator, an alienating effect through which the theatre's 'space of appearance' is made visible (Butler, 2011: 12). We are reminded that the audience's perspective is an exterior and not necessarily subjective one; that 'to bear witness to [another's experience] is not, always, to be able to comprehend it,' even though there is pressure on the actor to produce this comprehension (Silverstone, 2011: 6). We are reminded of the capacity our bodies have to be 'dispossessed by the perspective of others' (Butler, 2011: 77). To impose this aloneness in the aftermath of even an imagined sexual assault would be to risk inviting these feelings of separation and isolation, 'storing traces of traumatic violence' in the body that may be traumatic in themselves (Silverstone, 2011: 3).

The decision to include McEvoy, Rhodes and Ricou in the Epilogue's staging aimed to disrupt the possibility of this isolating effect. Surrounded by the other women and non-binary people onstage, Dickinson could orient her performance in relation to them. In one way or another, the play's other feminine characters had sustained losses or harm at the hands of male characters. By addressing them as the "comets" to whom she spoke (Appendix 3.1: 01.42.41), images of femininity embodied in the actors were called attention to, marking the Chorus' opposition to these men in her call to 'scourge the bad revolting stars' (1.1.4). Beyond dramatic effect, McEvoy, Rhodes and Ricou's presence in rehearsals shaped them as spaces of solidarity in which Queer and feminine sexual experience could be explored beyond the male gaze. Butler posits that

> no one body establishes the space of appearance, but this action, this performative exercise, happens only "between" bodies, in a space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another's. In this way, my body does not act alone when it acts politically. Indeed, the action emerges from the "between," a spatial figure for a relation that both binds and differentiates.
>
> (Butler, 2011: 77)

Though the Chorus' (and Katherine's) resistance is inculcated through Dickinson's performance, the other women and non-binary actors' bodies created space onstage for this action to appear, modelling embodied relationships and reactions to the character's pain that, in turn, held space for audiences to do the same. The rehearsal space gave a place to the collective recognition in the nuance but also, to use Butler's words, the binding effect of our gendered experiences: a knowing of sexually violent cultures and individuals, of the desire to rage against them, and of the vulnerability in allowing this feeling to appear. When Dickinson met the gaze of the actors around her, she was met with a collective resistance fostered through this creation of space, which the bodies – and unanimity – of the women and non-binary people onstage were active in constructing. Though they did not speak, the actors posed their 'challenge in corporeal terms,' their plurality affecting a subjectivity that transformed what, in solo performance, might constitute a performance of privacy and allowing their bodies to '"speak" politically' to the audience (Butler, 2011: 83).

Through this, Butler's acknowledgement of the plurality required between bodies to 'act politically' becomes an instrument for creating safety in the rehearsal room that can

transcribe to a visual dramaturgy of connectivity and resistance onstage (2011: 77). Ending the play engaged against her will to Henry, Katherine was still as the remaining male characters left the stage. With a lighting change, the scene shifted from the warm glow of the French court to a dimmer, more ambiguous setting that focused attention on the actors themselves. Katherine's French was replaced by the Chorus' Essex twang as she strode to the centre of the stage and unleashed her rage. Though her accent located the Epilogue within the contemporary realm of Flat World, the actors around her appeared as undefined figures into which all of the play's women could be imagined, affecting a form of the 'unlocalised' stage space discussed by Heinemann and Bennett, in which 'immediate' and 'remote' feminine experiences could be brought 'into confrontation' (1985: 232). Through this, Katherine's nonconsent came to stand for the nonconsent of women across the historic and contemporary settings represented in 'The Breach'.

Though the masculine violence figured in our version of Shakespeare's Great King remained influential in the Epilogue's textual and visual adaptation, his physical banishment from the stage in this final moment placed the power of his definition in the hands of the women and non-binary people who remained present. As her rage abated and was replaced with a mixture of mourning and triumph, the Chorus' took strength from declaring:

> Henry is dead, and never shall revive.
> Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace:
> Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms,
> Since arms avail not now that Henry's gone.
>
> (Appendix 3.2: 57)

The reconfigured lines (separate from each other in *Henry VI Part 1*) placed Henry at the beginning and end of this path to ending imperial and gendered violence envisioned by the Chorus. In drawing attention to England's future under Henry VI, *Henry V*'s original Epilogue anticipates – while at once recalling – the bloodshed viewed by early modern audiences in Shakespeare's first tetralogy. In doing so, Shakespeare creates a disrupted sense of closure, projecting an image of the future and acknowledging the open-endedness of the play's history. Though the Epilogue in 'The Breach' preserved this projection, it extended the time the Chorus took to reach her turning point from present to future (from the four lines in Shakespeare's Epilogue to nineteen in 'The Breach'). With this, space was created within the

adaptation's dramaturgy that allowed audiences to sit with the discomfort of "wooing scene" before permitting its closure. It's ending on the lines, 'Posterity, await for wretched years, / Our isle be a nourish of salt tears, / And none but women left to wail the dead,' preserved the effect of the play's original structure in reminding the audience that the conflict was not yet over (Appendix 3.2: 57). Yet the Chorus' call upon future generations to 'await for wretched years' fixed her attention on an imagined future beyond this, where people of all genders and classes might be free from violent kingship (1.1.48). In doing so, the Epilogue's structure was repurposed for this closing image of hope and the resistance that might be wielded through it.

