GENDERED LIVES:
PATRIARCHY AND THE MEN AND WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY HISTORY PLAYS

GILLIAN HEATHER ELTON

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GENDERED LIVES: PATRIARCHY AND THE MEN AND WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY HISTORY PLAYS

by

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Abstract

The examination of Shakespeare's Henry VI plays in this thesis, and the consideration given to Richard III in the conclusion, focuses on the assignment of gender-specific roles in patriarchal society, and how any deviation from these roles results in the corrosion of the social order. Assigned arbitrarily, with no consideration given for personality, these roles shape and limit the lives of women and men. In particular, unruly women who attempt to seek power, and the effeminate and weak men who allow them to do so, create situations in which both personal and public tragedies result. This subversion of gender roles causes a spiralling disintegration of the values held and promoted by the patriarchal society, which in turn leads to chaos and anarchy. It is only when gender roles are once again embraced that order can be restored.

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Introduction

Gender enormously impacts the development of an individual. From the earliest age, men and women are socialized to accept and maintain certain characteristics for their sex. As is stated in The Newly Born Woman, "one can no more speak of 'woman' than of 'man' without being trapped within an ideological theater where the proliferation of representations, images, reflections, myths, identifications, transform, deform, constantly change everyone's Imaginary and invalidate in advance any conceptualization" (Cixous and Clement 83). Concepts about the roles that men and women must play dominate the social world, and tied in with these ideas of gender are understandings of power and its distribution between the sexes.

The notion of power and gender being intertwined has been a major element of the work of feminist critics, who have devoted a great deal of time and effort to the examination of how patriarchal society, a society ordered by specific gender roles, has limited the role of women, and the power which they hold. Radtke and Stam begin Power/Gender: Social Relations in Theory and Practice by stating, "power and gender are terms so commonly conjoined that their combined invocation has almost ceased to be indexical" (1). In Of Woman Born, Adrienne Rich describes patriarchy as

> the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men--by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. (57)

The feminist movement has brought into question the legitimacy of a society based on such gender division. As Karlene Faith states, "feminism is both a spontaneous reaction against,

and a strategic resistance to, existing power relations" (47). It has spurred not only a reconsideration of the way in which men and women operate in society, but also a re-examination of the presence of patriarchy, and the oppression of women in literature. As feminist criticism has grown exponentially in the last few decades, it has encouraged a review of texts previously dismissed (largely texts by women), and a re-examination of canonized works.

Irregardless of the backlash feminist theory has received because of its questioning of patriarchy, it is now widely accepted as a legitimate critical approach. Interest in men's studies has also begun to grow, despite Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that "a man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male" (xv). Still, it is a long way from garnering the attention which feminist theory has received. It is undeniable that men's lives have been affected by the expectations placed on them by society. Like women, they are expected to fulfill social roles which are clearly defined, and those who fail to do so receive the censure of society. For both men and women, patriarchal society limits the roles they may play, and the power that they have to shape their own destinies. While patriarchy clearly divides duties and roles based on gender, it is also a hierarchical society in which class is integral. Men of each class may have power over women in their own, and lower, classes, but they remain subordinate to men in higher classes. They may also be subordinate to women of a different class, if fulfilling roles as servants, or, in the case of England's Queen Elizabeth I, courtiers. Literature serves as an important vehicle through which questions of gender may be examined. For any critic

interested in questions of gender roles, the plays of the Renaissance provide ample material for investigation.

Shakespeare's plays are a perfect source for an analysis of the role gender plays in the lives of both men and women, as portrayed through literature (drama). In recent years, there has been an explosion of feminist interest in Shakespeare's plays. The histories, the comedies, the tragedies, and the romances have all provided fodder for those interested in the examination of literary texts in light of the feminist movement. The work of such critics as Marilyn French, Phyllis Rackin, Lisa Jardine, Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, Coppélia Kahn and Angela Pitt, has raised questions about the presentation of women, and the roles they have and are expected to fulfill within the plays--as mothers, wives, queens, friends, and daughters. These critics have developed an entirely new way to examine the plays by Shakespeare. Using feminist criticism, they have examined the experiences of female characters (hitherto largely ignored), thereby exposing alternatively the female characters' weaknesses and strengths, their tragedies and joys, and the limitations and advantages women experience. While some feminist critics have chosen to explore how Shakespeare's presentation of women was advanced for his time, others have highlighted points which they feel illustrate Shakespeare's conventional Renaissance stance on the gender issue. There has, however, been little written by those interested in men's studies--yet the plays provide just as much information for an examination of men's lives, and how they are affected by patriarchal society, as they do for women's lives.

This thesis will examine the impact that patriarchal society has had upon the lives

of the men and women of Shakespeare's early history plays. Women must be subservient, quiet, and unobtrusive; men must be dominant, strong, leaders. Kelso describes the desirable qualities of a woman in the Renaissance as encompassing beauty, humility, sweetness, simplicity, peaceableness, kindness, piety, temperance, obedience, patience, and charitableness (23-24). Hall, describing Margaret of Anjou's deficiencies, also highlights what is desirable in a woman, echoing the same characteristics as other writers of the time--shamefastness, pity, and womanly behaviour--the latter referring to avoiding evil judgement and the causes of slander (T3v).

During the late medieval and renaissance periods there was an ongoing debate about the nature of women, and their role in society. In a series of theoretical arguments, the two opposing sides emerged. Some detractors argued that women were, by nature, inferior to men. They characterized women as less intelligent than men, prone to evil, and untrustworthy. Women's defenders, both male and female, argued that women were admirable creatures, who deserved respect. Both sides used historical and mythical examples of women to support their arguments. Woman's detractors repeatedly focussed on her weakness and instability. John Knox, in his tract The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women (1558), characterizes women as weak, frail, impatient, feeble, foolish, inconstant, and cruel (12). He also calls them imprudent and soft (24). Other male writers convey similar thoughts. Even the supporters of women place limitations on the appropriate roles women can play.

Thomas Elyot, in The Defence of Good Women (1545), essentially creates a

debate between a misogynist and a supporter of women, called Caninus and Candidus respectively. In this debate, Caninus expresses the popular arguments used against women, while Candidus refutes them. Zenobia joins them to help Candidus change Caninus's mind. The representation of Zenobia is particularly interesting because of the virtues she personifies. While she is a queen, one who managed to rule after the death of her husband, the ideals of womanhood she fulfills are explicitly presented. First of all, she repeatedly states that she feels uncomfortable out at night, and she is nervous to be away from home so late. When she talks about the education she received, she focuses on the advantages it brought to her husband. She states that it made her a better wife, and that she never did anything to displease her husband (D3v). In particular, her education enabled her to preserve her chastity, that most highly valued of feminine virtues. Caninus finally acknowledges that a properly educated woman *might* be able to equal men in their constancy and fidelity.

The importance placed on chastity is stressed again and again throughout the literature. Kelso states that "it is already obvious that every consideration from the first turns upon the central demand of chastity, the virtue of woman, so judged by women as well as men" (42). Tilney, in his Flower of Friendship (1573), discusses the virtues of marriages, and the roles and duties that a woman should fulfill. First and foremost, a woman should be chaste:

> For the happinesse of matrimonie, doth consist in a chaste matrone, so that if suche a woman be conjoyned in true, and unfayned love, to hir beloved spouse, no doubt their lyves shall be stable, easie, sweete, joufull, and happy. (128)

A good wife should also be obedient, and shamefast, she should stay at home and never be idle, and she should always honour her husband. Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance, by Ruth Kelso, Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England by Louis B. Wright, Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Women, 1540-1620 by Linda Woodbridge, and Chaste Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640, by Suzanne Hull, all provide insight into the formal controversy over women, and also provide insight into the literature (plays, poems, ballads, and satires) which revealed the general virtues associated with womanhood. In all these, chastity is featured foremost. Spenser's The Faerie Queene has one entire book dedicated to the virtue of chastity, and his repeated references to good women as chaste, and bad women as lascivious, clearly demarcate the need to retain one's chastity. Plays such as Titus Andronicus, and poems such as The Rape of Lucrece, both by Shakespeare, indicate that even chaste women who are victims of forced sexuality are permanently stigamtised. (Titus kills Lavinia because she has been raped and mutilated, while Lucrece commits suicide after she has been raped by Tarquin.)

While men also had duties they had to fulfill, they were generally less censorious in tone when presenting them. Tilney says that a husband should avoid drunkenness, gaming, adultery and rioting (114-15), and should

> be advised in speeche, curteous, gentle in conversation, trusty, and secret in that, wherein he is trusted, wise in gyving counsaile, carefull in providing for his house, diligent in looking to that which is his, sufferable of the importunities of his wife, daungerous and circumspect in matters touching his honesty, and jealous in the education of his children. (117)

Kelso remarks that men were generally advised not to hit their wives (86), that they should both in "public and in private [...] be loving and considerate" (86), and that they should avoid arguing with their wives (87). Generally, men while given some advice on how to be proper husbands (such as found in the above quote taken from Tilney), or how to court women, received much less attention in the literary debate of the day than women did. Men's roles also tended to be less restrictive. For the most part, men were accepted as women's superior (both intellectually and morally). (Not everyone, however, believed women were weaker and more prone to evil. In Guillaume Alexis's work, a woman and a man debate the nature of women. The woman contends that men are less than perfect: they start wars, steal, murder, and commit treason (76).) Time and time again, the belief that men should lead women emerges in the writing of this period. This was justified by the Bible, particularly the writings of St. Paul. As Hull states, there was "a permeating norm that implied men were dominant and women, inferior. Saint Paul said as much in the Bible" (Women 16). Knox, in his diatribe against women, states emphatically that women should never have power or authority over men, that such a situation goes against God's law:

> To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reueled will and approued ordinance and finallie it is the subuersion of good order, of all equitie, and iustice. (11)

He also argues that a man who allows women to have power over him, does so "to his own shame" (30), and also "in despit of God and of his apointed order" (30). Knox proceeds to lambast such men by calling the nobility of England and Scotland "brute

beastes" (32) for following the governance of queens, and he states that the countries suffer because of the rule of women. This points to one of the key roles men were expected to fulfill; they were expected to rule and control the women in their lives. Failure to fulfill this duty to lead and govern their families caused men to be considered "feminized" and were open to ridicule. The result was the appearance in literature of the fop. In particular, "male effeminacy is a recurrent theme in the formal satires of the 1590's" (Woodbridge 169). Allowing women to have control, as queens, wives or daughters, was ultimately seen as an indication of a man's weakness and failure.

The duties assigned to men and women because of their gender are also partly dependent on the class to which the individual belongs. While the king, as head of state, is expected to lead all the people, courtiers, despite their high position, are subservient to the king, while servants and labourers have a host of people to whom they should show deference. In each class, however, women are denied many of the privileges that men of the same class are free to enjoy. For either sex, failing to fulfill the role (determined by both gender and class) expected of them, is depicted as disastrous--for the individual, and for society as a whole.

This thesis focuses on the Henry VI trilogy, and ends with a brief discussion of Richard III in the conclusion. The first chapter, "The Battle of the Sexes: Henry VI, Part 1," exposes the battle of male vs. female, English vs. French, spiritual vs. physical. In this play, the beginning of the civil strife which was to plague England starts to emerge, and the role that gender reversal has on the stability of society begins to show. The play

clearly exposes the expectations held for each gender, and the stigma attached to any individual who attempts to step outside of their role (and social position). In the second chapter, "Emasculating Women, Emasculated Men: Henry VI, Part 2," the focus of the gender war turns from an international to a national concern. Shakespeare portrays that when a strong woman rules a weak man, civil unrest and court disorder are necessarily going to follow. "Subverting Patriarchy: Henry VI, Part 3," the third chapter, explores the ways in which failure to maintain gender roles leads inevitably to a system in which all areas of the patriarchal social structure begin to collapse and invert. The struggle for power is no longer merely between men and women, the lower and upper classes, instead, it has invaded the family--the basic unit of any patriarchal society. The subversion of gender roles has allowed disorder to seep into every element of society. Natalie Zemon Davis's article "Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe," explores the nature of gender subversion in Europe. She states that it was generally believed that "the lower ruled the higher within the woman, [...], and if she were given her way, she would likewise want to rule over those above her" (148). She states that gender inversion was a "widespread form of cultural play, in literature, in art, and in festivity" (152). Suzanne Hull remarks that cross-dressing by men and women received considerable attention from moralists (Women 186). Furthermore, some writers, such as Vives, felt that the practice was contrary to God's will (Hull, Women 186). Davis argues that this sexual inversion did not just serve to reinforce the hierarchical order, but that it at times also allowed criticism of that order, and the possibility of change (154).

Reversal of gender roles was certainly a prominent feature of the literature of the day. While some inversions were praised, for instance the examples of the female saints who donned male dress in order to live in monasteries, these were unusual, exceptional women (Davis 93). Men and women were both criticized in the literature of the day for their failure to maintain gender roles. Satire and comedy provided an excellent medium through which to reveal the ridiculousness of men who fail to take control, and the women who rule them (interestingly enough, these women are almost inevitably characterized as unchaste, while their husbands are shown to be cuckolds). Jonson's Epicoene exposes the ridiculousness of women who dare to involve themselves in matters normally belonging to the male domain, and who go out in public by themselves, and men, fops, who become the butt of jokes. Public punishments were also given to those who failed to abide by the socially sanctioned rules of gender roles. Women who were scolds could be, under the directives of the law, publicly humiliated, while the husband whose wife cheated would inevitably be regarded as a fool. Furthermore, a wife who was known to bully or beat her husband could be forced to perform in a skimmington (Jardine 117), in which a wife might be forced to beat her husband while being led through the town. This served as a punishment for the wife, but also for the husband, whose failure to control his wife was seen as ridiculous, and unmanly.

The subversion of gender roles in the first tetralogy allows for a Machiavel like Richard III to seize power for himself. The conclusion, "Cunning and Chaos/Honour and Order," exposes how Richard III's reign is the result of the disintegration of the social

order, caused by the subversion of gender roles. It is only when the figure of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, arrives to take control that order can once again be restored. While in the past it has been suggested order is restored only when the rightful, "divine," king is placed on the throne, it is possible to examine events in light of the gender question, determining that in actuality, it is only restored when a strong man, supported by a passive woman, wins the crown.

Each chapter of the thesis, as already explained, will consider the representation of gender, and the way society is subverted. Some comparisons to the sources for the history plays will be made, as well, in order to examine the way Shakespeare has adapted the historical data to suit his own purposes. As Williamson states,

> although Shakespeare's history plays usually represent a man's world in which women have at best minor and contingent roles, the first tetralogy is notable for its series of strong women, especially Joan La Pucelle and Margaret of Anjou, who may profitably be read against the portraits of them in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century histories of women and the traditions of those histories (41).

(Some modern history texts will also be used to illustrate the difference in the way history was interpreted by Renaissance writers in order to support particular attitudes and ways of thinking.) It is important to remember that these plays are fiction, not history. While they may reveal characteristic attitudes, it is impossible to interpret them as realistic representations of the way Renaissance society was. Criticism from feminists and men's studies proponents will be drawn upon to help examine the first tetralogy in detail. These secondary materials will help to illustrate the way in which these plays illuminate the importance of maintaining gender roles to preserve the accepted social (and political)

order--patriarchy.

The early history plays are an excellent source for a study of gender roles for a number of reasons. First of all, the plays illustrate the limitations placed on men and women by their gendered standing in society. The role of each individual is clearly shown to be determined by the circumstances of his or her birth. For the women and men who fail to fulfill their socially assigned roles effectively, humiliation, scorn, banishment, and death await. This loss of personal happiness and fulfilment is only one aspect of the impact that such gender subversion has: the family unity, the country, and society at large also suffer. The plays show how the subversion of gender roles in society leads to civil strife and disorder.

Another reason why the first tetralogy can serve as an excellent source for a study of gender roles is because of the relative lack of attention it has received until recently. As almost every literature student knows, Shakespeare's plays have undergone enormous scrutiny by critics since they were first written and performed. They have been analysed and criticized from every theoretical perspective. The early histories, however, have not received nearly the same amount of attention. For many years, there was a debate over whether or not Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, and 3 were written by Shakespeare. Because of what many critics felt were major flaws in the construction of the plays, it was determined that Shakespeare could not possibly have written these by himself. Over the years, the plays have been attributed to Nashe, Marlowe, and Greene, or to some partnership between these playwrights (Boyce 274). This attitude has changed, though recently the editors of

the Oxford edition of the plays (1986) raised this issue again, arguing that Shakespeare was certainly not the only author of Henry VI, Part 1 (Howard, "The First Part of Henry the Sixth" 587). In this thesis, however, I will assume that the plays were, in fact, written by Shakespeare.

Another reason why the plays have been largely ignored is because many felt they were poorly written and full of inconsistencies. As Swander points out, "there [is] the more recent but now almost universally accepted critical judgment that, although the scripts may be Shakespeare's, they reveal more promise than achievement" (149). While this is a legitimate concern, critics and dramatists have begun to dispute this attitude. The plays are once again being performed, and critical attention has grown.

The importance of gender cannot be underestimated in the patriarchal society in which the plays take place. The men and women are both limited and shaped by the societal expectations placed on them. The impact that gender subversion has on the society is extremely interesting, and devastating. Ultimately, these plays reveal that gender role subversion, and more specifically the conflicts which occur between strong women and weak men, result in chaos for the individual, the family, and the state. It is through gender role subversion that England's system of government and social order begin to collapse.

Chapter 1

The Battle of the Sexes: Henry VI, Part 1

The first tetralogy opens with the announcement of the death of King Henry V. A strong, competent leader, who had made considerable inroads in obtaining control of France, he has left his infant son to be king of England. In the funeral procession, various members of the court both praise Henry V's power and might, and grieve for his loss. The Bishop of Winchester is one of those grieving the loss of his king, but the Duke of Gloucester dismisses his speech with scorn:

> Had not churchmen pray'd,
> His thread of life had not so soon decay'd.
> None do you like but an effeminate prince,
> Whom like a schoolboy you may overawe. (I.i.33-36)

(All quotations are taken from The Riverside Shakespeare, unless otherwise stated.) This remark proves prophetic. Henry VI proves to be an ineffective king who cannot sufficiently fulfill his gender and hierarchical determined role as man and king. His weaknesses will help to plunge the country into a period of turmoil and chaos. He is one of several individuals in the tetralogy who will undermine the social structure of England through his inability to assume his gender-determined role. Though he only appears a handful of times in this first play, most of the time as a child, the characteristics which will undermine his power and authority, and the stability of the patriarchal society, are revealed. Pearlman argues that the society which Shakespeare portrays is feudal. While she is right in one sense, she seems to suggest that the issues which are explored in the plays are no longer relevant. However, one of the components of a feudal society is its

patriarchal nature. While feudalism may be a thing of the past, patriarchy is certainly not. Pearlman's claim that

> in Shakespeare's feudal world, the roles allotted to women are clearly demarcated, and as a result the occasional woman who intrudes into the world of soldiership and government must be regarded as perverse (25)

while accurate, fails to acknowledge that this is not simply an issue in feudal societies. This is made abundantly clear in Henry VI, Part 1, by the characterization of Joan de Pucelle, the French champion.