Conclusion

The adaptations aimed to disrupt the centrality of Shakespeare's kings by interrogating their roles as violent centres around which hegemonic narratives and narratives of hegemonic victory are constructed in performances of the second tetralogy. An analysis of the violent kingship and violent masculinities in the plays through the lens of Connell's masculinities provided the foundation for an application of this and other sociological theories in the adaptation, direction and performance of 'Fall of Kings', 'Between the Armies' and 'The Breach.' The dramatic process gave rise to practices of recharacterisation and re-embodiment through experimentations with sociologically-informed textual and visual dramaturgies, casting, theatrical gender performance, and experimentations with setting. Our attempts at reimagining hierarchies in the plays activated considerations of how power operates through space, bodies, expectations, divisions of emotional labour, and centrality in theatre and performance practice. The process generated new knowledge of how issues of gender, sexuality, race, class and authority might be negotiated in the rehearsal and performance of Shakespeare, and how this might help *re*negotiate dynamics of power between director, actor, character and audience. Considering instances of these negotiations from across the three productions, this conclusion will reflect on the process of adapting Shakespeare in early twenty-first century contexts, detailing a sociological approach to staging and performing the second tetralogy plays.

By critiquing and adapting the gendered physicalities, acts, and semiotics of Richard and Bolingbroke in 'Fall of Kings', Underwood and Eccleston's performances disrupted the integrity of the dichotomy between violent masculinity and passive femininity. In doing so, Bolingbroke's violent outbursts could be seen to stem from a stereotypically feminine lack of control over his emotions, coupled with an inability to communicate beyond his use of bodily force. His banishment and the resulting conflict arose from the stringent emotional repression exerted by the masculine codes of the playworld, upheld by Richard and obstructing any form of open communication, or nonviolent resolution, between them. While Bolingbroke's body presented a conventional image of hegemonic warrior masculinity, the aspects of his personality that disrupted the integrity of this gendered identity were subject to reprimand and ridicule. Outwardly Bolingbroke's emotions manifested as anger, interpreted by Eccleston as a displacement of 'kinetic energy' from the feelings of vulnerability and anxiety the situations he found himself in gave rise to (Appendix 4.1, p.10). As anger is

conventionally considered a masculine emotion (in that it is an emotion commonly acceptable for men to express) it could be argued that Eccleston's portrayal did not actually constitute feminisation. Rather it captured an aspect of masculine experience in which forms of emotional expression must be "quashed," while physical violence is encouraged.

With the production's exploration of how audience sympathy might be aligned with Richard to disrupt the acceptability of his victimisation, Bolingbroke's feminisation and his condemnation in the Narrator's gaze unintentionally reinforced the opposition to feminine power. In doing so it missed a vital opportunity to revoke the scrutiny to which feminine characters are often subject in performances of *Richard II*, perpetuating a negative view of feminine-coded expression. Our intervention did, however, disrupt the victorious aspects of Bolingbroke's narrative. The disruption appeared to occur both in the narrative of his ascension to the throne itself, which was clouded by unwillingness and guilt, and the view of his "evilness" that suggested a perception of Bolingbroke in line with the tyranny usually attributed to Richard.

Responding to these observations in 'Between the Armies', Rumour's narration presented a critical view of hegemonic violence that was shared by various characters throughout the play. The strategic placement of her interjections attempted to guide attitudes to the characters as the play progressed. The collective resistance of the show's Queer, Black and female characters amplified Henry IV's isolation, contributing to a characterisation of his kingship as a reign of violent oppression aimed at anyone who might contest his dominance. The adaptation presented Hal's inheritance of the throne as a coinciding inheritance of violent masculinity, building on language in the *Henry IV*s that illustrates Hal's commitment to the honour-bound ideologies upheld by his father. The physicalisation of Henry's abuse and its mirroring in Hal's murder of Hotspur made visible the connection between these acts and the performance of violence through which his redemption is attained. Though Hotspur's death did not entirely negate his subsummation into the narrative of Hal's kingship, the refiguring of this journey as a tragic surrender disrupted the view of Hal's supposed greatness. Hotspur remained an object of mourning, but the scripting that placed Kate's remembrance of him into the scene following his death transformed his role in the dramaturgy of Hal's character arc to one of resistance, co-opting his memory for disruption rather than the underpropping of hegemonic victory.

In 'The Breach', Withey's characterisation of Pistol as a young working-class soldier who could be seen to rebel against the military masculinity required of him rejected conventional narratives of indoctrination which glorify culturally condoned violence in representations of contemporary warfare. With the creation of Flat World, the production's reframing of the militaristic violence in *Henry V* through a working-class gaze exposed the disempowerment and exploitation of subordinate characters in which the play's representations of masculinity are rooted. Pistol's decision to turn cutpurse towards the end of the play appeared as a subverted right of passage, in which he could be seen to reject the corrupt moral principles that many young male characters in both Shakespeare and contemporary media are shown to accept. In contrast to Hal's commitment to violent masculinity in 'Between the Armies', the disruption of this convention in Pistol's character arc in 'The Breach' presented an inversion of the narratives that obscure alternative pathways toward non-violence for boys and men.

Drawing on Darren McGarvey's challenging of this rhetoric in relation to underclass experience in *Poverty Safari* (2017), the approach to world and character development offered windows into the vulnerability of young working- and underclass men generated through the Othering projection of harmful stereotypes. The combined use of this material and the collaborative imagining of the Flat World characters' lives and backgrounds helped normalise conversations around lived experiences of economic hardship, educational barriers, and social pressures associated with class in the rehearsal room. Withey's remarks about the shame associated with his class identity prior to 'The Breach' suggest that the working-class-led approach contributed to a disruption of the stigmas that give rise to feelings of inferiority or non-belonging. The development process offered space for Withey to accept and explore aspects of his class experience, reinforcing its value and allowing him to guide its use in decisions around character and narrative representation in the production.