Joan provides the first representation in Shakespeare's early tetralogy of a woman who defies the limitations set on her by her gender and hierarchical roles. While only a young woman, she is brought before the Dolphin by the Bastard of Orleance, who describes her as "a holy maid" (I.ii.51). In order to test the authenticity of her claims, the Dolphin changes places with Reignier, but she quickly detects the deception. She then offers to fight in armed combat with the Dolphin, saying: "My courage try by combat, if thou dar'st,/And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex" (I.ii.89-90). He accepts her challenge, and Joan defeats him. She quickly asserts, however, that both her intelligence and her strength are supernatural, that she would not be able to do these things without divine inspiration. In this way, she alleviates the threat posed by her position as a woman and a shepherd, spheres in the patriarchal and hierarchical world which would normally prevent her from engaging in such activities. The claims Joan makes about the source of her power are both interesting and revealing. She calls on a tradition of female power to validate her own abilities. Instead of claiming God as her benefactor, she claims God's

Mother as the source of her power. She repeatedly draws on the image of the Virgin Mother to validate her power and her mission. When she first appears before the Dolphin, she states,

> Dolphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
> My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.
> Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleas'd
> To shine on my contemptible estate. (I.ii.72-75)

She claims that God's Mother appeared to her in a vision, telling her what to do. Later, when she fights with the Dolphin, she again explains that "Christ's mother helps [her], else [she] were too weak" (I.ii.106).

Her association with the Virgin Mary not only helps to legitimate Joan's military mission, but it associates her with notions of chastity and virginity, very important characteristics for a woman, as is evident in the literature of the Renaissance, as mentioned in the introduction. Her insistence on her chastity is important for two essential reasons: first of all, she could not be a witch, since at the time it was believed that one became a witch by copulating with the devil (Warner 15); secondly, it supports her claim of being an admirable, heroic woman, one who is motivated by divine inspiration, and not out of a sense of personal ambition. It is also an attempt to draw attention away from her sexuality.

Joan's reference to female sources of power is not limited to the Virgin Mother. She states that she found her sword in St. Katherine's churchyard. This is mentioned in the historical records. However, in her trials, Joan attributed her voices to Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, and to Saint Michael (Warner 126-27). As is obvious, they were not

strictly female. Shakespeare's representation of Joan claiming only female sources of power marks the threat she poses for the patriarchy. Through these claims, Joan is, in essence, portraying a matriarchal line of succession, in which women pass down their power and authority to other women: the patriarchal line of descent, the one society is based on, has been completely ignored. It is from women that she claims to acquire her power, and it is women who she uses to legitimate her purpose and her subversion of normal gender and hierarchical roles. The men around Joan are either ambivalent to, or outright dismissive of, her attempted representation of asexuality.

The French display ambivalence for this woman who claims to have come to rescue them. Charles, whose throne was given away by his parents (Guillemin 9) (much in the same way that Henry VI will do to his son) to the English king, is in need of assistance. Before Joan appears, both he and his men run from battle, though he claims that "[he] would ne'er have fled,/But that they left [him] midst [his] enemies" (I.ii.23-24). They are being roundly beaten by the English, and Joan offers the French a chance they desperately need. The language they use in reference to Joan is inconsistent. Bevington draws attention to the fact that "the allusions are complexly ironic, sometimes contrasting Joan with positive ideals of divine harmony, and sometimes likening her to infamously wanton women" ("Domineering" 52). Charles also draws on the tradition of female religious leaders whom Joan associates herself with. After she defeats him in battle, he says that she fights "with the sword of Deborah" (I.ii.105). Both a judge and a prophetess (Blakemore Evans 600, Henry VI, Part 1 I.ii.105), Deborah led the people of Israel in a battle against

their enemies--a campaign that was successfully won. It is also interesting to note that in this story another woman eventually destroys the enemy. Provided with the opportunity, Ja'el kills Sis'era, the enemy, a feat which the men who pursued him had been unable to do (Judg.4.17-22). Charles continues by comparing Joan to Helen, the mother of Constantine, who was believed to have recovered the True Cross and the Holy Sepulchre (Blakemore Evans 600, Henry VI, Part 1 I.ii.142), and to the daughters of Saint Philip, four virgins who were said to have had prophetic powers (Blakemore Evans 600, Henry VI, Part 1 I.ii.143). However, he also ties her to a host of non-religious figures, many of which are ambivalent and problematic, contrasting with the image of chastity and holy inspiration that Joan tries to present.

At the same time he calls her a Deborah, Charles also says she is an Amazon. His reference to her as an Amazon is both positive and negative. Female warriors, Amazons were often favourably presented, but they were also sometimes criticized in the literature of the day. Spenser's The Faerie Queene, for instance, contains a few Amazons. While the portrayal of Belphoebe and Britomart appears favourable, the depiction of Radigund is definitely harsh and critical. She is shown dressing men in women's clothing and keeping them captive. Though she is defeated by Britomart, another Amazon, her power is given back to the men (Book 5, canto vi). There are also a series of references in the play which definitely contradicts the image Joan is trying to present. Charles ties her to a number of women who are not known for their chastity, but for their sexuality. In Act I, scene ii, he calls her "Bright star of Venus" (144). This connection with the goddess of love is hardly

appropriate for a woman who draws her power from the Virgin Mother. Later, in Act I, scene vi, Charles says he will build a pyramid to her, greater than "Rhodope's [of] Memphis" (22). Again, he has referred to a woman whose history is sexually charged. The reference to Rhodope, a Greek courtesan (Blakemore Evans 604), contrasts sharply with the women whom Joan claims as her sources for power, and the image of chastity that they evoke.

Despite her best attempts the French never forget her sexuality. Charles attempts to woo her, after she has bested him in combat:

> Impatiently I burn with thy desire,
> My heart and hands thou hast at once subdu'd.
> Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,
> Let me thy servant and not sovereign be. (I.ii.108-111)

Charles, who so desperately needs help in his fight against the English is thinking of love, rather than war, when he is given the opportunity to secure a possible ally and winning advantage in battle. Of course, this partly speaks of his own ineffectiveness, and it foreshadows the weakness of the men in the later plays. Henry VI and Edward IV will both pursue matters of love and lust without any thought to the consequences. It also illustrates the lack of respect he has for her claims of chastity. He immediately tries to seduce her. Joan, however, rejects Charles's proposition, stating that she "must not yield to any rites of love" (I.ii.13). The men at court, watching the exchange between the Dolphin and Joan also make sexual insinuations. Alanson remarks, "Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock" (I.ii.119), and shortly thereafter, "These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues" (I.ii.123). (This latter reference calls to mind the negative

stereotype of the shrew, that is, a woman bully, who attempts to dominate men through the use of language. Throughout the literature of the Renaissance period, shrews, and their male partners, were continually satirized (for example, in The Taming of the Shrew). They, and the men they bullied, were also subjected to public punishment in the form of Skimmingtons.) Guitierrez characterizes the way the men talk about Joan, and Charles's own courting, as a way to control Joan: "Woman as sexual object used by man for his own purposes" ("Gender" 189). After these initial suggestions of her sexuality, no such references are made again by the French. However, the point has not been lost. It has been suggested to the audience that Joan is a sexual being. Interestingly enough, in historical accounts, the men and soldiers Joan interacted with testified that they did not see her this way. Some claimed that though she was attractive, any desire they had for her ended immediately when they approached her (Warner 17-18). A Jesuit, Ceriziers, even stated at the retrial after Joan had been killed that if a man looked at her with desire they would become impotent (Warner 18-19). (This retrial was requested by Joan's mother in November 1455, over twenty years after her daughter's death, and its conclusion was reached on July 7, 1456. Its purpose was to annul her sentence, which it did (Warner 190).) There were a few stories of men, other than her soldiers, who approached her, but were quickly rebuffed (Warner 17-18). In Shakespeare's sources, Hall suggests that Joan remained a virgin because of her "foul" face (S1r), while Holinshed states "of fauour was she counted likesome" (163). Shakespeare combines these two characterizations of Joan. In her first appearance in the play, she tells Charles that she used to be "black and swart"

(I.ii.84), but after her vision, she became beautiful.

The French are quick to desert their heroine. When they are defeated at Orleance, shortly after their first victory, Charles quickly turns on Joan: "Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?" (II.i.50). His use of the term cunning is particularly interesting. In the note to the Riverside edition of the play, this term is identified with skill with magic (Blakemore Evans 605). Charles has, essentially, suggested that Joan's power is tied to witchcraft, an idea that is persistently pursued by her enemies, the English. The Frenchmen's willingness to turn on their supposed saviour foreshadows the future. When Joan is captured by the English, the French do nothing to help her. In fact, Charles, when he is talking to the English and forging a plan for peace, does not even mention her name. This contrasts sharply with the Englishmen's endeavours to secure the release of Talbot, their hero, when he is captured by the French. Joan is not given a second thought. This is historically accurate--Charles did not attempt to ransom Joan. (Guillemin ties this to the problems that the historical Charles had with Joan. He argues that Charles probably expected Joan to remain in the background, as a symbol of the French cause, not to become actively involved in war (93).)

The English view Joan as an agent of the devil, a witch, from the very first moment. In Act I, scene iv, Talbot makes a play on her name, saying "Pucelle or puzzel" (107). While the name Pucelle means maid, virgin, girl, (Cotgrave 3T3r), puzzel, which mimics the English pronunciation of her name (Howard, "The First Part of Henry VI" 440)), means slut, or drab (Blakemore Evans 603). In Cotgrave's A Dictionarie of the

French and English Tongues (1611), under the word pucelle, Pucelle de Marolle, is defined as "a crackt peece; a wench that hath got a clap; one that rather goes for a maid then is one" (3T2v). These connotations contrast sharply with the image she is trying to present, and instead support the English view of her. Joan, as a woman engaged in battle, is extremely threatening. Linda Bamber, however, suggests that the problem the English have with Joan is not that she is a woman, but that she is from the lower classes (136). She argues that Joan is not measured against a female norm (while Margaret is) (Bamber 137). While there is some relevance to the idea that Joan's social standing has an impact on the way her opponents view her, the repeated references made to Joan as a whore and a witch indicate that her position as a woman is relevant. This is exemplified by young John Talbot's refusal to fight with her, as related by Joan:

> Once I encounter'd him, and thus I said:
> "Thou maiden youth, be vanquish'd by a maid!"
> But with a proud majestical high scorn
> He answer'd thus: "Young Talbot was not born
> To be the pillage of a giglot wench."
> So, rushing in the bowels of the French,
> He left me proudly, as unworthy fight. (IV.vii.37-43).

Young Talbot, with his use of the word giglot, meaning wanton (Blakemore Evans 620, Henry VI, Part 1 IV.vii.41) has again drawn attention to Joan's sexuality. Her sexuality continues to be troubling to the English. Joan's ability to beat the English threatens their manhood. The only way for them to destroy her is for her to be feminized and demonized. Talbot, when he first encounters Joan, calls her a witch, saying: "Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee./Blood will I draw on thee--thou art a witch--/And straightaway, give thy soul

to him thou serv'st" (I.v.5-7). He later calls her Hecate (III.ii.64), who is the goddess of witchcraft (Blakemore Evans 612). Burgundy calls her a fiend, and a courtesan (III.ii.45), while York refers to her as Circe (V.iii.35), the witch who, according to Homer, turned men into beasts (Blakemore Evans 623). Throughout the play she is referred to by Talbot, Young Talbot, Bedford, and Burgundy as a witch, a strumpet, a sorceress, a courtesan, a fiend, and a hag. For the English, there is no ambivalence in their feelings toward her. They are, unlike the French, able to see her for what she really is (at least according to Shakespeare)--a witch, and an agent of the devil.

Joan's characterization in the history play is one which modern readers would find both unusual and shocking. It is her early presentation in the play as a saintly, holy figure, which would seem familiar. Her canonization in 1920 (Warner 6), and the subsequent presentation of Joan by the Catholic Church, and in literature, such as Bernard Shaw's play, Saint Joan, have created an image which coincides with the one Joan attempts to present in the beginning of the play. However, many early texts certainly did not see Joan in such a light. Shakespeare's sources (which are, it is important to remember, English), Holinshed and Hall, both present less than favourable pictures of this young woman. Hall refers to her as "an enchantress...sent from Sathan to blind the people..." (T1v) and he criticized the French for their failure to detect that she was not sent from God, but from the devil (S1r and T1v). Holinshed, likewise, refers to her as a sorceress (172). Charles's glorification of Joan after their victory at Orleance is much more familiar, though once again, there are references to sexually charged women:

> Tis Joan, not we, by whom the day is won;
> For which I will divide my crown with her,
> And all the priests and friars in my realm
> Shall in procession sing her endless praise.
> A statelier pyramis to her I'll rear
> Than Rhodope's [of] Memphis ever was.
> In memory of her when she is dead,
> Her ashes, in an urn more precious
> Than the rich-jewell'd coffer of Darius,
> Transported shall be at high festivals
> Before the kings and queens of France.
> No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,
> But Joan de Pucelle shall be France's saint. (I.vi.17-29)

Of course, for the Protestant English historical record, the fact that she was French and Catholic certainly did not help.

Though the English, from the very beginning of the play, are sure that Joan's power comes from the devil, for most of the play, there is no concrete proof of her association with witchcraft, though there certainly are insinuations. When Talbot challenges Joan, he is unable to beat her (though neither is he defeated by her). He remarks on her unusual strength, saying, "Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?/My breast I'll burst with straining of my courage,/And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder" (I.v.9-11). Or course, at this point in the play, as far as the audience knows, Joan's power may have been a gift from the Virgin Mary, as she claims, and not from the devil, as the English believe. Yet this is not the only suggestion of supernatural interference. After having been persuaded by Joan to switch to the French side, Burgundy remarks: "either she hath bewitch'd me with her words,/Or nature makes me suddenly relent" (III.iii.58-59). His defection is particularly puzzling because of the anger he

exhibits to her in the previous scene, when he says, "Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtezan!/I trust ere long to choke thee with thine own,/And make thee curse the harvest of that corn" (III.ii.45-47). In the final act of the play, however, Joan is actually shown engaging in witchcraft. Throughout the majority of the play, allusions and accusations, as well as her extremely threatening behaviour to the patriarchy, are the only indication of her association with the devil.

The demonization of Joan is necessary because of the threat that she poses to the social order. As has already been stated, she completely bypasses the patriarchal succession, claiming her power and authority through the feminine line. She also dons men's clothing, acts as a military leader, and engages in battle. Her participation in military action is particularly troubling because of her place in society as a woman. Simone de Beauvoir, in The Second Sex, says that

> The worst curse that was laid upon woman was that she should be excluded from these warlike forays. For it is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth, but to that which kills. (64)

Joan, by engaging in battle, threatens the balance of power. What is even more threatening to the patriarchal order is that she is successful. She actually makes the English soldiers run from her. This is both humiliating and shameful for the men, as Talbot points out when she captures Orleance: "The shame whereof will make me hide my head" (I.vi.39). Defeat by a woman, even one who has the supernatural powers of a witch, is both degrading and unmanning.

Joan, throughout the play, shows complete disregard for societal expectations and

values. She subverts the normal role attributed to a woman and a shepherd's daughter, and she repeatedly ridicules values which are cherished by society, such as age, exemplified by her interaction with Bedford (III.ii.), and titles. Talbot, on the other hand, embraces all the patriarchal and hierarchical values of his society. He embodies all the characteristics that are desirable and admirable in a man (compared to Joan who consistently fails to fulfill her proper role). He is a strong leader, intelligent, loyal, brave and honourable–everything Joan is not. His name is enough to bring terror to the French. One of Shakespeare's sources, Holinshed, promotes this image of Talbot: "Lord Talbot, being both of noble birth and of haultie courage, after his comming into France, obteined so manie glorious victories of his enemies, that his onelie name was & yet is dreadful to the French nation" (158). Shakespeare's portrayal of Talbot mimics this historical representation. To Talbot, honour, name and the maintenance of social norms are extremely important. He repeatedly displays disgust with the behaviour of others (such as Joan and Falstaff) which betrays these notions. He is horrified when Joan and four soldiers, disguised, enter Rouen and capture the city. The French refusal to come out and fight indicates to him that they are not honourable, noble men: "Like peasant footboys do they keep the walls,/And dare not take up arms like gentlemen" (III.ii.69-70). (Repeatedly throughout the play Talbot draws attention to the importance of high birth. By comparing the French to peasant footboys, he is ridiculing them.)

The French, led by Joan, have in essence ignored the standard accepted for warfare by refusing to meet on the battlefield. (Howard and Rackin tie Joan's behaviour to her low

class (54).) While their decision may be logical, it is not honourable. Talbot's deep sense of honour is displayed when he refuses to be traded for someone he considers an inferior. He would prefer to die rather than suffer such an indignity (I.iii.27-34). His notion of honour is again displayed by his interactions with Sir John Falstaff, who fled from battle. When he sees him at court, Talbot is infuriated, and roundly upbraids him: "I vow'd base knight, when I did meet thee next,/To tear the Garter from thy craven's leg" (IV.i.14-15). He loses no time in doing so, in the presence of the king and other courtiers. While explaining his action, Talbot illustrates his own feelings toward the importance of social position and social order:

> When first this order was ordain'd my lords,
> Knights of the Garter were of noble birth,
> Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage,
> Such as were grown to credit by the wars;
> Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress,
> But always resolute in most extremes.
> He then, that is not furnish'd in this sort
> Doth but usurp the sacred name of knight,
> Profaning this most honorable order,
> And should (if I were worthy to be judge)
> Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain
> That doth presume to boast of gentle blood. (IV.i.33-44)

In this passage Talbot sums up all that he holds dear, and all that he feels should be of value and admired in a man. This speech marks the virtues by which he lives his own life, as is exemplified by the way he leads his troops, the honour he shows his king, and in the scenes he shares with his son. The balance Talbot successfully maintains between his need to lead, as a prominent soldier, and his need to serve, as a subject of the king, can be difficult to reach. Marilyn French, in Beyond Power, draws attention to this issue, and the

difficulty men may have in creating such a balance. They are "expected to be in total control of their immediate surroundings [...] but to surrender control to 'superior men' while maintaining self respect" (265). It is one of the conundrums of patriarchal society, but one which Talbot effectively deals with (some men in the later plays will not).