The representation of Shakespeare's kings throughout the adaptations ironically became not about the kings themselves but rather the characters around them, and the actors that interpreted their actions. In doing so the productions succeeded in decentring Shakespeare's kings in the decisive action around which characters should and should not hold space and respect within the second tetralogy narratives. The negative attitude toward violence that pervaded our representations of the adaptations contributed to a proposition that violence itself, though it has been postulated as an inherent trait of masculinity, is ungendered. Regardless of Bolingbroke's feminisation, Hal's queering, Hotspur's re-racialisation, or

Henry V's working-classness, the sociological approach to performance contributed to the presentation of their actions as responses to the environments and ideological frameworks in which they were immersed.

Disruptive bodies

With the re-characterisation and re-embodiment of various characters in the adaptations came different views and approaches to their rehearsal and staging. Most significant for the actors involved in the productions, the reimagining of their characters activated an adjusted view of how their bodies operated in performance. Eccleston's exploration of Bolingbroke's physicality encouraged him to consider the dissonance between his character's embodied and emotional interiority, and how it was interpreted by others, altering his ideas of masculinity and male power. Most interesting in moments when he chose to play with feminine-coded body language, Eccleston stated, 'was still having the power' (Appendix 4.1, p.12). He recalled the scene in which Richard handed over his crown after a drawn-out tirade against everyone around him (4.1) and how few lines Bolingbroke had. He acknowledged that while he would generally interpret silence as power, Bolingbroke's power didn't come from a place of 'thinking and brooding' but from one of 'I don't know what to say and if I say something I'm gonna hurt someone's feelings and I don't want them to not like me' (Appendix 4.1, p.6).

Not only did Eccleston's consideration of gendered physicality and verbality inform his character development, it also led to a shift in his consideration of the gender performance of others. Finding the 'otherworldliness' in Bolingbroke's movement led him to consider more deeply what he and others might find 'uncomfortable' about physicalities that break gender conventions (Appendix 4.1, p.12). The power Bolingbroke's silence and otherworldliness carried in performance, and in Eccleston's reflections on it, offered an insight into possible differences between how masculinity is viewed and reacted to, and how it is experienced.

In Withey's discussion of the contrasting forms of power held by his characters in 'The Breach', he reflected on a fight scene between the High Constable and Gibbs' Boy: 'He's probably stronger than me but also [...] I've got reach. If I've got a knife in my hand, thinking practically, I had the power in that situation, but Constable didn't feel like he had the power. He was panicked, he was scared' (Appendix 4.3, p.10). His reflection signified an awareness

of the contrasting forms of physical, political, and psychological power at play in the moment. While the Constable's power came from his position in the French nobility, Pistol's came from his willingness to engage in battle and his 'not being afraid to die' (Appendix 4.3, p.13). Pistol took power from his exposure to violence as a young working-class man, and his eventual rejection of military masculinity represented a claiming of the agency his disenfranchisement – ironically – made possible. Withey's youth enabled the presentation of Pistol's rejection as a mirror to Hal's at the end of 'Between the Armies'; while Hal had committed to the violent masculinity required of him, Pistol refused it, presenting an alternative path to conformity and self-sacrifice. Withey's work on 'The Breach' was the first time power had been presented to him in a way that 'wasn't just power. It was power going into class and going into gender and going into age' (Appendix 4.3, p.17). By detaching Pistol from the ancientness with which he is associated in the text, Withey's casting disrupted the assumption that young working-class men are inherently violent, and that they have no control over the direction their lives take. Through the compassion-centred approach to the production, Withey was able to perceive his personal power in relation to his age, his body, his gender, and his class identity, infusing Pistol with the same sense of agency and empowerment he gained in the process.

Just as our interrogation of power in relation to the body opened up new avenues in the actors' performances, it also exposed hidden gendered practices surrounding the consideration and treatment of the body in theatre development. In 'Between the Armies', as the emphasis on Scott's physicality as a key signifier of Falstaff's Queerness emerged, so did a focus on how his body was used in performance. While also paying attention to Falstaff's gestures and body language, as Eccleston did with Bolingbroke, Scott showed a more heightened consideration of his body's visual presence onstage. Scott would arrive at rehearsals with questions such as, do I gain or lose muscle for this role? Do I shave my face or body? Discussions of whether he should grow his facial hair spanned multiple rehearsals, as did the choice of drink for his pitcher (Figure 2.1) and he was intensely conscious of not straying into caricature. Our deliberations highlighted the extent to which many multilayered aspects of gender performance often remain unexplored in the practice of male actors.

Rarely do such character questions come from cisgender male actors. Discussions of how tight costumes should be, whether hair should be tied up or worn down, and what kind of underwear should be worn are commonplace from female or feminine presenting performers,

often connoting ideas of confidence, sexuality or status. When Scott took on the role of York in 'Fall of Kings' just over a year beforehand, the main questions surrounding his costume focused on how it could be used to age him to present a realistic father-son relationship between him and James Leyshon, who played Aumerle (the two actors being around the same age). Scott's attention to the details of Falstaff's bodily presentation, therefore, seemed to arise from our queering of the character. While Falstaff's Queerness enacted a disruption of heterosexual masculine performance, it also widened the scope of consciousness surrounding his portrayal. Scott became aware, or perhaps was simply permitted to express his awareness, around the performed aspects of gender available to his character. Whether arising from Falstaff's own Queer consciousness in the adaptation or from Scott's preexisting understanding of outward expression as a signifier of Queer identity, his awareness contributed to a change in the actor's approach to performance and underlined the potential of the body's resistance to heteronormative masculinity.

Gender and power in the plays are never merely a matter of dramatic logic but constructed through their relation to gender and power in reality. This division between stage and what is beyond it does not exist for actors in the same ways it does for the consumer as their performances are also lived and embodied experiences. As I have explored, contemporary Western actor training and techniques rooted in realism establish the body as a site and instrument of meaning, through which the "truths" of performances must be internalised before they can be projected. With the consistent embodiment of violent narratives, actors are committed to interpretations of their bodies as causes and enactors of this violence. As Bennett urges in her discussion of reimagining historical discourse, asking "what if?" in the context of masculine violence in the plays, together with the willingness to accept unfamiliar or unexpected discoveries surrounding the characters' reactions to violence, not only expanded the interpretations available to the actors but opened channels for discussing their own discomfort with the aggression or victimhood they are habitually asked to portray, relocating Shakespeare's "disembodied wisdom" of humanity in the actors' empirical understandings of their own experiences (Garber in Bennett, 1996: 37).

Across the course of the adaptations, the different approaches to gendered characterisation could be seen to alter conceptualisations, as well as the material and semiotic imagining, of the body in performance. It could be seen to inform understandings of character through the embodied emotional responses to imagined situations, while providing new perspectives on

experiences the actors saw as parallel to their own. Attached to roles, narratives or settings in which certain bodies (young, gay, Black, female, or gender nonconforming) are often absent, embodied and re-embodied exploration could be seen to expand the interpretations of them available to actors. Unleashing the potential of physical action to project identity beyond the predetermined corporeal body, new approaches to characterisation, communication, and aspiration were encouraged, transcending the neutrality of the hegemonic masculine body in performance.

Emotional labour, performance and consent

While the focus on gender performance was freeing for many of the adaptations' male actors, for others it served to intensify the limitations of their bodies and gendered roles. Our explorations of violent interplays among the characters laid bare the second tetralogy's dependence on traumatic cycles of oppression and dominance as the basis for representing masculine relationships. In rehearsals, questions repeatedly arose around the emotional impact of such traumatic relations on the characters and their possible effect on audiences. With these questions came discussions of the psychological and embodied reactions through which these effects might be experienced, inevitably touching on the experiences of the actors themselves. With the attempt to expose the violence in the plays through its re-embodiment and detachment from white male neutrality, issues of unequal emotional and often physical labour in the processes of rehearsal and performance emerged. In performance practice, it is often taken for granted that actors will assume the imagined realities, experiences, psychologies, body politics, and histories of characters, but with the varying weight of these understandings this work is often unequally distributed. For many of the actors involved in the productions, the work involved placing themselves in the positions of characters affected by extreme violence. The rehearsal process involved not only additional physical labour in the form of extended fight calls and repetitive exercises in sustained states of tension but also the emotional strain of engaging with narratives of homophobia, racial hostility and misogyny.

Malloy in particular attempted on multiple occasions, both during and after her work on 'Between the Armies', to verbalise the experience of taking on the Douglas as a regendered role. The actor's journal kept throughout her involvement in the production offered a detailed

insight into her character research and reflections on the rehearsal process. In her notes surrounding Kate's isolation and how heightening Rumour's seductive feminine qualities affected the character's confidence 'in her right to be angry,' Malloy returned repeatedly to ideas of the cisgender female body as a 'liability.' Presented as a woman forced into the masculine arena of battle against her will by the abduction of her son, Douglas' body was first and foremost a 'tool' for the enactment of motherhood; and as a young wife at the mercy of her husband's military escapades, Malloy saw Kate's as a symbol of her lack of self-possession. In an interview, Malloy returned to the subject again in reference to the Douglas:

> She blames herself for having a female body and therefore being seen as weak, so she does everything she can to be *not* seen as weak. And that takes having to be stronger and more violent and aggressive and bloodthirsty than any man.
>
> (Appendix 4.5, p.10-11)

Discussing Douglas' lack of autonomy in relation to Kate's voicelessness, Malloy described how she 'wanted [Kate] to stand up for herself and say something,' but also knew 'what it felt like to be in that space, especially in the scene with Glendower – how scared she is in that scene. And almost this kind of embarrassment with the fear' (Appendix 4.5, p.6). Her characters' disempowerment served as a frequent reminder of 'the dangers of being in a female body' in male-majority spaces, compromising the sense of agency and safety she felt in rehearsals. In performances of Shakespeare's histories, where non-male characters are so often relegated to the peripheries of performance, the actors portraying them have little control over how the scenic action plays out. Much in the way that performed violence translated to a sense of discomfort for Katebe and Scott, Malloy's awareness of her characters' physical and psychological lack of autonomy generated similar feelings of powerlessness, connected to a perceived weakness of her body.

Though Katebe and Scott's characters were predominantly central to the scenes they shared together, the casting decisions that placed them in roles requiring performances of extreme aggression revoked, to some extent, their ability to determine this aspect of their portrayals themselves. Particularly for Katebe, the production did not only evoke discomfort but presented a racialised image of the violence between Hotspur and Hal that was not initially volunteered. In Silverstone's discussion of Doran's *Titus Andronicus* (1995), which

played into histories of racial oppression 'in the wake of South Africa's first democratic post-apartheid elections,' she questions 'whether those concerned consented to the use of their testimony' (2011: 46). In 'The Breach', the actor-led approach to character and world building activated a process by which Withey and Hardwell could voluntarily engage with their class backgrounds, exploring aspects of their experiences that *they* deemed relevant to their performances.