The quote above also highlights the importance Talbot places on nobility. To him, being of noble birth is extremely important, and it would certainly be one of the contributing factors, along with her subversion of her role as a woman, which would blacken his opinion of Joan de Pucelle. His interactions and attitude towards Joan can be compared to his attitude to another woman: the Countess of Auvergne. One of only three women who appear in Henry VI, Part 1, the Countess is also French. Like Joan, she wants to play a role in the political world which surrounds her, a desire which lies outside the bounds of what is proper for a woman. Driven by a desire for personal glory and concern for the welfare of her nation, she invites Talbot to her home, in the hopes of capturing him. Confronted by the physical appearance of Talbot, she is shocked. Her speech is also purposely inflaming and insulting. She is challenging him:

> Is this the Scourge of France?
> Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad
> That with his name the mothers still their babes?
> I see report is fabulous and false.
> I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
> A second Hector, for his grim aspect
> And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.
> Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf!
> It cannot be this weak and writhled shrimp
> Should strike such terror to his enemies. (II.iii.15-24)

She makes the mistake of assuming his physical appearance indicates his military prowess.

Talbot, however, quickly dispels her assumptions. He refers to the fact that he is a mere shadow of himself, confusing her, but playing on the idea that without his soldiers, he could do nothing. He calls forward his soldiers, who had been in hiding, showing her his superiority. He had detected her plan, and came prepared to deal with it. He knows that he is only as strong as those he leads. They are the source of his physical strength:

> How say you, madam? Are you now persuaded
> That Talbot is but shadow of himself?
> These are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength,
> With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,
> Razeth your cities, and subverts your towns,
> And in a moment makes them desolate. (II.ii.61-66)

Suitably apologetic and submissive, the Countess is forgiven, while Joan cannot be. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, despite the fact that these women both exhibit a desire to interfere in what is traditionally a man's world, they do so differently. The Countess of Auvergne never forgets her position as a woman. She attempts to use her femininity to trap Talbot, by complimenting him and inviting him to dinner. When she fails, she is suitably repentant and appropriately impressed by Talbot's greatness and cunning. She acknowledges his superiority in her apology:

> Victorious Talbot, pardon my abuse.
> I find thou art no less than fame hath bruited,
> And more than may be gathered by thy shape.
> Let my presumption not provoke thy wrath,
> For I am sorry with reverence
> I did not entertain thee as thou art. (II.iii.67-72)

Her apology is both gracious and mannerly. (Joan would never behave this way. In her first encounter with the Dolphin she states that she would never back down from a man

(I.ii.103).) Furthermore, the Countess is a member of the nobility, and as has already been stated, Talbot has definite ideas about the importance of hierarchical standing. She deserves, because of her birth, to be treated with respect (unlike Joan). The fact that she owns a portrait of Talbot, even though he is her enemy, is also very flattering.

Talbot can also afford to be gracious with the Countess because she is unsuccessful in her bid to outwit him, and she neither poses a threat to Talbot, or to society in general. Bevington sums the situation up as follows:

> Her motives are unquestionably patriotic, her desire for fame ennobled. Hers is a temptation that Talbot relishes and finds worth even a pause in his military efforts. Talbot finds in the Countess an admiring, rational woman who is ready to be persuaded by firm argument, courage, and a sense of humor. She gladly submits to his mastery, apologizes for her inhospitable behaviour, and responds to his gallantry with the courteous entertainment of a feast. ("Domineering" 56)

The ease with which she hopes to capture the Scourge of France is laughable, and indicates her own naivete. Talbot responds to her apology with a gallantry that he never exhibits in his dealings with Joan:

> Be not dismay'd fair lady, nor misconster
> The mind of Talbot as you did mistake
> The outward composition of his body.
> What you have done hath not offended me. (II.iii.72-75)

He requests only that she share a feast with himself and his soldiers. This scene illustrates that Talbot can be charming and forgiving to those who challenge him, but who remain within their proper sphere. He cannot show such consideration to Joan or to Sir John Falstaff because they represent the antithesis of everything he believes in. While he can be kind and generous, he will not accept behaviour he views as reprehensible and unnatural.

Talbot's relationship with his young son, John, exemplifies his acceptance of the values of patriarchal society. Both father and son exhibit deep affection and caring for one another, and also a striking similarity in their values. Kahn states that "no other relationship between men or between men and women in the tetralogy is so securely tied by bonds of love and duty as this one, however confining they may be" (55). Neither father nor son is willing to compromise their honour or their name in order to secure their survival. For them, death is preferable to the loss of social standing and honour. In Act IV, John tries to convince Talbot to leave the battlefield so that he will live to fight again, while Talbot tries to convince John to leave in order to ensure the continuation of the family line, and to ease his mother's suffering. The arguments both use fail. To leave a battle would mean a loss of honour, a prospect neither can endure. As young John says, "Here on my knee I beg mortality,/Rather than life preserv'd with infamy" (IV.v.32-33). Furthermore, John will not leave his father:

> Nor more can I be severed from your side
> Than can yourself yourself in twain divide.
> Stay, go, do what you will, the like do I;
> For live I will not if my father die. (IV.v.48-51)

They insist upon fulfilling their socially determined roles as men, as soldiers, and as nobles.

While it would be easy to state that Talbot and his son willingly choose to fulfill the duties set for them by the patriarchal society in which they live, they are actually afforded little choice. They can die and maintain their honour and prestige, or they can live, and end up ostracized by society. The treatment of Falstaff earlier in the play, and the criticism he experiences for his decision to flee battle, leave no doubt of the fate that would await

Talbot or his son if they chose to leave the field of battle. Though Talbot embodies the characteristics promoted and admired in his world, it does not mean that he does not suffer because of the strictures of his role as a man and a soldier. Riemer, talking about American literature, says that a study of that literature can "reveal the ways in which manly ideals can restrict and complicate men's lives, often interfering with the satisfaction of their basic human needs" (295). Talbot and his son are trapped by the ideals of manhood which they want to live up to: they cost them their lives. They suffer because they embrace the role expected of them, just as surely as those who subvert their gender and hierarchical roles will suffer throughout the remainder of the tetralogy. While they maintain their good names, they are still destroyed. Joan draws attention to the ridiculousness of this. When Lucy, after battle, appears to ask about Talbot, listing his long titles, Joan responds:

> Here's a silly stately style indeed!
> The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,
> Writes not so tedious a style as this.
> Him that thou magnifi'st with all these titles
> Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet. (IV.vii.72-76)

His name, while preserved for the historical record, does him little good. This speech also exhibits Joan's disregard for the titles so highly regarded in a hierarchical and patriarchal society. It reveals another rejection of the values held by the society in which she lives. Talbot's death marks the beginning of the disintegration in England of the values he represents. The Duke of Gloucester assumes Talbot's role as the personification of social values in Henry VI, Part 2; he will also be destroyed. With Talbot's death, the survival of the values of the patriarchal structure is threatened.

Shortly after Talbot's death, Joan finds herself in desperate straits. Confronted with the possibility of defeat, she finally utilizes the witchcraft in front of the audience which the English have been repeatedly referring to. Guitierrez argues that this is the only time the audience is provided with an opportunity to view Joan without the filter of the attitude of the French ("Gender" 192). Hence, it is possible to see her engaged in supernatural activities. While it is the first time the audience sees her without her retinue, it is not the last. She is again seen without the benefit of her French supporters at the end of the play, and her presentation will be even more negative. In Act V, scene iii, desperate to help the French forces, she calls forth evil spirits, who refuse to help her. Though she offers them her body and her blood, they withdraw. This depiction of Joan shatters any remaining questions about the authenticity of her claims to divine inspiration. Her aid comes not from the Virgin Mary, but from the devil. This destroys all her claims of having received her power from feminine sources, and her claims to chastity. Witches came under the control of the male devil and his male agents (Levin 101), and they were bound to him through copulation (Guitierrez, "Witchcraft" 3).

It is now clear that Joan's power does not reside with the feminine, and that it is not divinely inspired. Deserted by her fiends, she is captured by York. He castigates her, calling her ugly and taunting her to call on her spirits to save her:

> Damsel of France, I think I have you fast:
> Unchain your spirits now with spelling charms,
> And try if they can gain your liberty.
> A goodly prize, fit for the devil's grace!
> See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows,
> As if, with Circe she would change my shape! (30-35)

Joan, in turn, curses Charles, her one-time supporter, and tries to curse York. He reprimands her, however, saying, "Fell banning hag, enchantress, hold thy tongue" (V.iii.42). He tells her that she can curse when she is on the stake. He then drags her off stage. Immediately, Suffolk comes on stage leading Margaret. The contrast between the presentation and treatment of these two women is staggering. They present two opposing views of womanhood in this scene: witch and lady, whore and virgin. Whereas Joan has been vilified, Margaret is praised. Suffolk's language and wooing of Margaret is reminiscent of courtly love practices. He says to her:

> O fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly,
> For I will touch thee but with reverend hands.
> I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,
> And lay them gently on thy tender side. (V.iii.46-49)

Throughout the passage, his reverence and regard for Margaret become more and more apparent. He has been transfixed by her beauty and her grace, and as such, is willing to do anything to have her in his life, despite the fact that he is married. Whereas Joan is called a hag, and ugly, Margaret's beauty is praised. Furthermore, Suffolk treats Margaret with gentleness, as if she were a precious treasure.

In this passage Margaret personifies all that is admirable in a woman: she appears chaste, demure, beautiful and graceful. Joan, who has just left the stage, contrasts sharply, as a military leader, a witch, and a cursing shrew. Furthermore, while Margaret belongs to the aristocratic class, as does the Countess of Auvergne, who also evokes language reminiscent of the courtly love tradition, Joan is a mere shepherd's daughter Their differences in station and in their assumption of gender roles is highlighted by the

treatment they receive from their captors. And they are both undoubtedly captives of the enemy camp, the English.

Despite Suffolk's gentle and mannerly treatment of Margaret, he is plotting a way to seduce her. He plans to have her despite the fact that he is a married man. While he might admire and lust after her, he clearly does not respect her, or truly wish to protect her, despite his protestations. He would destroy her virtue in order to get what he wants. Furthermore, he sees his relationship with her as a means to increase his own power at court. He believes he can control the king through her. Suffolk finally makes the decision to marry her to his king. When he suggests this idea to Margaret, she responds, "I am unworthy to be Henry's wife" (V.iii.122)--and she is right, as Suffolk is aware (V.iii.91-96). He persuades her, however, and she states, "And if my father please, I am content" (V.iii.127). She illustrates her loyalty and sense of propriety in this response. As a woman, and a daughter, any decision about her future lies with her father. He agrees to the match, and Suffolk, before taking his leave, tells him to protect her well: "set this diamond safe/In golden palaces, as it becomes" (V.iii.169-170). Despite Suffolk's ulterior motives, Margaret appears to have no idea what he plans. She is innocent at this point. When he takes his leave of her, he steals a kiss, supposedly for the king, but she says that she would send him "a pure unspotted heart,/Never yet taint with love" (V.iii.182-183). She has, essentially, stated her purity.

Margaret's characterization as a demure, proper young woman, and Suffolk's poetic treatment of her, not only follows Joan's capture, but precedes her final appearance

in the play. Again, the contrast between the language and treatment used towards these two women is startling, as is their characterization. Whereas Suffolk encourages her father to protect her as carefully as he would a precious jewel, York says to Joan, "Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes,/Thou foul accursed minister of hell!" (V.iv.92-93). In her final appearance in the play, all pretenses fall away, and Joan's true nature is exposed. In the beginning of Act V, scene iv, Joan's father appears before her, grief-stricken by the situation in which he finds her: he offers to die with her, echoing the sentiments of John Talbot. She refuses, however, claiming that she is descended from nobility (despite the fact that she had, earlier in the play, acknowledged her lowly birth): "Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!/I am descended of a gentler blood./Thou art no father nor no friend of mine" (V.iv.7-9).

Joan's rejection of her father, so shortly after Margaret's own willingness to defer her decisions to her father, is shocking. Despite her father's pleas and urgings, she will not admit her parentage. When he asks her to kneel before him to receive his blessing, she again refuses him. To kneel before another indicates humbleness, reverence, and service. By refusing to kneel before her father, Joan refuses to acknowledge his superiority. This sends him into a rage: "Wilt thou not stoop? Now cursed be the time/Of thy nativity!" (V.iv. 26-27). He joins her enemies in condemning her to death.

Joan's rejection of her father is shameful and shocking. It goes against everything that is expected in a patriarchal society, and moreover, it is against one of God's commandments: to honour your father and mother. While Joan's failure to acknowledge

her father would further blacken her image with the audience, it also serves another purpose: it shows Joan's dismissal of everything valued by the patriarchal society in which she lives (though it is not completely surprising since she had, early on in the play, stressed the importance of female succession of power and might). She denies the basic, underlying unit of patriarchal society: the father-child relationship. Hardin characterizes Joan as a "renegade daughter, [who] violates the cherished patriarchalism of the age" (33). It could be argued that her failure to acknowledge her father is a final symbol of her repudiation of a patriarchal society in which her standing as a woman and as a shepherd's daughter serves to limit her place in society. However, her next action undermines any ability to make such an argument.

Joan, in order to save her life, claims to be pregnant, an idea that Shakespeare may have drawn from Holinshed (171). As a woman, and as a perpetuator of the patriarchal society, she hopes to save her own life. Her claim is laughable, because she had, just moments before, asserted her chastity:

> Joan of Aire hath been
> A virgin from her tender infancy,
> Chaste, and immaculate in very thought,
> Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effus'd,
> Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven. (V.iv.49-53)

Historically, it appears as if Joan's chastity was legitimate. Tested several times throughout her life, she was found to be inviolate. In the play, however, her status of a witch necessarily negates any claims to chastity, as does her willingness to offer the fiends her body. Through her claim of pregnancy, Joan attempts to use her role of woman, which

she has chosen to ignore before, in an attempt to save her life. It was a common practice to postpone the execution of a witch, or any other female criminal, if she were pregnant (Jackson 62). Ironically, her pregnancy would be yet another affront to the patriarchal order. She is unmarried. Adrienne Rich, in Of Woman Born, states that "to bear an 'illegitimate' child proudly and by choice in the face of societal judgment has, paradoxically, been one way in which women have defied patriarchy" (160). Joan, if she were pregnant, would once again be threatening the patriarchal order, as a pregnant, unmarried, young woman. Furthermore, she claims a series of men as the father of her child: the Dolphin, the Duke of Alanson, and Reignier. This highlights the fear of every man in a society based on primogeniture. There is no way to know who the father is. In the end, it doesn't matter. York says to her, "Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee" (V.iv.84). The Englishmen find fault with each of the men she claims as the father of her child. Warwick would not allow any bastard child to live, especially one belonging to Charles (V.iv.70-71). He believes that such a child, if male, would grow to fight against the English. York objects to the idea that Alanson is the father, saying he is a "notorious Machevile" (v.iv.74), while Warwick rejects the idea of Reignier being the father because he is a married man (V.iv.79). These three Frenchmen are all unsuitable fathers.

Joan's attempt to save her life fails and death and destruction are inevitable. She had refused to accept her proper place as a woman, engaging in military battles and donning men's clothing; she had ignored her position as a mere shepherd's daughter, daring to consort with royalty; she had rejected the value placed on age and hierarchy, and

she had dismissed her father. She exhibits none of the traits that are acceptable and admirable in a woman. Hence, she must be an agent of the devil. She could hardly be sent by God as the salvation of France: her very existence is a threat to the entire social structure. With her destruction, it seems as if the threat to the patriarchy posed by a "mannish" woman is at an end. In actuality, the threat to the patriarchal society is just beginning to emerge. Margaret, who appears to meet the criteria for a proper woman--and who seems to know her place in society--will prove to be an enormous threat to the social order of England. Furthermore, while her appearance in the play, sandwiched between Joan's capture and sentencing, highlights the differences between these two, it also marks her as Joan's successor. As Bevington states, "Margaret is explicitly the successor to Joan as femme fatale" ("Domineering" 56). The trouble that her arrival in England will create is hinted at by Suffolk's intention to use her to further his own ambitions, and the marriage contract he arranges. As the wife of Henry VI, she will subvert her role as wife and queen, and involve herself in matters of state.

Henry VI's decision to have Margaret as his wife is indicative of his weakness and unsuitability for the role he was born to. There are suggestions earlier in the play, however, that his reign will be troubled. Henry is just an infant when he becomes king (as he acknowledges in Henry VI, Part 2 when he says, "No sooner was I crept out of my cradle/But I was made a king, at nine months old" (IV.ix.3-4)) and he does not appear on stage in Henry VI, Part 1 until Act III. Throughout the play there are rumblings of discontent at court between England's nobles, most notably the Duke of Gloucester and

the Bishop of Winchester, and York and Somerset. Henry VI, though still a child, is aware of the danger that such factions can cause, as is evident in his speech to his two uncles, Gloucester and Winchester, when he urges them to set aside their differences:

> The special watchmen of our English weal,
> I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
> To join your hearts in love and amity.
> O, what a scandal is it to our crown
> That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
> Believe me, lords, my tender tears can tell,
> Civil dissension is a viperous worm
> That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth. (III.i.66-73)

His recriminations only temporarily alleviate the situation. In his next appearance in the play, while in Paris for his coronation, he is again confronted by squabbling members of his court, this time York and Somerset. He also understands that bickering between his courtiers forebodes trouble for England's chances abroad:

> If [the French] perceive dissension in our looks,
> And that within ourselves we disagree,
> How ill their grudging stomachs be provok'd
> To willful disobedience, and rebel! (IV.i.139-142)

Attempting to end the strife between York and Somerset, he divides his forces in France between the two men, in an incredibly naive gesture, believing that they will set aside their own differences in order to protect the interests of England. While the young prince means well, and is trying to restore calm to his court, his behaviour reveals his lack of understanding of the real world, a deficit forgivable in a young child, but one which cannot be so easily dismissed in an adult (and Henry will continue to exhibit such behaviour). This decision results not only in the loss of territory in France, but the loss of England's

greatest national hero, Talbot, who dies because York and Somerset fail to send him military backing.

It is in his third and fourth appearances in the play, however, that Henry VI reveals the depth of his unsuitability to be king. The Duke of Gloucester wants him to marry, but he is less than happy about the idea: "Marriage uncle? Alas my years are young;/And fitter is my study and my books/Than wanton dalliance with a paramour" (V.i.21-23). This provides the first insight into Henry's scholastic leanings, for which he will be roundly criticized in later plays. Despite his reservations, he agrees to a marriage for the good of his country. His uncle and Lord Protector, the Duke of Gloucester, arranges a marriage with the Earl of Arminack's daughter. Despite this, when Suffolk returns to England and tells the king about Margaret, Henry VI quickly disregards his previous commitment and his decision to marry for the good of the country in his desire to obtain this beautiful young woman for his bride. Unconcerned with the impact that reneging on his previous agreement may have, Henry is driven by lust and emotion to take Margaret as his wife. He does not think about the consequences this act will have on his kingdom, despite the advice of the Duke of Gloucester, and other courtiers. He gains nothing, financially or politically, from his marriage. Instead, it costs him the territories of Anjou and Maine, for which many of his soldiers had fought, and for which some had died. His decision to marry Margaret is the first example in the tetralogy of marriage based not on dynastic needs, but on self-gratification (Edward IV will also contract a marriage for love). Relationships in the first tetralogy which are based on love, inevitably lead to discord and

disaster, for the men involved in them, and for the country as a whole. Love is characterized as weakening a man, and it is associated with the feminine (French, Beyond Power 93). Woodbridge remarks that

> in the Renaissance, in literature at least, love was thought to alter a man in alarming ways. Male characters under the influence of Petrarchanism wept, sighed, complained, exchanged their manly freedom for abject slavery to feminine whim. (238)

Though Tilney stresses that love in marriage is important, he also states that love must grow slowly, because

> hastie love is soone gone. And some have loved in post hast, that afterwards have repented them at leysure. Wee all seek the fayrest, the richest, the noblest. But vertues are laide aside, and nought accounted off, we seeke to feede our eyes, and not to content our eares. (110)

Throughout Shakespeare's plays there are numerous examples of the weakening impact that love has on men. In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo is chided by his friends because of his melancholy disposition and his distraction, caused by his infatuation with Rosalind. In Antony and Cleopatra Antony's love for the Egyptian queen leads him to forgo his duties as a husband and to fail in his role as a military leader. Benedick, in Much Ado About Nothing, shaves off his beard and changes his personality radically when he falls in love with Beatrice. Other playwrights and writers of the time reveal the same notions of love. Edward II, in the play of the same name by Marlowe, rejects his wife and showers money and gifts on two consecutive men, who are his favourites (the issue of homosexuality is a whole other topic). Women can also be weakened by love. In Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage, Dido experiences the debilitating weakness caused by love. When Aeneas, her

lover, leaves her, she kills herself. Though Aeneas was, for a time, also weakened by his love for Dido, refusing to leave Carthage, he eventually resists his feelings. Love is not weakening in all the history plays, however. Henry V, a successful, strong king, contracts a love marriage (though one which is also an appropriate dynastic alliance) with Katherine (Shakespeare Henry V). The important point is that he does so after securing his country's stability. Likewise, Tamburlaine, in the play of the same name by Marlowe, also falls in love, but his love does not motivate his actions. Love is an emotion generally associated with women, and is not one that men are traditionally encouraged to exhibit (except for in the tradition of courtly love, but this was generally based on a love that remained unfulfilled and that did not serve as the basis for marriage). Marilyn French expresses this succinctly:

> If the traditional patriarchal image of woman has constricted them greatly, depriving them of most of life's activities and pleasure, the traditional patriarchal image of men has deprived them greatly, of the core of life, its central "purposes" and values: pleasure, love, intimacy, sharing and community. (Beyond Power 297)

While anger, rage, and hatred were appropriate emotions for men to exhibit, love and those emotions associated with femininity, were not. Only men who can place their love aside in order to pursue their military and political ambitions can remain unscathed (and Henry VI cannot). Henry VI will ultimately destroy himself because of the value that he places on the "feminine" values pointed out by French.

Henry VI's marriage marks the beginning of the alienation of the young king from his court. It also marks the beginning of Henry VI's characterization as a weak and

ineffectual king. Confronted with the possibility of strengthening his position in France through his marriage to the Earl of Arminack's daughter, he instead chooses to give away territory in order to secure the woman he wants. Furthermore, he awards Suffolk a considerable financial compensation for his work. What makes this even more ridiculous is that Henry VI has never actually met Margaret of Anjou. He is basing his decision on Suffolk's description of the young woman. His marriage not only brings nothing to the country, but marks the arrival of a woman who will undermine the peace that is so precariously in place in England at the time.

In Henry VI, Part 1, Joan and Talbot have highlighted the battle between patriarchal society and those who attempt to subvert it. Though they are major characters in the play, as Cox states, "they ultimately make no difference to the outcome of events" (61). Talbot dies in battle, while Joan is led away to be burned at the stake. Talbot dies because he followed the ideals set out by the patriarchal society, where honour and name are everything. Joan's rejection of the values of the patriarchal world, her engagement in military action, and her donning of male dress led to her destruction. It is important to acknowledge, however, that if Joan were on a divine mission, her subversion of gender roles may have been forgivable. However, her interaction with fiends marks the need for her destruction. Her subversion of the gender and hierarchical roles of her society is not caused by her need to follow the instructions of the Virgin Mary, but by her own ambitions and desires. In the end, she is not characterized as a heroine, but as a cowardly witch, willing to use whatever means are available to her in order to survive. While Talbot would

do anything to secure his honour, Joan would do or say anything to save her life. Her entrance onto the political and social scene marks the arrival of the first woman who will threaten the power structure, but she is not the most dangerous or the most powerful threat to patriarchal order. Margaret of Anjou will prove to be much more dangerous. The threat represented by the subversion of gender roles will move from being a battle between two different nationalities (English-male, French-female (Howard and Rackin 54)) in Henry VI, Part 1, to being an internal conflict in Henry VI, Part 2, resulting in a long and bloody civil war. The rumblings of discontent which have permeated the first play of the tetralogy will begin to emerge because of the presence of a weak king and a strong queen, who undermine the very structure upon which the monarchy, and the whole social order, is based.

Chapter 2

Emasculating Women, Emasculated Men: Henry VI, Part 2

The second play of the tetralogy, Henry VI, Part 2, opens with the arrival of Margaret of Anjou, the young king's new bride. Her arrival in England marks the beginning of a period in history which is tumultuous and chaotic. The threat posed by the subversion of gender and hierarchical roles which arose in the first play moves from being an external threat to an internal threat. While Joan de Pucelle and the Countess of Auvergne were foreigners who sought to step out of their expected roles as women, Margaret of Anjou and Eleanor Cobham live in England: the threat has been brought home. In addition to the difficulties caused by these two women, the men in the play begin to exhibit a greater disregard for maintaining the expected social and gender roles. It becomes more and more apparent that Henry VI is an unsuitable monarch. He is weak, ineffectual, and at times very self-centred. The nobles who surround him display progressively more seditious actions and thoughts. Without the leadership of a strong king, and with the gender role subversion which becomes more and more prominent, the order of the patriarchal world begins to disintegrate. The desire for power, expressed by the women and various courtiers in the play, leads to a volatile and dangerous situation, but the ambition of those individuals is hardly surprising.

Throughout Henry VI, Part 2 Margaret of Anjou is presented in a negative light. The audience has been given no concrete idea at the end of Henry VI, Part 1, of the havoc she will cause in England. Bevington states that "Margaret appears much less harmful at

first, because her wiles are more feminine and courtly than Joan's" ("Domineering" 56), but her appearance in the play immediately after Joan's capture marks her as the emerging feminine threat. Linda Bamber discusses the differences between Joan and Margaret. She points out that Margaret always has a male protector, that she is not a female warrior (this is not completely accurate since, in the later plays, she will take to the battlefield), and that she is motivated by her feelings as a mother. Because of the differences between Joan and Margaret, while Margaret is criticized for being a failure as a woman, Joan is not (Bamber 137). I would disagree that Margaret is motivated strictly by her motherly instincts. While this may be true in Henry VI, Part 3, her initial motivation is clearly a desire for power and control.

The details of the marriage contract provide the first indication that Margaret's arrival bodes ill for the country. Her marriage to Henry helps to further alienate those nobles who were becoming progressively more dissatisfied. As was stated in the last chapter, Margaret brought neither money nor goods to her marriage. Instead, she cost England the territories of Maine and Anjou. Henry's decision to cede the territories is his first major mistake: it angers and alienates those members of his court who had fought for them, or other, territories in France. Warwick, whom his father, Salisbury, describes as valiant, weeps at the news. When asked why, he responds:

> For grief that they are past recovery;
> For were there hope to conquer them again,
> My sword should shed hot blood, mine eyes no tears.
> Anjou and Maine? myself did win them both.
> Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer,
> And are the cities that I got with wounds

> Deliver'd up again with peaceful words?
> Mon Dieu! (I.i.116-123)

The loss of these lands is a threat to England's reputation and to the nobles' and soldiers' manhood. They had fought hard for this land, but the king casually gives it away. The affront is particularly troubling because they have no recourse for action. York states that he would have "torn and rent his heart/Before [he] would have yielded to this league" (I.i.126-127). Margaret's marriage to Henry VI also put an end to the opportunity of forming a political alliance with France and a better relationship with the King of France, through Henry's marriage to the daughter of the Earl of Arminack. Henry ignores these issues because he wants to marry Margaret. When he finally meets her, he is as captivated by her physical presence as he was by Suffolk's description of the young French woman:

> Her sight did ravish, but her grace in speech,
> Her word yclad with wisdom's majesty,
> Makes me from wond'ring fall to weeping joys,
> Such is the fullness of my heart's content. (I.i.32-35)

He is in love. He makes Suffolk, who clearly has designs on gaining more power, a duke for his part in arranging the marriage and he also grants him money, raised by taxing the people. Gloucester tells the other nobles that Suffolk had demanded a 15% tax on the income on land (I.i.132-134). Though Henry, in Henry VI, Part 1, had granted him a tenth (V.v.92-93), Suffolk actually demands more for himself, indicating his greed and his disregard for the plight of England's people. Financially, the commons are forced to pay for Henry's folly. Margaret's presence will prove even more disturbing and threatening, however, to England's stability.

Margaret is horrified by her husband's inaction and uninvolvement in state affairs. Philippe Erlanger in his history Margaret of Anjou remarks on the difference between the French and English courts (84). The daughter of a French nobleman, she is appalled by the power held by Parliament, and her husband's lack of authority:

> My Lord of Suffolk, say, is this the guise,
> Is this the fashions in the court of England?
> Is this the government of Britain's isle,
> And this the royalty of Albion's king?
> What, shall King Henry be a pupil still
> Under the surly Gloucester's governance?
> Am I a queen in title and in style,
> And must be made a subject to a duke?
> I tell thee, Pole, when in the city Tours
> Thou ran'st a-tilt in honor of my love
> And stol'st away the ladies' hearts of France,
> I thought King Henry had resembled thee
> In courage, courtship, and proportion . . . . (I.iii.42-54)

In Act I, scene iii, she proceeds to discuss with Suffolk Henry's fascination with religious matters and his resulting inaction:

> But all his mind is bent to holiness,
> To number Ave-Maries on his beads;
> His champions are the prophets and apostles,
> His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,
> His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves
> Are brazen images of canonized saints.
> I would the college of the Cardinals
> Would choose him Pope and carry him to Rome,
> And set the triple crown upon his head--
> That were a state fit for his holiness. (I.iii.55-64)

Margaret's choice of language is interesting--she is using the terminology of chivalrous knighthood (tilt-yard, weapons, champions) to describe Henry's religious tendencies. This highlights the perversion of the warrior ideal--which Henry should at least attempt to

fulfill, but does not--to religious concerns. The fact that she describes Suffolk's own success in chivalrous competitions immediately prior to this highlights Henry's deficiencies even more. It also indicates that though Margaret may fail Henry as a wife, he also fails her. He is not what she expected.

This is not the only time in the play that Henry's religious leanings are discussed. From early in the play, those around him refer to his piety and his interest in religion. Richard, Duke of York, is the first to make such a reference. When talking of his desire to seize the crown for himself, he says Henry VI's "church-like humours fits not for a crown" (I.i.247). For the most part, religious matters have little place in the world of politics. Henry VI's preoccupation makes him accepting and philosophical about defeat. After losing more territory in France, he is upset with the news, but responds, "Cold, news, Lord Somerset; but God's will be done!" (III.i.86). This is hardly the proper reaction for a king who should be motivated by anger and a desire for revenge and not willing to passively accept news of defeat. Henry is too philosophical.

Margaret is disillusioned with her husband and disheartened by the state England's court is in. She loses no time in trying to resolve the situation, involving herself in political and state affairs, with the aid of her lover, Suffolk. In Act I, scene iii, Gloucester admonishes the queen for her involvement in such issues: "Madam, the king is old enough himself/To give his censure. These are no women's matters" (116-117). His comment is tied to the ideals of womanhood. Women were expected to stay at home and involve themselves with domestic interests. Furthermore, her attempt to govern her husband is at

odds with the idea that women were to be obedient to men. (Knox is extremely vocal about the idea of women governing men. He states that it is the effeminate manners of some men which leads them to argue some women should be allowed to teach men who are inferior in intellect and spirituality to them (25). Knox believes that even this idea is abominable--no woman should have authority or sway over any man (25).) Gloucester's censure is ignored, as it is by his wife, who also wants to involve herself in political matters. Margaret quickly makes herself an enemy of the Duke of Gloucester, resenting the power and authority he wields over the country. Hall acknowledges she intends to remove his power (2B2v), and Howard and Rackin remark that

> In singling out Gloucester as a rival to be eliminated, Margaret both acknowledges Gloucester's power and recognizes that Henry cannot pretend to control the realm while Gloucester holds the staff that symbolizes his authority as Lord Protector. (70)

Margaret also resents his wife, Eleanor Cobham. Speaking to Suffolk about her anger over the Duchess of Gloucester's behaviour toward her, she expresses her desire to see her, and the duke, removed from power and destroyed. She will get her wish.

Margaret is motivated by self-interest, a desire for power, and a need to control the events around her. She is everything a woman should not be. Instead of remaining in the background, behind her husband, she takes matters into her own hands, involving herself in political and court matters. She is a scheming, lying adulteress who sleeps with another man, Suffolk. As queen, her adultery is particularly threatening. (There is no proof, historically, that Suffolk and Margaret had an affair, though he was certainly a favourite courtier of hers. Their affair serves to blacken both their reputations, (while also adding

some spice to the play).) Through her affair, Margaret undermines the most basic component of a patriarchal structure at its most fundamental level. Rothman remarks that the reasons for "the 'double standard' - the ideas about virginity for brides, abortion, 'illegitimacy,' about women's sexual and procreative freedom in all areas - reflect men's concern for maintaining paternity" (31). Without the assurance of a woman's purity, no man can be sure of a child's paternity. This is why, Rackin states, women posed a threat to the patriarchal order: "because an adulterous woman at any point could make a mockery of the whole story of patriarchal succession" (Stages of History 160). Any child which Margaret bears may not be the product of her husband's marriage bed. She could, potentially, place a bastard on the throne. Holinshed states that many of the common people believed that Edward was not the son of Henry VI, that in fact the king was incapable of having children. They used "manie slanderous words, greatlie sounding to the queenes dishonour," over this issue (Holinshed 236). This may be where Shakespeare got the idea to suggest that her affair with Suffolk was widely known in the country. Margaret's affair also serves to humiliate Henry VI. He is shown to be a cuckold, and cuckolds were "fair game for sport, and infinite were the jests passed upon this 'horned' species of man" (Kelso 90). They were viewed as dupes.

Margaret's relationship with Suffolk is one of the few issues which prompts any sign of weakness in the queen's strength and determination. She pleads with the king not to banish him, the only time she actually asks him (rather than telling him) to do something (III.ii.289). Unfortunately for her, this is also one of the few times Henry makes a decisive

move. His decision results in the banishment of her lover, on pain of death. Margaret bewails his fate (III.ii.339-356), and when he is killed, she grieves for him. She carries his head about the stage (IV.iv). In this scene Margaret blatantly reveals her love for Suffolk, and in a way that is extremely erotic: "Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast;/But where's the body that I should embrace?" (IV.iv.5-6). She leaves no doubt about the true nature of their affair, or of the way her love and desire for him has shaped her. She says that his "lovely face/Rul'd like a wandering planet over [her]" (IV.iv.15-16). Suffolk's involvement with the queen is avenged by his beheading. The lovely face that "kiss'd the Queen" (IV.i.74), has been removed from its body. The queen's distraction and grief once again reveal the disruptive influence love and sexual desire have. She is unconcerned with the spectacle she is making, and ignores what is going on around her. The king reprimands her for her behaviour, saying he believes she would not mourn so for him. She responds that she would die for him. Despite her affair, Margaret is loyal to her husband in her own way. She wants Henry to act as king and wishes he would show more interest in matters of state. Because he is unwilling and unable to control and direct his court, Margaret takes the task upon herself. (Margaret may well have been a good queen if she had had the guidance of a strong king. Henry VI's inactivity, however, leads her to take matters into her own hands.)

In the end, Margaret recovers from the lethargy which has dominated her since the death of her lover, and she once again involves herself in matters which lie outside her domain as a woman. Faced with the possibility of York's military success against the king,

she forces her husband to flee, becoming angry with him for his failure to act:

> What are you made of? You'll nor fight nor fly.
> Now is it manhood, wisdom, and defense
> To give the enemy way, and to secure us
> By what we can, which can no more but fly. (V.ii.74-77)

Margaret finally prods him into action and they do escape.

Henry's unsuitability for the position of king becomes more and more apparent. His defects are obviously stated in the above reprimand by Margaret. He is ineffective and unmanly. Howard and Rackin state that "Henry VI, Part II makes the young King Henry responsible for much of the disorder in his kingdom, and it insistently connects his failures as a monarch to his failures of masculinity" (67). Though very likeable, he has neither the intellect nor the political cunning which is needed to keep England together, and to subvert the efforts of those who wish to undermine his authority. One of Henry VI's greatest mistakes lies in his failure to curb Margaret's actions. Though there had certainly been factions appearing in the court before her arrival, Margaret's actions precipitate and fuel the eruption of outright civil war. If Henry could have controlled his wife, as a strong, dominant man would, many of the problems Margaret causes in England would not have arisen. His failure to control his wife is indelibly linked to his effeminate presentation, as is her cuckolding of him. Men were expected to control and govern the women in their lives, as is evident from the repeated references to obedience in the literature of the time (Kelso draws attention to this (42)).