In 'Between the Armies', Katebe's singularity as the only Black actor in the production and the narrative that formed around the attempted acknowledgement of this fact denied him the privilege of opting into the representation of his character's marginality. Creating an environment in which Katebe could lead explorations of Black masculinity, collaboratively navigated through active consent-seeking, might more effectively have avoided the effects of white directorial hegemony that can exacerbate this lack of privilege. By acknowledging actors' ownership of their lived and embodied experiences in 'The Breach', the approach established an intentioned practice of permissibility, creating space for self-actualisation and the transfer of power in the rehearsal room. With the application of such practices in work with all underrepresented and marginalised artists, creative processes have the potential to set a precedent for individuals like Malloy or Katebe to take power from their lived and embodied experiences, contributing to further disruptions of hegemonic representation and authority.

As Silverstone's study of contemporary Shakespeares demonstrates, trauma can arise from repetitive images in performance and media. Performances of Western masculinity that reiterate hegemonic male dominance continue to inform men and boys of how they should navigate the world, limiting the perceivability of nonviolent action. When emotional repression and aggression are repeatedly celebrated in representations of masculinity, such behaviours are normalised as the means by which validation or security may be sought. Such norms can become increasingly difficult to break from without equally prevalent views of how their rejection might be possible. Across the course of the adaptations, the approaches to narratives of hegemonic victory led to a realisation that there were more powerful forms of disruption than simply condemning or disregarding characters (and men) on the basis of their violence. Rather, it was through a humanistic approach to performances that furthered understandings of what could be seen to drive their actions and empowered them with

alternative paths to those required of them by 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist [heteronormative] patriarchy' in the worlds of the plays (hooks, 2004: 71).

Prominent among the rhetorics that emerged in our attempts to counter the violence in the plays was the message that male journeys – or those of any individual – toward escaping violence do not have to be made alone. At the close of 'The Breach', when Dickinson levelled her gaze at the audience, her expression begged them to acknowledge the weight of the scene to which they had borne witness. While her glances at the women around her made clear the Epilogue's call for feminine solidarity, the rousing anger she aimed at the audience included them all, regardless of gender:

> Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace:
> Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms,
> Since arms avail not now that Henry's gone.
> Posterity, await for wretched years,
> Our isle be a nourish of salt tears,
> And none but women left to wail the dead.
>
> (Appendix 3.2, p.57)

Her calls to future generations promised an end to fates like Katherine's, her final line a warning of what might happen should nothing change. In these moments, the Chorus – and the company – found solidarity in mutual rage, depicted in the image of the four women onstage that echoed scenes of unity across the three productions in Eastcheap (Figure 2.2), Nell's apartment (Figure 3.3) and the French camp (Figure 3.1). Whereas Hal had abandoned his community in Eastcheap and many of the soldiers were lost or betrayed by their comrades in arms, the Chorus drew the women around her close, building their unity around resistance to a common enemy. As the lights faded to black, the image of violent kingship depicted throughout the plays was banished, ending with a battlecry testifying to the strength, connectedness and power of femininity.

Disruption, centrality and directorial intervention

In setting out to narratively decentre Shakespeare's kings, the project perhaps more accurately managed to disrupt the function of their centrality across the adaptations. The project's response to representations of violent masculinity and kingship in post-1980's performances inadvertently configured the interventions posed by adaptation, direction and performance in relation to these images. This approach risks what Heinemann and Brecht warn against in that it may excessively concentrate performance's 'interest and causation' in a single central character, affecting a 'magnetisation of the audience so that its own powers of judgement are paralysed' (1985: 239). Yet, though Shakespeare's kings remained epicentres of violence, through them the productions were able to draw attention to this violence as a mode by which gendered power is circulated and enacted in the plays. In doing so, centrality is refunctioned as a device with which to point to violent centres from standpoints that lie beyond them, reactivating the margins as spaces where this perspective power may be displaced to. More so than decentring the kings themselves, the adaptations enacted a shift in how their centrality may be utilised to reconstitute the relationships among characters, actors and audiences to underscore or alienate from conventional forms of characterisation and narrative through which violent kingship is accepted and hegemonised.

While there is still a place for conventional productions that "preserve" the plays' Shakespearean forms for the purposes of their historical and cultural record, there is no avoidance of the fact that convention in itself acts to barricade access to past, present and new interpretations. As Butler points out and Bennett acknowledges in the context of Shakespeare's reception, 'past conventions' are constituted through their investment with 'the political power to signify the future' (Butler, 1993: 220). Aughterson and Grant Ferguson's discussion of Andoh and Linton's *Richard II* demonstrates the extent to which seemingly simple traditions like black-painted performance spaces, many of which have emerged from aspirations to certain dramatic effects, work to produce violent or exclusionary by-products for marginalised or non-majoritive others. Just as spaces may be configured as places of safety or unsafety, practice may also project impressions of openness or hostility. To prioritise convention over the people it may work to alienate is therefore to accept this violent effect.