The most outstanding example of Henry's inactivity, and his failure to curb his wife's actions, results in the death of his one trustworthy supporter, the Duke of

Gloucester. The latter is next in line for the crown since, at this point, Henry VI is without an heir. His popularity and his high social standing aggravate his enemies, who want to seize the power he wields for themselves. In Act II, scene i, after they have been hawking, the Cardinal, Suffolk, and Margaret begin to attack and criticize Gloucester, in the presence of the king. Henry's only response is to mildly rebuff the queen, using biblical references in his response: "I prithee peace,/Good queen, and whet not on these furious peers,/For blessed are the peacemakers on earth" (32-34). The Cardinal's answer is particularly interesting. As a man of the cloth, it would be expected that he might show more piety than Henry VI. Yet he exhibits much more interest in intrigue and war than the king ever does: "Let me be blessed for the peace I make/Against this proud Protector with my sword!" (II.i.35-36). While illustrating the Cardinal's own aspirations and character, this also highlights Henry's mildness and inaction. He shows a lack of understanding of the situation around him. Later, when the Duchess of Gloucester is captured and found guilty of treason, he again fails to defend the Duke, and takes the staff of Protectorship, even though he states he believes in his uncle's innocence: "And go in peace, Humphrey, no less belov'd/Than when thou wert Protector to thy King" (II.iii.26-27). Margaret is thrilled Henry is finally taking control for himself:

> Why, now is Henry king, and Margaret queen,
> And Humphrey duke of Gloucester scarce himself,
> That bears so shrewd a maim: two pulls at once--
> His lady banish'd, and a limb lopp'd off.
> This staff of honor raught, there let it stand,
> Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand. (II.iii.39-44)

Margaret's choice of language is very interesting. She refers to his staff as a limb lopped

off. The staff suggest phallic imagery, and its loss, emasculation. Suffolk compares Gloucester to a droopy pine, again using phallic imagery, this time to suggest impotence. Gloucester's staff is the symbol of his power and authority. When Henry takes it from him, he loses that power. He is unmanned, or, in other words, symbolically emasculated. While Gloucester is still held in high esteem by the king, the process of destruction has begun. His enemies now actively pursue the Duke, using every opportunity to accuse him of wrong-doing, in the process attributing to him the characteristics that they themselves embody.

After the Duchess of Gloucester's banishment, the queen actively tries to persuade Henry the Duke has changed and now poses a threat to him:

> Can you not see? or will yet not observe
> The strangeness of his alter'd countenance?
> With what a majesty he bears himself,
> How insolent of late he is become,
> How proud, how peremptory, and unlike himself? (III.i.4-8)

Despite her urgings and persuading, echoed by the Cardinal, York, Buckingham and Suffolk, the King remains assured of the Duke's loyalty:

> My lords, at once: the care you have of us
> To mow down thorns that would annoy our foot
> Is worthy praise; but shall I speak my conscience,
> Our kinsman Gloucester is as innocent
> From meaning treason to our royal person
> As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove.
> The Duke is virtuous, mild, and too well given
> To dream on evil or to work my downfall. (III.i.66-73)

This speech also shows that Henry does not understand the motivation of the nobles. He naively believes they are acting out of their concern for him, rather than self-interest. He is

simply not a match, intellectually or physically, for those who wish to gain power for themselves. Courtney describes him thus:

> Henry VI, a weak man but a peaceful Christian, lacks the ability to wield power, command authority, or inspire confidence. He cannot control the Machiavels who surround him. This inability breeds their ambitions and invites their contempt. (75)

When his nobles and his wife accuse the Duke himself of treason, Henry VI does not protect him, and instead hands him over to his enemies, once again stating his belief in his uncle's innocence:

> Ah, uncle Humphrey, in thy face I see
> The map of honor, truth, and loyalty;
> And yet, good Humphrey, is the hour to come
> That e'er I prov'd thee false or fear'd thy faith.
> What low'ring star now envies thy estate,
> That these great lords, and Margaret our queen,
> Do seek subversion of thy harmless life? (III.i.202-208)

Though he finally understands that the nobles and Margaret want Gloucester removed, he does nothing to halt their progress.

Henry begins to cry, feeling helpless to save Gloucester. He compares himself to a dam whose calf has been slaughtered and who can do nothing but "wail her darling's loss" (III.i.216). Howard and Rackin state that

> compared to a mother cow bewailing the loss of a calf carried off to the slaughter, the King of England is refigured as a lowly domestic animal and regendered as a bereaved - and helpless - mother. Himself the author of the comparisons, the king is also the author of his own disempowerment. (71)

Henry feminizes himself, and he seems to feel that he has no power to stop the actions of those around him, that his enemies are too strong for him to fight. (In Act III, scene I,

Gloucester himself states that he "throws away his crutch" (189), essentially stating that the king has emasculated himself. Without him, Gloucester knows that the young man has no one he can trust or rely upon.) Yet Henry is king, and as king, he does absolutely nothing to save his uncle and good friend. Instead he leaves parliament, saying "My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,/Do or undo, as if ourself were here" (III.i.195-196). Rather than deal with the situation, Henry VI wants to leave, and he does, crying as he goes. Even Margaret is shocked by his departure: "What, will your Highness leave the parliament?" (III.i.197) (although this does suit her own purposes, leaving Gloucester at the mercy of his enemies). His inaction ultimately allows the Duke of Gloucester to be murdered.

It is Margaret who suggests Gloucester's murder to her co-conspirators, while Suffolk sees that it is carried out. Upon hearing of his uncle's death, Henry VI rages at the deliverer of the news, Suffolk. His grief is palpable, if ineffectual, and the outrage of the common people is immediate. Neither Suffolk, nor his lover, Margaret, had counted on their reactions. Suffolk is banished. Henry, for the first time, has made a resolute decision, and he remains unmoved by Margaret's appeals: "Ungentle queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!/No more, I say! If thou dost plead for him,/Thou wilt but add increase unto my wrath" (III.ii.290-292). Though he finally stands up to Margaret and the nobles around him, he has already lost his one true supporter. Without Gloucester, Henry VI has no one to protect or support him, which he recognizes himself: "For with his soul fled all my worldly solace;/For seeing him, I see my life in death" (III.ii.151-152). He is left wide

open to those who want to seize his power, and they take advantage of this fact.

Henry VI, towards the end of the play, states that he does not want to be king, that he has been trapped by his birth:

> Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne
> And could command no more content than I?
> No sooner was I crept out of my cradle
> But I was made a king, at nine months old.
> Was never subject long'd to be a king
> As I do long and wish to be a subject. (IV.ix.1-6)

He cannot escape from the role of king, however neither can he proficiently fulfill that role. He is trapped by his place in the patriarchal world. As the son of a king, he is expected to assume the role of leadership. His failure to remove Gloucester as Lord Protector, until Margaret forces the issue, illustrates his own lack of interest in matters of state. Even more problematic is the fact that Henry VI fails to fulfill the gender role assigned to him as a man. He fails to control his wife, he remains passive (for the most part) and inactive, and he continually withdraws from issues which he should settle and control. He gives his power to his wife and nobles. As revealed in the writings of the Renaissance, men were expected to control and govern the women in their lives. Yet Henry VI is clearly governed by Margaret. Marilyn French, in Beyond Power, draws attention to the roles which men are expected to fulfill, and what they cannot do, as men: "a man cannot be under the power of a woman; he cannot be like a woman (effeminate: this has no connection with homosexuality). Usually he cannot be passive" (276). Yet this is exactly what Henry VI is. It costs him his kingdom, his peace of mind, and ultimately, his life. Hall characterizes Henry as a meek, peaceful man, more interested in religious matters than politics: "there

could be none, more chaste, more meke, more holy, nor a better creature: In hym reigned shamfastenesse, modestie, integretie, and pacience to bee marveiled at" (2B2v). While these qualities might make him admirable, they also make him an ineffective and weak king.

Henry does exhibit some talent for peace-keeping. Rather than seeking the destruction of the rioters after the Jack Cade rebellion, he wants them to be pardoned and allowed to return to their homes:

> I'll send some holy bishop to entreat;
> For God forbid so many simple souls
> Should perish by the sword! And I myself,
> Rather than bloody war shall cut them short,
> Will parley with Jack Cade their general. (IV.iv.9-13)

However, he does not lead his troops in battle and he is never shown fighting with anyone. Instead, he is shown to be watching or hiding from the action. Furthermore, the concern he shows his people is inconsistent. While he wants to save the rioters from being punished, he showed no hesitation in taxing the commons in order to bankroll his marriage to Margaret. He ultimately shows that he lacks the attributes necessary in a king. Henry has, in essence, been trapped by his hierarchical role as king, which he is expected to fulfill enthusiastically and effectively. He fails miserably and is unhappy to boot. He does not want to be king. The tragedy of the situation is twofold: personally, Henry VI is forced to live a life which is contrary to his own personal needs and desires, and politically, England is forced to endure the rule of an ineffective, weak king.

Margaret and Henry essentially weaken the patriarchal structure through their

inversion of gender roles. Margaret would, in actuality, be a much better ruler. Hall refers to the fact that she had many of the qualities usually associated with a man. She was

> a woman of greate witte, and yet of no greater witte, then of haute stomacke, desirous of glory, and couetous of honor and reason, pollicye, counsall and other giftes and talents of nature, belongying to a man. (2B2v)

Foxe also remarks that these characteristics led Margaret to take the government of England upon herself (51) when her husband failed to rule effectively. Her governance helps to plunge England into a period of chaos and turmoil.

The king and queen are not the only two characters who subvert gender roles in the play. There are a series of other individuals who also weaken England's stability. One of only two women in Henry VI, Part 2, Eleanor Cobham is presented as a scheming, ambitious woman who is willing to do anything to become queen of England. As the wife of the Lord Protector, she has a high social position and substantial financial wealth. She exhibits absolutely no loyalty, either to her king, her queen, or her husband. The dreams Eleanor and her husband have at the beginning of the play are interesting because of what they suggest. Gloucester dreamed that his staff had been broken in two. His staff represents his authority and power and its destruction would mean a loss of that power--it marks his emasculation. His dream contrasts sharply with Eleanor's:

> Methought I sate in seat of majesty
> In the cathedral church of Westminster,
> And in that chair where kings and queens were crown'd,
> Where Henry and Dame Margaret kneel'd to me,
> And on my head did set the diadem. (I.ii.36-40)

Her dream is particularly interesting because it does not include her husband. She did not

dream that he was crowned king, but that she was crowned. Howard and Rackin remark that

> Eleanor's dream reveals much about the exact nature of her transgressions. Significantly, the person crowned in the dream is Eleanor alone, although it is Gloucester, who as brother to Henry V has a blood claim to the throne if Henry VI dies without issue. (75)

This suggests that her ambitions may be even more threatening to the patriarchal order: she may actually wish to rule herself, though she knows it is only through her husband she may do so. Eleanor may believe that she could rule through her husband, much as Margaret rules Henry VI, and the way Suffolk had hoped to rule Henry VI through Margaret. Gloucester's dream proves to be prophetic, while Eleanor's is not.

Eleanor is the antithesis of what Jankowski states: that a woman was "required to be 'chaste, silent and obedient'" (48). (Though she does state there were a number of "acceptable manifestations" of this which allowed women to hold some power (i.e. parental authority for some wives in Protestant marriages, legal rights for some widows, allowing them to engage in business, queens and some noblewomen being allowed to play a role in politics) these were exceptions (Jankowski 48-9).) Early in the play Eleanor attempts to encourage her husband, the Duke of Gloucester, to seize the crown for himself:

> What seest thou there? King Henry's diadem,
> Enchas'd with all the honors of the world?
> If so, gaze on, and grovel on thy face,
> Until thy head be circled with the same. (I.ii.7-10)

He is horrified by her suggestion. When she continues to push him, he becomes angered,

calling her "Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtur'd Eleanor" (I.ii.42). He is adamant in his refusal: "And may that thought, when I imagine ill/Against my king and nephew, virtuous Henry,/Be my last breathing in this mortal world!" (I.ii.19-21). To an honourable man (which Gloucester is) who is only interested in supporting his king, Eleanor's treasonous suggestions are reprehensible. While she does not like his decision, she has little choice in at least outwardly obeying his commands: "Follow I must, I cannot go before/While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind" (I.ii.61-62). Her acquiescence is only for show, however. Eleanor takes matters into her own hands. She wishes she were a man. Eleanor states that if she were, she would not be swayed by feelings of loyalty:

> Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
> I would remove these tedious stumbling-blocks,
> And smooth my way upon their headless necks;
> And, being a woman, I will not be slack
> To play my part in Fortune's pageant. (I.ii.63-67)

In this section of the play, where she has tried to persuade her husband to seek the crown, Eleanor's speech seems to be a precursor of Lady Macbeth's in Macbeth, a much later play by Shakespeare:

> Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
> And chastise with the valour of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round,
> Which fate and metaphysical aide doth seem
> To have thee crown'd withal. (Macbeth I.v.25-30)

Pugliatti states that Shakespeare makes Eleanor "a miniature Lady Macbeth, although less resolute and 'manly' than her more famous sibling" (462). The difference between these two women lies in the reactions of their husbands. While Gloucester is horrified by his

wife's treasonous idea, Macbeth is not. Furthermore, it is Macbeth, not his wife, who consults witches. Despite her protestation, however, Lady Macbeth is driven mad by her guilt over her role in the death of the king. In contrast, Eleanor never exhibits any concern over her own rejection of the loyalty she owes to her king and her husband. Nancy Guitierrez would find Eleanor's decision easy to understand. Because Eleanor has no authority to act on her own behalf, she can be tempted to try and alter the patriarchal order to suit her own purposes. Guitierrez describes this phenomenon as follows: "because women are marginalized by the patriarchal system, they can very easily be tempted to work against it" ("Witchcraft" 4). In her attempt to control matters, Eleanor contributes to the disintegration of the patriarchal order in England, undermining her husband's power and authority, and thereby providing his enemies with the means by which to destroy him. Her actions also allow the king's enemies to move forward with their plans to usurp him. This is exactly what she wants to do herself, but Eleanor's plan is to seize power for her husband and herself, not to undermine his power.

In the play, Eleanor foolishly earns the wrath of the new queen, Margaret of Anjou. Instead of pretending to offer loyalty and admiration to her monarch, as do most of the courtiers in the play who are jockeying for more power, Eleanor is obviously dismissive. She makes snide comments to other royals about the queen's lack of wealth, she dresses extravagantly, and she refuses to show the queen the deference she is due because of her social position. This does not escape Margaret's notice:

> She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
> More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife.

> Strangers in court do take her for the Queen.
> She bears a duke's revenues on her back,
> And in her heart she scorns our poverty.
> Shall I not live to be aveng'd on her?
> Contemptuous base-born callot as she is,
> She vaunted 'mongst her minion t'other day,
> The very train of her worst wearing gown
> Was better worth than all my father's lands,
> Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter. (I.iii.77-87)

These actions only anger the queen and make her eager to see the duchess destroyed. (Pugliatti states that "Shakespeare unhistorically abases the queen's motives to a mean (one might think, 'womanly') desire to humiliate Eleanor Cobham (see 1.3.138-40), whereas Margaret and Eleanor Cobham probably never met" (460).) Margaret's choice of language in the above passage is very interesting. She calls Eleanor a "callot", meaning a lewd woman, according to Bevington's notes in his collection of Shakespeare's plays, (Complete Works 546, I.iii.83), and according to Blakemore Evans, a strumpet (635, I.iii.83). The callot is in direct opposition to the patriarchal ideal of the virtuous, submissive woman. This use of female-specific insults serves as a means to keep women subordinated, attributing to them the characteristics and titles of specific examples of womanhood which are considered unacceptable and undesirable. This use of language marginalizes and isolates the offending women. Margaret also draws attention to Eleanor's low birth in this passage. This serves to blacken Eleanor on another level: she is not only trying to subvert her position as a woman, but as a member of the lower classes. It is ironic that Margaret chooses to use this technique on Eleanor since she is, herself, the subject of such criticism.

Suffolk sets in motion a series of events which will lead to the Duchess of Gloucester's humiliation, even before a request is made by the queen:

> Madam, myself have lim'd a bush for her,
> And plac'd a choir of such enticing birds
> That she will light to listen to the lays,
> And never mount to trouble you again. (I.iii.88-91)

Here Suffolk compares Eleanor to a bird, one who is attempting to "mount," to fly above her sphere. His statement that he has "lim'd a bush for her" refers to the practise of catching birds "by smearing bushes and twigs with a sticky substance known as birdlime" (Greenblatt 224; I.iii.92). Suffolk is going to keep Eleanor from soaring above her station. Knowing this, the queen does everything in her power to aggravate Eleanor, boxing her ears when she refuses to pick up a fan. This fuels Eleanor's desire to see the queen destroyed and herself placed on the throne. In her attempt to forward her position, Eleanor arranges to meet with a witch. This representation of Eleanor's involvement in witchcraft is reminiscent of the depiction of Joan's involvement in witchcraft in Henry VI, Part 1. Though Eleanor is not a witch herself, she is completely willing to use the forces of evil for her own purposes. She is unconcerned with the morality of such an endeavour. Historically, Shakespeare's representation of Eleanor Cobham's activities are fairly accurate. She was caught with a witch, attempting to destroy Henry VI (Hall 2A4r). Shakespeare does depart from the historical data, however, by refraining from making reference to a wax figure of Henry VI which had been created and which was going to be used to destroy him (Hall 2A4r). However, in Henry VI, Part 2 her involvement with witchcraft only extends to enquiring about Henry's reign. She does not actually do

anything which threatens his health or throne. Her crime in the play is associating with witches. She does not actually take part in any attempt to kill the king (Levine, "Case" 113). She is caught with the witch, betrayed by Hume who had set up the meeting, but who also worked for Suffolk. She is captured, charged with treason, and ultimately punished. Her husband, for whom honour and name are everything, cannot, and will not, save her: "Eleanor, the law, thou seest, hath judged thee;/I cannot justify whom the law condemns" (II.iii.15-16). She is forced to walk the streets of London, being jeered at by the commons, and she is then sentenced to exile on the Isle of Man. (Her punishment is historically accurate (Holinshed 2A4r).) She remains unrepentant, criticizing her husband for failing to rescue her. As Levine states, "she refuses, in the end, to take her place as the silently suffering female" ("Case" 118).

Through her attempts to subvert the patriarchy, and her refusal to listen to her husband, Eleanor has destroyed herself. Furthermore, she has given her husband's enemies the ammunition with which to begin his destruction. (Levine suggests that Eleanor is used as a pawn by the Yorkists to further their own ambitions ("Case" 111).) However, as Williamson states though Margaret's "taunting of Eleanor is intended to drive her to ruin, as it does, yet it would hardly succeed in bringing Gloucester down but for the real opposition to him among the nobles" (49). Eleanor disregards her position as a woman, as a wife, as a courtier, and as a subject. By doing so, she sets in motion a chain of events which will turn the patriarchal world upside down, and lead to her husband's destruction. (Davis discusses the way the disorderly woman, who steps out of her socially determined

role as a female to seek power and authority, disrupts the social order, and leads the woman into areas such as witchcraft (148). She also discusses the way that disorderliness could reinforce societal rules (153), or challenge them (154). In Eleanor's case, her disregard for her role as a woman reinforces the idea that female disorderliness is extremely dangerous to the social order, and can only produce a negative outcome.)

The Duke of Gloucester is the only nobleman in King Henry VI's court who has the best interests of the king and the country at heart. Unlike Suffolk, the Cardinal, York, and others, he is not interested in procuring further rights and privileges for himself, or in seizing control of the throne. He is the last remaining bulwark of a society which seems to be rapidly disappearing from England during Henry VI's reign. Like Talbot in Henry VI, Part 1, Gloucester is motivated by his notion of honour and nobility. His name and standing are of the utmost importance to him. Throughout the play he is described by those around him as honourable. In Act I, scene i, Salisbury states that "I never say but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester/Did bear him like a noble gentleman" (183-184). He urges York and Warwick to support Gloucester. One of the key mistakes Gloucester makes is in assuming that these qualities will protect him from his enemies, that honour will win out against deception and intrigue: he is wrong.

Despite his innate goodness, Gloucester is betrayed by the actions of those around him: his wife, his enemies, and his king. His downfall is precipitated by a number of events. First of all, his inability to control his wife leads to her desire to be made queen and her involvement with witches and conjurors. Gloucester's failure to make his wife

behave is an indication of his position as a man. One of the most basic elements of any patriarchal society is the need for men and women to assume their correct gender roles. Eleanor attempts to subvert her position, both in terms of gender and hierarchy. Her actions, and Gloucester's failure to curtail her (though he does try), contribute to the subversion which is beginning to permeate English society, and which is undermining the basic structure upon which that society is based, leaving England in a state of unrest and chaos.

Both Henry VI and Gloucester are guilty of allowing their wives to take control, and "in both cases, the men's failure to control their wives has more than personal consequences; it also undermines the stability of the kingdom" (Howard and Rackin 77). Both the king and the duke are also guilty of loving their wives. As was discussed in the introduction, love is feminizing and weakening. The Duke's obvious affection for his bride is displayed throughout the play in the way that he speaks to her. (In Shakespeare's sources, Gloucester's relationships with women are shown to be problematic. First of all, he marries a woman who is already married (Hall P4v). Later, when this marriage is ruled illegitimate, he marries Eleanor Cobham, "by wanton affeccion blinded" (Hall P5r).) In "History into Tragedy: The Case of Richard III," Rackin comments that in the Henry VI plays, marriage is represented as dangerous and destructive to men (37). This is not completely accurate. All love relationships are shown to be ill-advised and destructive. Suffolk's relationship with Margaret, the Duke of Gloucester's relationship with Eleanor, and Henry VI's marriage to Margaret all bring trouble to the men, personally, and to the

state. All these men are "women's men" (as Canidius, led by Antony who allows his love for Cleopatra to shape his decisions, describes himself and his peers in Antony and Cleopatra (III.vii.69), governed by the women the men love). It is Gloucester's affection for his wife that leads him to trust her.

The Duke of Gloucester also fails to fully understand the danger he is in. Suffolk, Margaret, the Cardinal, York, and his other enemies will stop at nothing to see him destroyed. They attack him, accusing him of a series of wrong-doing-- appropriating funds, selling of offices in France, failure to pay soldiers, and cruelty in meting out punishments. His faith in his own goodness and in the social structure which he believes will protect him contributes to his destruction. (Hall alludes to this in his history (2B3r).) He fails to comprehend the way society has changed. His wife, however, with her own aspirations for power and glory, does. She attempts to warn him, but her explanations fall on deaf ears:

> Ah, Nell, forbear! thou aimest all awry.
> I must offend before I be attainted;
> And had I twenty times so many foes,
> And each of them had twenty times their power,
> All these could not procure me any scathe
> So long as I am loyal, true, and crimeless. (II.iv.58-63)

As Marilyn Williamson states,

> If Humphrey is not gullible (he keeps York out of the regency of France and therefore without forces), he is still too trusting in his own innocence to survive the fierce competition among the factions of nobles, as Eleanor tells him when he counsels her to bear her penance and exile patiently. (48)

Gloucester stands for almost everything that is manly. He is strong, forthright,

honourable, and noble (Holinshed's characterization of Gloucester is extremely favourable (211-212).) He is able to act decisively and in the best interests of his king and country. In fact, aside from Margaret, he is perhaps one of the few members of the nobility who actually wants Henry VI to assume control of the kingdom (though he is aware of the young king's shortcomings). He is also one of the few nobles who is not plotting against the king, or attempting to subvert the patriarchal order (Margaret certainly wants to outwardly maintain the order, but she wants things to be done her way, not the way the king feels is best). His strengths are highlighted by his anger at the marriage between Margaret and Henry VI, his suggestion for settling an accusation between a man and his servant (I.iii.207-209), and his treatment of the man who is pretending to be blind. Simpcox, who claims to have been blind since birth, says he regained his eyesight after visiting Saint Alban's shrine. The Duke of Gloucester quickly exposes him as a fraud, highlighting his own intellectual capabilities while doing so. (At the same time, Henry VI's inability to detect the deception shows that he is not particularly smart. He would have willingly accepted the miracle as true (II.i).) Gloucester remains loyal to King Henry VI despite his horror over some of his decisions and actions. As next in line to the throne, and as a popular noble, Gloucester's power seems assured, yet it is because he is next in line that he is resented and disliked by the other nobles. They will do anything to see him destroyed, and they will be successful. Abiding by rules which are no longer being followed, Gloucester cannot halt the progress of his destruction (and does not really try because he underestimates the severity of the threat). He is betrayed by his king's

inaction, Margaret's and other courtiers' scheming, and his wife's ambition. The loss is England's.

One of Gloucester's most prominent enemies is the Duke of Suffolk. Suffolk begins to express his desire for more power at the end of Henry VI, Part 1. He poses a threat to the patriarchy for a number of reasons. First of all, he arranges a marriage, as was discussed in the last chapter, for the king with a woman who he wants for himself (despite the fact that he is married and the king is already betrothed). Even though Suffolk falls for Margaret, he never forgets his own agenda. Still, his desire for the young queen is troubling. As Howard and Rackin remark, "Suffolk's adulterous passion for Margaret [. . .] is a sign of his own lack of self control" (69). (All the relationships in the early history plays which are motivated by love, rather than need and politics, are shown to be a sign of weakness.) Suffolk understands Henry VI's lack of strength and sees his relationship with the new queen as a means by which to extend his own control and power, through her. His actions indicate that his interests lie not with the well-being of the king and country, but in his own ambition. He does not care that Margaret's marriage to Henry VI has angered the nobles and alienated the king from his people. He also does not care that he has cuckolded the king, whom he had sworn allegiance to. He denigrates the Duke of Gloucester to Henry (I.iii.122-127 and III.i.42-57), he plots with the other nobles to bring about Gloucester's destruction (III.i.257-265), and in the end, he arranges his murder. Essentially, "in 2 Henry VI Suffolk [is] the principal agent behind the destruction of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the only remaining bulwark preventing complete

political chaos, as all things meet in mere oppugnancy" (Cox 63). The threat he poses to the social order is enormous. He plots against someone superior in rank and he has murdered the next in line to the throne, and he has an affair with the queen, thereby subverting the proper patriarchal order of succession.

Suffolk fails to understand the fragility of his own standing. Disliked by the general populace, his involvement in the death of the Duke of Gloucester is suspected, as brought forward by Salisbury to the king:

> Dread lord, the commons sends you word by me,
> Unless Lord Suffolk straight be done to death,
> Or banished fair England's territories,
> They will by violence tear him from your palace,
> And torture him with grievous ling'ring death. (III.ii.243-247)

He finds himself banished from England on pain of death. Later, he is captured at sea. Discovering his identity, his captors immediately plan to kill him, unmoved by his statements of his own importance and standing. He is accused of treason by them:

> Ay, kennel, puddle, sink, whose filth and dirt
> Troubles the silver spring where England drinks.
> Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth
> For swallowing the treasure of the realm.
> Thy lips that kiss'd the Queen shall sweep the ground,
> And thou that smil'dst at good Duke Humphrey's death
> Against the senseless winds shall grin in vain,
> Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again;
> And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
> For daring to affay a mighty lord
> Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
> Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem. (IV.i.71-82)

The imagery in this passage refers again and again to the mouth: the yawning mouth (73) which swallowed the treasure of the realm; the lips that kissed the queen (75), and later

smiled at the news of Gloucester's death (76). The lieutenant states that these very lips will now "sweep the ground" (75) and "grin in vain." (77). Suffolk will not spend his life with Margaret, but he will be married to the "hags of hell" (79). He carries on the image of the mouth by evoking the extremely disturbing ideas of matricide and cannibalism: "And like ambitious Sylla, overgorg'd/With gobbets of thy [mother's] bleeding heart" (IV.i.84-85). The reference to mother, here, refers to England--Suffolk's mother country. Through his actions he has disregarded the well-being of his country. This betrayal is seen by the pirates as evil and extremely disturbing. Suffolk himself carries on the image of the mouth in his reference to his "imperial tongue" which is "stern and tough/Us'd to command, untaught to plead for favor" (IV.iv.121-122). This scene also contains an interesting pun on the words pole, pool and poll, which highlights the similarity in pronunciation of "poll, head, pole, Suffolk's family name, and pool, a pool of water" (Bevington, Complete Works 569, IV.iv.69-70). Suffolk states that he would rather have his head on a pole than bow to his captors (IV.iv.124-128). In the end he refuses to plead for his life. He is beheaded. (This beheading echoes the idea of castration which surrounded Gloucester's loss of his staff of Protectorship.) The final insult for Suffolk is that he is killed by a pirate--a base born man. For someone who regards his position as a nobleman as extremely important, this is the last humiliation. Neither his social position, which he tries to invoke, nor his standing with the queen can help him. The latter actually hurts his cause.

While Suffolk wanted to rule through the king, there is another noble who wants to

seize the throne for himself. The Duke of York poses the greatest threat to Henry VI's reign. His impact on the patriarchal world is based on his desire to claim the throne for himself. York visits his uncle, Mortimer, in the tower in Henry VI, Part 1. He tells York of the family's claim to the throne. In Henry VI, Part 2 York's intentions to pursue his ambition becomes more and more obvious. He feels he is the rightful king of England. In Act I, scene i, he takes the loss of territory in France as a personal affront: "So York must sit, and fret, and bite his tongue,/While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold" (230-231). However, his bid for the throne is also tied to Henry's ineffectiveness. He could not have acted if there had been a strong, powerful king on the throne. Before undertaking his own campaign, York determines to find out how such a claim would be received by the people of England, by invoking an uprising.

Jack Cade's rebellion is orchestrated by York, though once it is underway it displays a life of its own. Cade leads the common people on an attack, claiming to be the rightful king of England, through an even more convoluted (and ridiculous) line of descent than York's. His claim to the throne runs along the same line as York's, however, descending through Mortimer. The difference is that Cade claims to be the offspring of a son who had been kidnapped at birth and raised by peasants (IV.ii.142-146). Of course, he has absolutely no proof of his claims. His revolt is important because it causes havoc in the realm and because it actually threatens the king's position. Cade embodies everything that is hated by patriarchal society. His claim to the throne is extremely precarious, and he is, as a commoner, unsuitable for serving as a leader and a king (as expressed by Talbot in

Henry VI, Part 1). As was mentioned in earlier chapters, patriarchal society, while based on particular notions of gender and gender roles, is also a hierarchical society in which different stratas of the society have specific rights, privileges, and abilities. As the son of a bricklayer, Cade is unsuited for the position as king. (Noble birth is not always essential in a leader. Tamburlaine, despite his position as a shepherd, proves to be a threat in Marlowe's play of the same name. His rule, however, while harsh, is not senseless, as Cade's is. Tamburlaine succeeds because of his strength and organization. He stresses the importance of consistency in decision making. Cade's rule, in contrast, is personified by inconsistency and senselessness.) The king and queen are forced to seek refuge from the mob. Considering the inexperience and lack of funding the common people who made up Cade's army would have, it is ludicrous that the king could not quickly put down the rebellion. Henry VI's power and authority have disintegrated at an alarming rate.

Cade's revolt is both shocking and comic. The sheer brutality of his rule, exemplified by the order to kill those who can read (IV.ii.99-108), the murder of Lord Say and his son-in-law (IV.vii) and the killing of one of his men who unknowingly makes the mistake of calling him Jack Cade after he stated he would now be called Mortimer (IV.vi.5-8), all indicate the extent to which the social order has disintegrated. Everything that would normally be regarded as a virtue is instead viewed as a negative characteristic. The social order has been completely subverted, and the fact that this is able to happen at all, even for a short period of time, is indicative of the unrest and instability which is plaguing England. The problems are not simply limited to the court; they have infiltrated

every aspect of society. Larry Champion states

> The execution of the clerk Emmanuel for knowing how to write his name, the slaying of the two Staffords and the dragging of their bodies behind a horse, the striking down of a fellow soldier for calling to "Jack Cade" rather than "Lord Mortimer," the beheading of Lord Say because he constructed a grammar school and speaks Latin and of James Cromer merely because he is Say's son-in-law–such deeds combine the grotesque humor of the incredibly naive blusterer Cade with the genuine reality of the violence and destruction sweeping the land. (35)

Cade is an extreme example of the characteristics associated with manliness. He is strong, brave, brutal (which is an acceptable, even desirable, characteristic of manliness), and a leader of men. However, the folly of his rule and orders, and the fact he is a commoner attempting to overtake a nobly born man, is reprehensible. Though the rebellion is quickly put down and Cade is killed by a landowner, Alexander Iden, the impact which the rebellion has, remains, and York has the answer he was looking for. England's king is weak, and the entire social structure of the country is beginning to collapse.

York's part in the rebellion draws attention to one of his major detractions. He shows no emotion or concern for the people of what he claims to be his country. He willingly immerses them in a period of turmoil and danger, which brings many sorrow, pain, and death--hardly the actions of a caring king. He is finally led to declare his claim to the throne by Margaret's refusal to allow Somerset's removal from court. York, who had been assured the Duke had been imprisoned, is infuriated. He loses no time proclaiming his claim to the throne: "How now? is Somerset at liberty?/Then, York, unloose thy long imprisoned thoughts,/And let thy tongue be equal with thy heart" (V.i.87-89). The civil war, which has been simmering for years, finally erupts in England.

York is caught by the patriarchal system. If he is, indeed, the rightful king, he should be ruling. As a man who has sworn fealty to Henry VI, however, he owes him his loyalty. In many ways, York would perhaps have been a better king: he is strong, decisive, intelligent, and willing to engage in battle. In other words, he possesses many of the qualities associated with, and desirable, in a man. He will not be dominated by his fears:

> Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,
> And change misdoubt to resolution;
> Be that thou hop'st to be, or what thou art
> Resign to death; it is not worth th'enjoying.
> Let pale-fac'd fear keep with the mean-born man,
> And find no harbor in a royal heart. (III.i.331-336)

However, he reveals he is a Machiavel (a role his youngest surviving son will embrace with even more relish and aptitude). While this is one recognizable type of manhood, York fails to respect the ideals of honour and nobility of character which are essential in a man in patriarchal society. Ultimately, his actions and ambition lead England into an even greater period of turmoil and uncertainty. His sons, in particular Richard, will undermine English society.

In essence, Henry VI, Part 2 describes a devolution of the social order, made possible by the subversion of gender and social roles by various members of the court and commons. Margaret of Anjou and Eleanor Cobham display a desire for power and authority unsuitable in a woman. Their involvement in matters outside the sphere of feminine influence poses an enormous threat to their husbands and to the country as a whole. Howard and Rackin, while speaking of Margaret of Anjou and Eleanor Cobham, state, "fundamental to the play's brutal representation of political disorder, then, is its

emphasis on the gender disorder at the heart of the English state and the English family" (65). The men, however, also fail to fulfill their gender-determined roles. Henry VI fails to provide the leadership and strength of character which the country, and his court, so desperately needs. He is completely unsuited for the role of king and his inaction allows his nobles to pursue their own agendas. Suffolk and York, motivated by self-interest and ambition, subvert the patriarchal order and undermine the king's power. Gloucester is the only individual in the play who attempts to fulfill his patriarchal roles, as a man and as a courtier, as expected of him. However, his failure to control his wife and to understand the threat that the other nobles pose to him results in his own destruction. With his death, the disintegration of the patriarchal order is inevitable. In Henry VI, Part 3 matters will only become worse.

Chapter 3

Subverting the Patriarchy: Henry VI, Part 3

The civil war between the Lancastrian and the Yorkist factions, which threatens at the end of Henry VI, Part 2, breaks out in the first act of the third play in the tetralogy. Richard, Duke of York, makes his claim for the throne at Parliament. Henry VI remains as inactive as ever, while Margaret takes more and more power on herself. The subversion of gender and hierarchical roles becomes more and more evident, resulting in chaos and anarchy. Radtke and Stam state "power, like an entity, may be ceded from one person to another and may be acquired by virtue of one's position within a social hierarchy or through sheer brute force" (2). In Henry VI, Part 3, the audience witnesses both methods of power exchange. Henry VI gives power to Margaret and Clifford, Edward IV takes it from them, and Richard of Gloucester begins to plot to seize control from his brother. Three women appear in Henry VI, Part 3: Margaret, who has appeared in the two previous plays of the tetralogy, the Lady Bona, sister to the king of France, and Elizabeth Grey, a widow. The latter two women mark a departure from the women who have previously appeared in the plays of the tetralogy. Neither subverts the gender role assigned to her. They do not involve themselves in political matters, they do not participate in warfare, and they do not attempt to control the men in their lives. Instead, they fulfill many of the ideals expected of them as women. There is only one male in the play, however, who promises to correctly fulfill his role as a man. Young Richmond will, in Richard III, restore peace and order to England. His appearance in this play, however, is very short. England still

has a long period of upheaval to endure before experiencing peace.