During Katebe's preparation for 'Between the Armies', his apprehensions about the audience's lack of understanding or negative reactions should he draw attention to his

character's race point to an anxiety about more overt hostilities. The pressure of audience and critical reception, especially in the contexts of work with canonical texts, poses a major challenge in the contemporary adaptation, direction and performance of Shakespeare. Increasingly, the "anti-woke" backlash associated in its most aggressive forms with Far Right movements in the West poses a danger to the economic and human safety of dramatic productions. Expectations of hostile reception can work against attempts to construct the safety in rehearsal spaces essential to bringing political or counter-hegemonic performances into being. Negotiating expectations of reception in the creation of feminist theatres is to tread a fine line between acceptable and unacceptable forms of disruption. As Scott expresses in his discussion of Falstaff's exaggerated gentleness, responses to masculinity are often a conscious navigation of anticipated violence (Appendix 2.3: 00.07.29). It is not only women and Queer individuals that do so; Harry Brod states that 'for a man to admit that he has questions about masculinity is already to admit that he has failed at masculinity,' and it is through this hegemonic mechanism that systems of gender hold power over us all (2002: 162).

As hooks and Brod suggest, engaging hegemonic and superordinate groups in the work of feminism begins by reckoning with the practices that hold systems of power in place. In allowing performance to be limited by this control, which dictates that narratives and images of masculinity must perpetuate the culturally conditioned formats entrenched in historic canons and dramatic traditions, we exclude men from the possibility of redefining and rerepresenting themselves. The narrative centrality of Shakespeare's kings is a device by which the perspectives of these characters, and the historically and culturally specific perspectives they represent, become the dominant ones through which we understand the action in the plays, and by which other characters are defined. Through its consistency across Western culture, this dominant perspective is rendered invisible. By this same logic, the violence inherent in the second tetralogy's depiction of acceptable masculinity and authority appears normal and justifiable, especially when wielded to defend positions of dominance.

Though the adaptations aimed to overturn the apparently inherent nature of this violence, it remained a demarcation of hypermasculine forms of gender presentation in Bolingbroke and Henry IV's physical intimidation, and in Henry V's exertion of military force. This is not to say that the adaptations did not succeed in depicting images of kings who did not wish to exercise violence. Bolingbroke's was the result of martial conditioning and a cultural

emotional repression that other characters, including Richard, were active in maintaining; whereas Henry V's arose from a desperation to prove his monarchic, and masculine, legitimacy. Yet, as Brod posits, 'the unmarkedness of the superordinate is precisely the mark of their dominance' (2002: 166). With the unavoidable nature of their violence came a clear visibility of Shakespeare's kings as agents in whose conflicts it is born and through whose authority it is projected onto others. Though they remained at the centre of the adaptations' narratives, the relational framework underpinning the adaptation process helped foreground the nature of violence as a practice; one which cannot exist in a vacuum. Though violence may be disembodied, it remains operational through the relations between one social formation and another. As such, setting, casting, characterisation and design choices were informed by the intention to embody disembodied forms of power in the adaptations, making visible the 'broader institutional settings, incentives and norms that surround them' (Tufekci, 2019). These choices were active in forging narratives by which the kings' roles as the originators of violence could be marked by the embodied perspectives of characters who inhabit the plays' margins.

In prioritising these characters in the textual and visual adaptations, the hegemonic gaze of Shakespeare's plays was shifted to an exterior, fragmented perspective. With this, centrality came to be defined by a spotlight effect that exposed the workings of violent power in the plays. This effect, however, was also felt by many of the actors who were required to embody violent masculinities throughout the project and in doing so affected a social rearrangement of the rehearsal space in which masculinity in general, at times, felt under attack. As Pollard's difficulty in reconciling the conflicting versions of Henry V in his performance demonstrates, this feeling can present a barrier to the creative process. It is possible that the experience of embodying sexually violent behaviour evoked feelings of personal blame that make it difficult to view Henry's actions as being 'in opposition to oneself' (Brod, 2002: 168). *Chapter 3* has explored how this form of distancing might work as an 'emotional resource' by which new perspectives and interpretations might be arrived at (Silverstone, 2011: 37). Yet, this exploration must go hand in hand with the creation of safe and emotionally attuned environments in which these realisations can function restoratively rather than traumatically.

There is a danger that, in seeking to stage alienating representations, direction may do so by isolating the actors that perform them and reenact the effects of the very systems that divide genders, races and social classes from one another. McGarvey's account of learning to

take on violence as 'a form of communication' from behaviour he experienced is reflected in Eccleston's internalisation of the "bruiser" and "bully" personas determined for him by assumptions about his body (2017: 4). We must find ways of marking violence without projecting this violence onto specific groups or individuals, and we must do so while ensuring that actors have the resources to differentiate cultural challenges from personal ones. In encouraging actors to consider their bodies and genders in different ways, the project encouraged resistance to the expectations that may be projected onto them. With the permission to lead and individually delve into representations of gender or working-classness, the actors in 'The Breach' could practise autonomy through this process of exploration. The extent to which they might reveal how their personal experiences connected to their interpretations remained within their control. In doing so, the process avoided reproducing the effect of this practice as one whereby the actors might be pressured to offer up their experiences as resources for the show's development.

With the adaptations' progression from one to the next, my direction was able to respond to the need for permissibility, consent-driven practices and dramaturgical interventions that arose in the ones that came before. The process of reflecting on each process, and giving the actors a voice in this reflection, played a major part in bringing these realities to the foreground. This capacity to respond provides a foundation for safety and flexibility in the rehearsal process as well as its outcomes. It can allow directorial motivations and the practices by which they are realised to be guided by a cultural, political and personal awareness of issues presented by central themes, performance contexts or casting decisions. If we are to stage feminist or otherwise politically charged theatre, we must acknowledge what this means for the actors whose bodies must bear the weight of producers', directors', critics' and (perhaps long gone) playwrights' decisions. We must understand that those bodies bear other weights beyond their responsibilities to the texts or creative process. And we must acknowledge the fallibility of our own standpoints.