Richard, Duke of York, emerges as the key threat to the Lancastrians' reign at the beginning of Henry VI, Part 3. He is a manly man, who in sharp contrast to Henry VI, is willing to fight and act on his own behalf. He is not afraid of defeat, and he is aware of his own power. Along with his sons and supporters, the Duke of York appears at Parliament and takes the seat of the king. Henry VI is horrified and accuses him of treason. Richard, however, makes it clear that he believes himself to be the rightful king of England, that his line of accession was usurped by Henry IV, from whom Henry VI descends. As Berman states, "the question of the birthright becomes the great wedge into the solidarity of the state" (488). The issue of the right to succession is extremely important in this play. In a patriarchal world power and strength are very important but they are not the sole determiners of the right to rule. There must be another relevant factor or else the social world would be in a permanent state of anarchy. The divine right of kings is stressed by numerous monarchs and was a popular idea during Elizabeth's reign. Some argued that she could rule, even though she was a woman, because she was chosen by God. (Even John Knox, who had so vehemently attacked the idea of women ruling, accepted this notion.) Might and power are not enough to grant someone the position of monarch. Birth and God's blessing are also essential elements to an individuals' claim to the right to rule. At the same time, however, an individual must be competent to rule (Courtney 75). As Utterback states, "the institution of kingship rests not merely on its divinely sanctioned dignity but also on its efficacy in society" (49). Both ability and divine sanction are

necessary. If Henry VI had been a strong and competent king, Richard would not have stood a chance. It is because of Henry's weakness that he can make a claim to the throne.

Henry VI, despite the fact that he protests Richard's claim, feels that he may have a legitimate grievance, as do some of the other noblemen who are present. Rather than face being deposed, Henry VI proposes a compromise: "I know not what to say: my title's weak.--/Tell me, may not a kin adopt an heir?" (I.i.134-135). (Henry's use of a tag question reflects his personality. This is a feminine tactic, requiring assurance from another. Margaret, in contrast, never needs or asks for reassurance. Her language is both strong and dominant, allowing no room for debate or questioning. Their use of language is symptomatic of both their characterizations. While Henry repeatedly seeks reassurance and asks for forgiveness, Margaret conveys her wishes explicitly and definitively, as evidenced by her rejection of her husband after he disinherits their son.) Rather than following the example of his grandfather, who usurped Richard II through confrontation, Henry would prefer to compromise--legitimating Richard of York's claim to the throne in the process. Instead of fighting for his son's birthright and refusing to bow to Richard's demands, Henry willingly capitulates, though he is grieved by his decision, as is evident by his statement to Warwick, who asks him why he sighs: "Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,/Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit" (I.i.192-193). Richard agrees to Henry's proposal: "Confirm thy crown to me and to mine heirs,/And thou shalt reign in quiet whilst thou liv'st" (I.i.172-173). (This negotiation between Henry VI and Richard is historically inaccurate. Hall reports that the agreement was reached by "peers, prelates, and commons

of the realm" (2G2r). By showing Henry VI negotiating the deal, Shakespeare enhances his characterization as a weak, ineffective ruler, who does nothing to ensure the safety of the patriarchal order.)

Henry VI is roundly criticized for his disinheritance for his son. Westmoreland refers to him as a "fainthearted and degenerate king,/In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides" (I.i.189-190). Northumberland wishes that he will die for his actions (which he will), and Clifford curses him. Henry is grieved rather than angered by the defection of these lords. His solution is to propose writing to them, a sign of his inability to take positive action. Furthermore, they should be seeking his forgiveness. The actions of these nobles are indicative of the disintegration of values. While Northumberland, Clifford and Westmoreland will fight to have Henry VI on the throne, they do not do so out of loyalty to their king, but out of a desire to pursue their own agendas. They offer Margaret their help. In the end, Henry's decision to disinherit his son is irrelevant. Though Richard, Duke of York, at first feels he must honour his commitment, he is easily persuaded to disregard his promise by his son Richard, who tells him:

> An oath is of no moment, being not took
> Before a true and lawful magistrate
> That hath authority over him that swears.
> Henry had none, but did usurp the place.
> Then seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
> Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous. (I.ii.22-27)

He gives up notions of honour and nobility, and his belief in the sanctity of his word. This indicates how the social world has disintegrated. Honour and true nobility of spirit are no longer valued and protected. York acts quickly, raising a force to depose Henry VI.

In this third play of the tetralogy, Margaret is even more involved in state matters than she was in the past. She rejects her husband, becomes a military leader, exhibits extremely cruel behaviour to her enemies, and acts as an ambassador in France, pleading for aid and support. Her rejection of her husband early in the play is, of course, absolutely at odds with the power women had in their marriages. She is motivated by her husband's actions, however. Margaret, hearing of Henry VI's disinheritance of their son, is infuriated and states her views as strongly as Henry's nobles did: "Ah, wretched man, would I had died a maid/And never seen thee, never borne thee son,/Seeing thou hast prov'd so unnatural a father!" (I.i.216-218). She is unmitigating in her criticism of her husband: "Enforced thee? Art thou king, and wilt be forc'd?/I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch,/Thou hast undone thyself, thy son, and me" (I.i.230-232). (This is interesting because Margaret refuses to accept that Henry VI has been forced to act against his better judgement, even though she has in the past (and will again in the future) directed his actions.) She summarily states that Henry will have no place in her bed or life, at least until he rights the terrible wrong he has done to their son:

> And seeing thou dost, I hear divorce myself
> Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
> Until that act of parliament be repeal'd
> Whereby my son is disinherited. (I.i.247-250)

Interestingly enough, while Margaret should not have the power to act this way in a patriarchal society, where the husband's and father's word is of tantamount importance (she can only because Henry VI does not have the strength of character to control her), her motive is to protect the inheritance of her son from his father, who would undermine

his given right as the eldest son:

> She justifies this power, as she did her power in council, by accepting what the king has rejected, by acting as "king" when Henry has abrogated his power yet again and, this time, also disinherited his son (3HVI.1.1.216-54). (Jankowski 101)

She is trying to protect her son's rights. The problem lies in determining if she is attempting to secure his patriarchal or matriarchal rights. His paternity remains questionable because of the affair Margaret had with Suffolk (though Henry VI accepts him as his son). Richard, Duke of Gloucester draws attention to this question about his paternity in Act II, scene ii: "Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands./For well I wot, thou hast thy mother's tongue" (133-134). The threat to the patriarchal system posed by an illegitimate son is immense; he can undermine the very structure upon which that system is based. Margaret's position as his parent cannot be questioned, however, and she is determined to see her son placed on the throne. It could be argued that she is not supporting his patriarchal rights, but his matriarchal rights--the rights he inherits through his descent from her. Of course, this is not an accepted method of inheritance in the patriarchal world--descent is usually only acknowledged through the male line (unless the female is, by birth, queen, which Margaret is not). Regardless of the reasoning behind her decision, Margaret remains determined to see her son on the throne. She is willing to fight for his rights when his father will not. Howard and Rackin remark that

> In early modern culture, children were assumed to belong to their fathers, who determined their disposition and place of residence. Women were simply the vessels that delivered the father's progeny to the world and transmitted the father's lineage to his sons. It is remarkable, therefore, when Margaret claims Edward as her son and bears him away from his

> father [...]. Paradoxically, however, it is Margaret's strength and support that empower the young prince to claim the patriarchal legacy his father has betrayed. (85)

After Margaret admonishes him, Henry tries to speak to her, but she refuses to listen to him: "Thou hast spoke too much already;/Get thee gone" (I.i.258). Instead of being angered by her reaction, the king is full of pity and understanding. Rather than wishing to seek revenge against the Duke of York himself, Henry leaves the matter in the hands of his wife: "Reveng'd may she be on that hateful duke" (I.i.266). (This is symptomatic of Henry's relationship with Margaret. He expects her to make decisions and to act. Rather than rescuing her, he expects her to rescue him.)

With the support of several nobles, Margaret mounts an attack against York and his supporters. Despite the fact that the Yorkists were far outnumbered, they were not concerned, for as young Richard states, "A woman's general: what should we fear?" (I.ii.68). Their confidence proves to be short-sighted. At first the rebels are successful. Henry VI is captured and held by his enemies. Later, however, he regains his freedom and Richard finds himself captured by the Lancastrians. The treatment York receives at the hands of Margaret is troubling. She has Clifford and Northumberland place York on a molehill, then proceeds to taunt him. It is Margaret who tells him of his son's (Rutland's) murder:

> Look, York, I stain'd this napkin with the blood
> That valiant Clifford with his rapier's point
> Made issue from the bosom of the boy;
> And if thine eyes can water for his death,
> I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal. (I.iv.79-83)

Richard's condemnation of her is immediate and heated. His verbal attack directed at Margaret highlights the fact that she is unnatural and that she does not possess the attributes usually associated with and expected of a woman. He compares her to a she-wolf, an adder, an Amazonian trull, and a tiger, all descriptions which bring to mind cruel and violent creatures. He castigates her for her pride, which she bears in spite of her family's poverty (though they are of the nobility). She is everything that a woman should not be. In perhaps one of the most well-known quotations from the play, York highlights her unwomanliness:

> O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide!
> How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
> To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
> And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?
> Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;
> Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless. (I.iv.137-142)

She is too strong, too opinionated, and too cruel to be a proper woman. York ends his diatribe by cursing her and Clifford: "These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies,/And every drop cries vengeance for his death/'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false French-woman" (I.iv.147-149). (Margaret is later criticized by Edward IV in a similar manner. He refers to her as a "shameless callet" (II.ii.145), and compares her to "Helen of Greece" (II.ii 146), making it clear that while she is not as physically attractive as the legendary queen, she is as false. He also, like his father, criticizes the pride which she exhibits and calls attention to her poor origins.) Undaunted and unmoved by York's castigation, Margaret, along with Clifford, stabs him, ordering that his head be placed on the gates outside of York. Her murder of York is particularly troubling. French, in Beyond Power,

points out that

> A woman who kills is considered unnatural, whereas a man who kills is considered either a hero (if his killing is performed under institutional auspices) or a criminal, but not as a person who has lost personhood. (96)

Margaret has killed an opponent in warfare, but she is extremely cruel in the process. This representation of history is inaccurate. Shakespeare's sources Hall and The Mirror for Magistrates state clearly that Richard was killed in battle, that Clifford, after killing Rutland, found his body and had him beheaded. After placing a paper crown on York's head, he carried it to the queen, who was some distance off (Hall 2G3v; Baldwin 188-189). While it is suggested that his head was laughed at and made fun of, Margaret clearly had no involvement in his actual death, or in taunting him with the death of Rutland. Shakespeare's creation of the molehill scene helps to demonize and blacken Margaret's character. It shows the depth of her depravity. York's death, however, does not mark an end to the civil war in England. It just marks the beginning of an even more turbulent time in history. York's death will be revenged by his sons Edward, Clarence, and Richard. His curse comes to fruition: "My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth/A bird that will revenge upon you all" (I.iv.35-36).

The difference between Margaret and Henry VI is highlighted by their reactions to Richard's death. While she has no compunction about placing Richard's head on the gates of York, her husband, when he sees the head, is disturbed by it. He shows a gentleness and concern for the well-being of others that she never does (except for her son). When Margaret asks him if he is not glad to see Richard of York's head there, Henry replies,

> Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wrack:
> To see this sight, it irks my very soul.
> Withhold revenge, dear God! 'tis not my fault,
> Nor wittingly have I infring'd my vow. (II.ii.5-8)

Henry has a definite sense that this is wrong, and he is troubled by the breaking of an oath he made to Richard of York to maintain peace. (He appears to be the only character in the play who is still concerned with such issues.) When Clifford reprimands him for his gentleness, Henry VI responds to his suggestions of seeking revenge and using violence:

> But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
> That things ill got had ever bad success?
> And happy always was it for that son
> Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
> I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind,
> And would my father had left me no more! (II.ii.45-50)

He states his own belief in the need to act with impunity and honour, while also showing his own lack of interest in the role of king. He wants his son to grow to be an honourable man, to have the opportunities and freedoms which Henry does not have. When he knights his son he says, "Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight,/And learn this lesson: draw thy sword in right" (II.ii.61-62). While he cannot act in an appropriate manner to ensure the peace and well-being of his country, Henry certainly understands the concepts of honour and nobleness--he just cannot foster them in himself. (The audience never sees Henry drawing a sword.)

Margaret's and Henry's opposing reactions to the head of York reveal problems with both their characters. The sympathy which Henry VI shows to his enemies indicates a weakness which is problematic in a king. Margaret's willingness to embrace male

attitudes illustrates her own failure to conform to the norms expected of a woman. The king and queen have, essentially, switched places, both in terms of the gender characteristics and their roles as king and queen. This becomes more obvious as the play continues.

Margaret's interference in matters of state and politics becomes greater as does the control she exerts over her husband's actions. He is asked to leave the field of battle by Clifford, in Act II, scene ii, because "The Queen hath best success when [he is] absent" (74). Margaret is, in essence, acting as king, as Edward points out: "You are that king, though he do wear the crown" (II.ii.90). Later, when Henry VI would speak to Edward and the other Yorkists, he is forbidden, first by Margaret, and then by Clifford (II.ii.117-122). Her seizure of control fuels the Yorkists' decision to claim the throne. Edward tells her "Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept,/And we, in pity of the gentle king,/Had slipp'd our claim until another age" (II.ii.160-162). (This statement almost makes it appear as if Edward and his brothers are policing and protecting the patriarchal system by preventing Margaret from retaining control of the kingdom. This representation is short-lived, however. When confronted by the young Prince of Wales, who calls him a traitor, Edward is angered and kills the boy (V.v.17-38), thereby destroying Henry VI's line of succession--hardly the action of an individual who is attempting to safeguard the patriarchy.) Margaret's decision to forbid Henry VI to speak aggravates and alienates the Yorkists even more. Edward responds to her declaration with anger: "And in this resolution, I defy thee,/Not willing any longer conference,/Since thou deniedst the gentle

king to speak" (II.ii.170-172). Margaret's refusal to allow Henry to speak underlines the extent to which they have changed positions, and her assumption of typical male behaviour. However, it is Henry who allows her to take his power and authority away--he will not stand up to her. Speaking of Henry VI, Part 2, Howard and Rackin remark that

> It was a commonplace of early modern thought that mannish women--that is, those who assume the prerogatives of men--emerge when men are womanish and fail to assert control over their wives and daughters. (72)

This clearly applies to the third play in the tetralogy as well.

The extent to which Margaret and Henry VI have changed roles is once again made evident when Henry VI appears on the outskirts of the battle, watching the events unfold. He states at the beginning of his soliloquy that he had been ordered from the field of battle by Margaret and Clifford. His position as king should mean that he leads the soldiers into battle. Instead, his wife, who should be removed from the scene of conflict, is leading the men in war. This reversal in duties is a result of the differences in their personalities. Whereas Henry is gentle and retiring, Margaret is strong and dominant. In Beyond Power Marilyn French highlights the fact that the division of gender roles is, in many ways, arbitrary:

> Reality, of course, constantly challenges the categorizations of patriarchy. Actual women and men possess drives toward both "masculine" and "feminine" qualities, even including their extremes. If men cannot give birth, they can be as mothering and nourishing as women; women can kill, and do. There are extremely controlling women and extremely compassionate men. (96)

This is exactly how Margaret and Henry VI are; hence, they exchange roles, in the process threatening the patriarchal society. However, it is essential that Margaret takes control.

Jankowski points out that while her "generalship may be considered unwomanly and very threatening, it is necessary to the Lancastrian faction" (101). There is no one else to assume the role: "she embodies perhaps the only power that can match the unalloyed ferocity of Richard, Duke of York" (Howard and Rackin 82). Henry VI certainly cannot.

Banished from the battlefield, Henry sits and talks of his wish to live a life of quiet retreat, to be a shepherd who can spend his time in peaceful contemplation: "O God! methinks it were a happy life/To be no better than a homely swain" (II.v.21-22). Shortly thereafter, he is faced with the spectre of a father killing a son, and a son killing a father. Henry is horrified: "Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!/O that my death would stay these ruthful deeds!/O, pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!" (II.v.94-96). This scene highlights how far the social fabric of the nation has disintegrated, and the extent to which the patriarchal system has been undermined. Civil war creates a situation which fosters atrocities. Hall remarks on the unnatural situation which is created by this war: "This conflict was in maner unnaturall for in it the sonne fought against the father, the brother against the brother, the nephew against the uncle, and the tenaunt against his lord" (2G7r). While his outrage and his grief indicate Henry finds the situation abhorrent, it is necessary to remember that this situation emerges because Henry cannot govern effectively:

> Because [Henry VI] has failed to be a strong father to his people, the paternal order has dissolved. Slaughter takes the place of succession, yet ironically, the two originate in the same need to establish order and maintain identity on the basis of the son following the father, in vengeance no less than in inheritance. (Kahn 61)

Family members unwittingly find themselves on opposing sides. This is the antithesis of what the patriarchal systems stands for--but it foreshadows Richard of Gloucester's violence against his own family. (The difference is, while Richard will feel no remorse and will murder his family with full knowledge, the fathers and sons who Henry VI sees are unknowing killers, and their grief is palpable.)

Eventually Margaret is defeated in this conflict and Henry VI is captured. Margaret and the prince flee to France in search of aid from King Lewis. At first she is thwarted by the marriage proposed by her enemy, Warwick, between the Lady Bona, the king of France's sister, and Edward IV. Fortunately for Lady Bona, Edward's self-interest leads him to marry someone else.

The Lady Bona is portrayed as a gentle, meek, young woman, who is eager for marriage to Edward IV. His betrayal through his marriage to Lady Grey humiliates and angers her. Her response to Edward's action is within the appropriate range for a woman who has been wronged (Edward acknowledges this himself). She does not, as Margaret does, propose to involve herself in matters of war, but asks her brother for help. She urges him to support Margaret, thereby seeking revenge for this wrong. Lewis agrees, promising aid to Margaret, while Warwick, a long-time supporter of the Yorkist cause, is so outraged by Edward's action that he, too, offers his allegiance to Margaret. With this support, Margaret gathers troops to face Edward IV (contrasting sharply with the Lady Bona's willingness to allow the men to right the wrong done to her).

Before going into battle, Margaret speaks to the troops encouraging the men to act

with bravery and pride. This is usually a duty performed by a male leader, most notably a king. Margaret's assumption of this role highlights once again the extent to which she has assumed Henry VI's position as ruler. The interesting point is that she is a good and inspiring leader--much better than her husband. This is part of the threat which Margaret poses--she fulfills the role of man better than many of the men in the play. Her son, who also speaks to the troops, attests to this:

> Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
> Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
> Infuse his breast with magnanimity,
> And make him, naked, foil a man at arms. (V.iv.39-42)

In the end, despite the powerful speeches given by both queen and prince, they are unsuccessful in their bid to regain the throne for Henry VI. Margaret and the Prince are captured. The young prince, who exhibits a degree of nobility and a notion of his power which his father never does, angers Edward IV and his brothers. He is murdered. This is one of only two events in the tetralogy which causes Margaret to exhibit any of the emotions usually associated with a woman (the first was the death of Suffolk, as discussed in the last chapter) (Howard and Rackin 98). Margaret's grief is overpowering:

> O Ned, sweet Ned, speak to thy mother, boy!
> Canst thou not speak? O traitors, murtherers!
> They that stabb'd Caesar shed no blood at all,
> Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,
> If this foul deed were by to equal it.
> He was a man; this, in respect, a child,
> And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.
> What's worse than murtherer, that I may name it?
> No, no, my heart will burst and if I speak,
> And I will speak, that so my heart may burst. (V.v.51-60)

It is difficult to sympathize with Margaret. While she castigates her enemies for killing a child, she showed no such sympathy for York, instead taking pleasure in telling him of the murder of his young son. While her anger and grief are legitimate, the death of her son is also retributive. York's curse has come to pass.