In utilising masculinities in the rehearsal room, actors were given a framework by which to explore their own relations to gender that might then be used in their characterisation, rather than imposing assumptions that may be specific to my own experience. As such, performances of power in the adaptations appeared to hinge less upon the misuse or corrupting influence of royal authority, as has been of critical interest in *Richard II* in particular, and more on the expectation that such authority should be exercised through

violence. The origins of these meanings make them no less important than Shakespeare's own would have been to early modern audiences; they simply speak to more tangible dilemmas and anxieties that prove the texts' continued relevance in present conversions about gender and power. By bringing contemporary concerns of gender, sexuality, race and class to bear through adaptation, the original meanings in the plays may be distorted. The cultural and historic specificity of the masculinities Shakespeare represents may be lost, replaced by a different set of assumptions and images. Yet, as this study has considered extensively, these contemporary notions are at work regardless of whether or not the plays remain intact. They continue to act upon performers of Shakespeare through the historically specific consciousness of audiences and thus can never be escaped in their entirety.

Worthen finds that in contemporary performance practice, 'the Author works to legitimate "meanings" that are in fact constructed as the effect of our own ways of reading, thinking, acting, producing texts as plays' (1996: 25). He observes that 'when describing their work, actors [...] represent their activity onstage as a conversation with authority,' an effect produced by 'modern theories of acting' that define a 'contestatory relation between Actor and Author' (1996: 19-20). Under this authority, actors must qualify their performances and the interpretations inferred in them. The critical resistance to Shakespeare's altering contributes to an anxiety surrounding negative reception and pressure on actors to deliver performances that avoid the 'criminal other'-ness Kidnie observes in the discourses around adaptation (2009: 23). Yet through adaptation, the texts might be delivered to actors as already unfixed entities; that is, unfixed from their apparent stability as objects of Shakespearean authority. As I have considered in relation to the retitling of 'Fall of Kings', 'Between the Armies' and 'The Breach', in making explicit its interventions in the process of engaging the texts, adaptation might disrupt the authority of the Author – or that of self-appointed authorities – before the actors come into play. In this way, adaptation might intervene to shield actors from (unconstructive) exterior authority and assume the responsibility of qualifying performance.

Through this process, centrality comes to function again in a different way: one through which authority may remain fluid and in motion throughout the creative process. As *Chapter 3* has explored in the context of how shared knowing may be wielded to create safety in rehearsal spaces, representations may be shaped around the act of consensually making the private meanings of a text known in order to bring new subjectivities to light. When this

process may not feel safe, or appropriate (as it did not in the context of the work on working-class identities with non-working-class actors in 'The Breach'), directors may draw on their own empirical understandings as foundations for these representations. In letting ourselves be central in this way, directors can create a framework by which actors might engage with the lived and embodied experience of consenting others, and perhaps eventually allow themselves to become central. We create a space for appearance between ourselves and actors, as well as between ourselves and the subjects in the text. Allowing the adaptation of 'The Breach' to be guided by an intention to draw out stories of feminine, Queer and working-class experience laid traces of the personal meanings of these identities throughout the script, onto which the actors could layer their own interpretations. This unfixed, flexible flow of centrality throughout the rehearsal room enables focus to shift between characters, creatives, themes, and wider contexts. Though Shakespeare's kings may remain central to the adaptations' narratives, through the application of sociological frameworks, centrality itself may be made plural, rejecting and disrupting hegemonic powers of determination.

Shakespeare's plays, at least while they remain an integral part of actor training and one of the few royalty-free resources available to emerging theatre-makers, are unlikely to cease being performed entirely. Even now, when attempts at decolonisation and anti-racist practice by prominent organisations, such as Shakespeare's Globe, repeatedly draw questions of whether we should continue to stage plays like *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*, they continue to be produced in the hope of finding acceptable frameworks for engaging with their anti-Black and antisemitic tenets. Yet not to do this work, or to remain disengaged from issues of the friction between canonical texts and the ideological outlooks of modern consumers and critics, may be as damaging to the future of the plays' preservation as it is to their Black or Jewish audiences.

The meanings of the plays remain fixed only when those *to whom* they mean do so. As *Chapter 3* has observed in the context of post-MeToo *Henry V*s, with social progression, the ideological ruptures constituted in performances of historic texts become increasingly violent. Yet, as Connell posits, 'violence [...] can open possibilities for progress' (1995: 84). As they do even now, the plays may at some point fail to satisfy attempts to make them comply or coexist with contemporary sensibilities. As the ideological outlooks and objectives of theatre-makers and audiences alter, so will adaptation and so will the capacities in which we are able to engage the texts. This progress, however, relies on the exploration that only a

willingness to adapt, deviate from, disrupt or "lose" Shakespeare will potentiate. Bennett draws (with a hint of irony) on Michael Bristol (1990) to acknowledge that "saying forbidden things about Shakespeare" or *with* Shakespeare is unlikely to transform the politics of its perception or operation (1996: 29). Yet the authorisation of further action through the act of speaking to or on behalf of actors or audiences – in ways that avoid appropriation – can utilise privilege and power as a means of reconstituting forbiddenness as possibility.

Notes on the Appendices

Appendices are arranged into folders by production, containing videos, scripts that include a list of cast and company, and collections of rehearsal and production photographs. Actor interviews are included in a folder of their own, listed in order of mention within the thesis. Where possible, my descriptions of onstage action in the productions, post-show discussions or other content in the appendices aim to provide enough detail to make viewing non-compulsory. Where viewing is necessary to understand the points being made, I have included timestamps or page numbers to direct to the moments under discussion.

Production videos

Videos of 'Fall of Kings' (1.1) at Burdall's Yard and 'The Breach' (3.1) at The Rondo Theatre were recorded during performances before public audiences in Bath, UK. The video of 'Between the Armies' (2.1) was recorded during a dress rehearsal of the show, also at the Rondo Theatre, prior to public performances. The recordings have been edited, with cuts to the start, interval and end of the performances to limit the inclusion of audiences where possible. Due to the nature of the equipment that was available during the project, the quality of some videos is significantly lower than others. While not essential, the production videos are intended to serve as precursors to the written reflection, offering a chronological way of observing the project's practical aspects.

Scripts

The scripts for 'Fall of Kings' (1.2), 'Between the Armies' (2.2) and 'The Breach' (3.2) were adapted from the Arden Shakespeare Third Series editions of the plays, from which all Shakespeare quotations in the thesis are taken. Where useful to address the adaptations' deviation from the Third Series editions, I have included references to the relevant appendices alongside citations of the texts. Each script contains a list of cast and company, including the roles they fulfilled for reference.

Post-show discussions

Post-show discussions with public audiences followed selected performances of 'Between the Armies' (2.3 and 2.4) and 'The Breach' (3.3 and 3.4), which contributed to the dissemination and dialogues with the public audiences who attended. The audio recordings were converted from videos of the discussions to protect the identities of audiences. Due to technical

difficulties, the audio of "Between the Armies post-show discussion – part 2" (2.4) is incomplete as the recording was cut off towards the end of the discussion.

Rehearsal and production photographs

Rehearsal and production photographs have been recreated with permission from the photographers and subjects. Unless otherwise stated in the titles of appendices or figures, the copyrights for all photographs are held by C.J. Turner-McMullan.

Transcripts of actor interviews

Where relevant, I have included transcripts of interviews conducted with actors to provide context for quotations included in the thesis. The transcripts are semi-verbatim, with inaudible or irrelevant interjections removed and the names of individuals or projects unrelated to the study redacted. These cuts are noted in the transcripts with the use of ellipses in square brackets. The interviews were carried out in place of a live event that was unable to go ahead due to Covid-19, which would have taken the form of a final showcase and discussion with the actors from all three productions. As in-person events were not possible due to government guidelines, the interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom with the permission of the actors.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Fall of Kings

1.1 *Fall of Kings* (2017) Dir. C.J. Turner-McMullan. [Burdall's Yard, Bath. 23 March]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25408132.

1.2 Turner-McMullan, C.J. (2017) 'Fall of Kings.' [Unpublished]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25408471.

1.3 Terry, E. featuring Gabrielle Finnegan (vocalist) (2017) *Narrator's Theme*, MP3 audio. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25408513.

1.4 'Fall of Kings' rehearsal and production photographs. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25408558.

Appendix 2: Between the Armies

2.1 *Between the Armies* (2018) Dir. C.J. Turner-McMullan. [Dress rehearsal, Rondo Theatre, Bath. 20 September]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25420939.

2.2 Turner-McMullan, C.J. (2018) 'Between the Armies.' [Unpublished]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25423228.

2.3 Turner-McMullan, C.J. featuring the cast of 'Between the Armies', "Between the Armies post-show discussion – part 1." Rondo Theatre, 21 September 2018, MP3 audio.

2.4 Turner-McMullan, C.J. featuring the cast of 'Between the Armies, "Between the Armies post-show discussion – part 2" [incomplete]. Rondo Theatre, 21 September 2018, MP3 audio.

2.5 'Between the Armies' rehearsal and production photographs. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25423372.

Appendix 3: The Breach

3.1 *The Breach* (2019) Dir. C.J. Turner-McMullan. [Rondo Theatre, Bath. 29 June]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25423474.

3.2 Turner-McMullan, C.J. (2018) 'The Breach.' [Unpublished]. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25428745.

3.3 Turner-McMullan, C.J. featuring the cast of 'The Breach', "The Breach post-show discussion – part 1." Rondo Theatre, 29 June 2019, MP3 audio.

3.4 Turner-McMullan, C.J. featuring the cast of ‘The Breach’, “The Breach post-show discussion – part 2.” Rondo Theatre, 29 June 2019, MP3 audio.

3.5 ‘The Breach’ rehearsal and production photographs. DOI: 10.17870/bathspa.25428925.

Appendix 4: Actor interviews

4.1 Eccleston, R. (2020) ‘Playing Bolingbroke in Fall of Kings’. Zoom interview with Russell Eccleston. Interviewed by C.J. Turner-McMullan, 20 April.

4.2 Katebe, N. (2020) ‘Playing Hotspur in Between the Armies’. Zoom interview Njeko Katebe. Interviewed by C.J. Turner-McMullan, 26 August.

4.3 Withey, P.J. (2021) ‘Playing Pistol and the High Constable in The Breach’. Zoom Interview with Patrick James Withey. Interview by C.J. Turner-McMullan, 23 February.

4.4 Rhodes, T. (2021) ‘Playing Nym in The Breach’. Zoom interview with Tiffany Rhodes. Interviewed by C.J. Turner-McMullan, 28 March.

4.5 Malloy, E. (2020) ‘Playing Kate, Rumour and Douglas in Between the Armies’. Zoom interview with Emily Malloy. Interviewed by C.J. Turner-McMullan, 18 August.

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