In the end, Margaret fails to secure her son's inheritance. Her attempts to lead her husband and son and to involve herself in matters of state have been brought to a dismal end. Her husband and son are murdered, and she is sent back to France. Despite her desire to ensure the successful reign of her son, her failure to fulfill her proper role as a woman brings about the downfall of the Lancastrian line. With the ascension to the throne of Edward IV, she has effectively lost all power (she cannot control the state without a male figure to act behind). Hall ties her defeat to her destruction of Gloucester: "The Quene Margarete might well consider and thynke, that these euil adventures, chaunced to her for the moste parte, for the unworthy death of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, uncle to her husband" (2M6r). Margaret's actions in Henry VI, Parts 1 and 2--the part she plays in the destruction of the Duke of Gloucester and her undermining of her husband's authority--provide her enemies with the opportunity to rebel. (If Gloucester were still alive, it is questionable whether the Yorkists would have any opportunity to revolt (Hall 2B4r).) Ironically, in this third play, her actions are motivated by a desire to protect her son's rights as heir apparent, rather than a desire to secure more power for herself. Despite her failure, Margaret will reappear in the last play of the tetralogy. Though she will have no power or authority over political matters, she will serve as a prophetic voice

who curses the reign of her husband's and son's murderers and usurpers.

In Henry VI, Part 3 Henry is easily led by his wife and her supporters; he is uninterested in matters which are normally the concern of a king; and he fails to exhibit the strength of character and ability to act which are expected and necessary in a proper man. As Pearlman states, "he is perpetually youthful and immature, dominated first by his uncles and later by his wife Margaret. He is feeble in war and always more drawn to prayer than politics" (42). At the same time, Henry's presentation in this play becomes more sympathetic. As the play develops, Shakespeare consistently portrays him as a man who is kind and generous, but who is caught in a role he does not want, and which he cannot successfully fulfill. He is trapped by his role as king, and by the expectations placed on him as a man in a patriarchal society. His intentions are often honourable, but they display his lack of understanding of the world around him: "he loves his fellow man and wants to do good in the world, but he is no match for the Machiavels" (Courtney 26). Henry VI provides the most striking example in the tetralogy of how men have been limited and shaped by the gender roles they are expected to fulfill.

Henry VI serves as the only voice of reason in the third play of the tetralogy. Throughout the play he is horrified by the violence he witnesses, unlike his wife, her supporters, and his adversaries, who create the atrocities. His disgust with the events taking place around him means that "Margaret becomes the center of the atrocities on the Lancastrian side" (Williamson 52). Despite this, not all the differences between Henry and Margaret show the king in a more favourable light. Margaret, at least, is willing to act--

Henry is not:

> The scandal of Henry VI, Part III is not that a woman is general, but that a man, and an anointed king to boot, can perform none of the actions expected of a father and king. He is less fit to rule than his French-born wife. (Howard and Rackin 87)

Though Margaret's and Clifford's characters are blackened by their bullying of Henry, the king's character is also tarnished by his interaction with them. He accepts their decisions and follows their orders willingly, instead of taking control for himself. When he is caught by Yorkists he attempts to reason with his captors, but he does not react physically, marking another distinction between Margaret and Henry--while he would talk, she would act. Henry does not curse his captors or castigate them, instead respecting the vow they had made to Edward (though they had made the same vow to him). He follows them, saying, "In God's name lead; your king's name be obey'd,/And what God will, that let your king perform;/And what he will, I humbly yield unto" (III.i.99-101). He places his faith in God's hands, though it is ultimately his wife's forces who secure his freedom.

The air of holiness surrounding Henry is enhanced by the prophecies he makes in the play. In Act IV, scene vi, he meets the young Richmond. He immediately intuits that the young boy will be an important figure in English life:

> Come hither, England's hope.
> If secret powers
> Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
> This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
> His looks are full of peaceful majesty,
> His head by nature fram'd to wear a crown,
> His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself
> Likely in time to bless a regal throne.
> Make much of him, my lords, for this is he

Must help you more than you are hurt by me. (68-76)

In this passage Henry VI reveals his ability to foresee England's future and to recognize greatness, while also acknowledging the trouble his reign has brought to his country. (Holinshed discusses a similar meeting between the young man and Henry VI: "Lo, surelie this is he, to whom both we and our aduersaries leauing the possession of all things shall hereafter give roome and place" (302).)

In the final act of the play, when he is again captured and then killed by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Henry VI does not plead for his life, though he certainly recognizes Richard's intentions: "What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?" (V.vi.10). This provides a sharp contrast to the reaction of Joan in Henry VI, Part 1. Whereas Henry VI willingly accepts his death, Joan pleads for her life. Henry, in his death, is presented as a martyr (Champion talks of how his murder is almost ritualistic (230)). The audience feels no contempt for him, only sympathy and regret. Before he dies, he predicts the destruction Richard will wreak on England and its people:

> And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand
> Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,
> And many an old man's sigh and many a widow's,
> And many an orphan's water-standing eye--
> Men for their sons, wives for their husbands,
> Orphans for their parents' timeless death--
> Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born. (V.vi.37-43)

Though Henry continues his speech, Richard has heard enough and he kills him. Henry does not desire revenge for his murder, unlike others who had died before him. Instead he asks for forgiveness for himself and Richard: "O God forgive my sins, and pardon thee!"

(V.vi.60). Even when faced with death, Henry's focus remains on Christian teaching and the need for forgiveness and acceptance.

Henry VI is not an evil man. His weakness lies in his personality. He is too gentle, too genial, and too gracious to be an effective king. He has no interest in warfare or political matters, and he lacks the ability to act without compunction, all traits which are necessary in a leader, and which are generally thought to be characteristics of a good man. Even though he is criticized as an ineffective king and a poor example of manhood in this play, and in earlier plays, he does not receive the same treatment as the women who subvert the patriarchal order. While Margaret, Joan, and Eleanor Cobham are demonized and vilified for their interests and ambitions in areas which are normally outside the domain of a woman, Henry VI is portrayed as a pitiable, but likeable, man who is ill-suited to the role he was born into. He is granted understanding which the women never receive--indicating that women who subvert their gender roles are seen as a greater threat to the social order than men who do so (though men, as it has already been shown, are criticized). It will be the men, however, who continue to subvert the patriarchal order. Richard, Duke of York, has, in effect, loosed on England three young men who are each progressively more unsuitable for the role of king. His sons are legitimately grief-stricken by the death of their father and they, in their bid for revenge and power, will disrupt the patriarchal and social order even more than he has himself. Edward IV proves to be as ineffective a king as Henry VI, though in a different way, while Clarence is ineffectual and unreliable. It is Richard, however, that proves to be the greatest threat to England, and to

his own family.

One of the Lancastrians' strongest supporters is Clifford. It is largely because of Richard, Duke of York's defeat of his father that Clifford emerges in Henry VI, Part 3 as a mortal enemy of the Yorkist cause. Clifford is a strong and brave man. His desire to seek revenge is tied to his need to honour his father. In this play, Clifford fulfills the goal he had set for himself in the last play:

> York not our old men spares;
> No more will I their babes. Tears virginal
> Shall be to me even as the dew to fire,
> And beauty, that the tyrant oft reclaims,
> Shall to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.
> Henceforth I will not have to do with pity.
> Meet I an infant of the house of York,
> Into as many gobbets will I cut it
> As wild Medea young Absyrtus did;
> In cruelty will I seek out my fame. (Henry VI, Part 2 V.ii.51-60)

The imagery in this passage is very interesting. Clifford states his intention to act like Medea, who is often cited as an example of the disorderly woman. She eloped with Jason, after helping him recover the Golden Fleece. To forestall her father's pursuit of them, she killed her brother, cutting up his body and leaving pieces for him to recover (Bevington, Complete Works 582, Henry VI, Part 2 V.ii.59). She murders her own brother and betrays her father to get what she wants. (Later, she would destroy the children she had with Jason--tearing them to pieces.) She is a perfect example of how the disorderly woman, who disobeys the patriarch, leads the family unit to disintegrate. That Clifford chooses to model himself after her is telling. He is driven by his grief over his father's death to forgo the very values his father fought for: honour and kingship. His concern is

not with Henry VI's right to rule, but with the need to exact revenge. This is illustrated when York declares himself king in Parliament. Clifford vows he will fight for Henry VI regardless of whether or not his claim to the throne is legitimate: "King Henry, be thy title right or wrong/Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence" (I.i.163-164). This contrasts sharply with his father's declaration of his loyalty to Henry in the last play: "This is my king, York, I do not mistake,/But thou mistakes me much to think I do" (Henry VI, Part 2 V.i.129-130). Utterback states

> Clifford sanctifies this assertion of will by making it a vow, but his bald statement of personal commitment seems an anachronistic, Anglo-Saxon declaration of faithfulness to a war-lord. There is no public principle in it, for it means that personal will and force are the final arbiters of conflicting claims. (51)

(This once again draws attention to the fact that the right to rule must be determined by something other than might.) When the king willingly gives up the succession of the throne to Richard, Clifford loses no time in rebuking and cursing him. Clifford, though he fights for his king, does not offer him the respect his position should command. His motivation remains selfish.

Clifford does exact his revenge against the house of York. The first victim is York's young son, Rutland, despite the fact that he cannot defend himself and he begs for mercy. When Rutland suggests that Clifford fight his father instead, Clifford responds:

> Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine
> Were not revenge sufficient for me;
> No, if I digg'd up thy forefathers' graves
> And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,
> It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart.
> The sight of any of the house of York

> Is as a fury to torment my soul;
> And till I root out their accursed line,
> And leave not one alive, I live in hell. (I.iii.25-33)

This lack of mercy, while shocking to a modern reader, was perfectly acceptable and even admired in the patriarchal world. (Tamburlaine exhibits the same resistance in Tamburlaine, Part 1 when he has the young virgins killed, despite their innocence and pleadings (V.i.106-120).) Unlike Henry VI, Clifford is not moved by feminine emotions of pity or compassion for his enemies. His ability to set aside such niceties and revenge his father's death displays his loyalty. Clifford is not satisfied with Rutland's death and he continues to support Margaret. He kills the Duke of York, exacting further revenge for his father's death, but at the same time, creating a situation in which Richard's sons will seek vengeance for the murder of their brother and father. Young Richard vows to seek revenge: "Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,/As thou has shown it flinty by thy deeds./I come to pierce it, or to give thee mine" (II.i.201-203). Revenge is a never-ending proposition. It creates a situation in which feuds can continue on forever. Howard and Rackin express the dilemma succinctly:

> When many sons have the deaths of many fathers to avenge, the father-son ideal provokes a transgenerational free-for-all from which no one emerges with honor. Instead of passing on the glory of his manhood, the father passes on the injuries it has sustained; the sense of injury, at least, is what determines the action, writes the script. (99)

Revenge becomes the focus of these men, to the detriment of other social values.

Clifford feels comfortable chastising Henry for his behaviour. He reprimands the king for his continued inactivity and the sympathy he feels for his enemies: "My gracious

liege, this too much lenity/And harmful pity must be laid aside" (II.ii.9-10). When Henry VI attempts to speak with Edward and Richard about a possible means of reconciliation, Clifford upbraids him: "My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here/Cannot be cured by words; therefore be still" (II.ii.121-122). These repeated reprimands to his king are troubling--it shows his disregard for his role as a courtier, answerable to the king. He subverts the king's role by refusing to allow him to speak or to govern in the way he believes is best. While he fulfills the role of a man by being strong and brave, by fighting with courage in battle, by protecting his king and queen, and by avenging the death of his father, his disregard for honour and what is right, his refusal to respect his king's decisions, and his willingness to subvert the patriarchal succession if it suits his own purposes, means he does not fulfill all the necessary characteristics to be considered a good man in the patriarchal world. His interpretation of his role as a man is distorted, made possible by the disruption of the patriarchy through gender and hierarchical subversion which dominates the tetralogy. His loyalty to Henry is not of a courtier to his king, but is tied to his need to exact revenge. Though he has killed Richard, Duke of York, and Rutland, he has not destroyed the Yorkist cause.

Throughout the first half of the play, Edward, York's eldest son, is shown to be willing to act, to be able to stick to his convictions, and to be brave and strong. Furthermore, when urging his father to claim the throne early in the play, Edward states his own desire to rule: "But for a kingdom any oath may be broken:/I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year" (I.ii.16-17). When his father is killed, he is persuaded

by Richard, his brother, to pursue the crown for himself. Shortly after he gains the throne, it becomes obvious that England has traded one ineffective king for another. While Henry VI was uncertain of his power, Edward IV is too cocky about his own. He believes he has the right to do whatever he chooses. Motived by his own desires, he makes choices which cause him to weaken his position and which create enemies. Despite the fact that Warwick, a long-time Yorkist supporter, is negotiating a marriage to the Lady Bona, niece to the king of France, Edward IV marries Elizabeth Grey, a young widow whom he first attempted to seduce, who offers no financial or political benefits. His decision is ironic because of the criticism he had heaped on Henry VI: "the very man who lectured Henry about how unsuitable for the kingdom was his choice of Margaret as bride (II.ii.144-62) ignore[s] governmental and political considerations altogether in marrying Lady Grey" (Utterback 53). Though he had willingly agreed to the marriage to the Lady Bona, stating

> Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
> For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
> And never will I undertake the thing
> Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting (II.vi.99-102)

he forgets his promise very quickly. It appears from the discussion between Richard and Clarence (III.ii.11-108) that Edward's propensity to favour women was not sudden. This presentation suggests a weakness in his character which is unfitting in a king. (Henry VIII, in the play named for him by Shakespeare, also falls in love with a young woman. Despite this, he is "forced" to marry his brother's widow, Katherine of Aragon. The favourable presentation of Henry's divorce of Katherine and his remarriage to Anne is understandable. Katherine is, first of all, Catholic, while Anne Boleyn, the woman Henry VII is portrayed

as loving, is the mother of Queen Elizabeth. Historically, however, Henry VIII was infamous for his relationships with women. He had, in total, six wives, two of whom he had beheaded--including Anne Boleyn.) Edward's decision is reminiscent of the one made by Henry VI. Howard and Rackin express the problems associated with such love matches:

> Shakespeare's Henry VI and Edward IV both reject prudent dynastic marriages in order to marry on the basis of personal passion; both marriages are represented as disastrous mistakes that weaken the men's authority as kings and destabilize the political order of the realms. (44)

Once again, a king has forgone his duty to contract a marriage which will bring both political and monetary gains, instead placing lust and love above duty.

Edward's bride, Elizabeth Grey, is a young widow with three sons. She appears before Edward to plead for the return of her husband's lands. She is motivated by an appropriate desire to secure financial independence for her sons. She is neither forward nor cunning in her approach. The problem which arises because of her appearance in the play is not a result of her own ambitions or desires. It is Edward IV who creates the situation in which she will undermine the standing of the king. He is determined to seduce her. She refuses his request to become her lover, preferring to remain poor than sacrifice her honour: "To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison" (III.ii.70). When he states that by refusing him she is being unfair to her children, she responds:

> Herein your Highness wrongs both them and me.
> But, mighty lord, this merry inclination
> Accord not with the sadness of my suit.
> Please you dismiss me, either with ay or no. (III.ii.75-78)

She is adamantly virtuous, rejecting any suggestion of impropriety. As has already been explored in the previous chapters, both Margaret and Joan are undermined and blackened by their association with loose behaviour. Elizabeth, in contrast, embraces the feminine virtues of chastity and shamefastness. When the king determines he cannot have her by any other means, and he means to have her regardless of the consequences, he proposes marriage. Elizabeth again shows that she knows her proper sphere, both as a woman and as a member of the hierarchical order. She is taken aback at his suggestion and states that such a union is unsuitable because of her low estate: "'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord./I am a subject fit to jest withal,/But far unfit to be a sovereign" (III.ii.90-92). Shakespeare probably drew on Hall for this exchange. Hall attributes Elizabeth with saying, "she was for his honor farre unable to be hys spouse and bedfelow" (2H5v). She does not belong to the right caste from which the king should draw his bride. She is also not a virgin, as most wives were expected to be--she is a widow. (Kelso, in Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance, discusses the problems associated with widowhood. Widows were usually granted more freedom (and control) than they had ever had before. They could be judged as good, bad, or true, depending on the reasons behind their decision to remarry or to remain single (Kelso 122). Hull also discusses the arguments associated with marrying a widow. While some thought it advantageous, to others widows posed a threat. Hull discusses the debate between Swetnam, who felt one should not marry a widow, and Sowerman, who supported and defended these women (Chaste 114-15).) In the end Edward remains unmoved by Elizabeth's arguments, and she becomes queen of

England, despite her apprehensions.

Edward's decision to marry for love is the first indication of the trouble which will emerge because of his relationships with women. The affection he shows his wife and his son at the end of the play is feminizing. Howard and Rackin state

> The husband's enthralment with his loving wife here proves as much a danger to his masculinity and his public power as did the more overt challenges to patriarchal authority posed by demonized, ambitious, and warlike women, such as Joan of Arc, Margaret of Anjou, and Eleanor Cobham. (99)

Edward allows his desire to control and govern his actions and decisions. His infatuation with Elizabeth leads him to disregard political matters. When his brothers raise their concerns about the reaction Warwick will have to his marriage, Edward is dismissive. This weakness is not just apparent in his relationship with his wife, however. In the beginning of Richard III, Richard remarks that his brother, instead of engaging in battle, cavorts with his mistress: "He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber/To the lascivious pleasing of a lute" (I.i.12-13). Political and military matters are ignored in the pursuit of love.

Unlike the previous women in the tetralogy, Elizabeth does not attempt to use her husband's affection to gain more power and authority. Her characterization and appearance in the play mark the beginning of the disappearance of women from the world of politics and warfare. Elizabeth is concerned by the reactions of Edward's supporters to their marriage, though she does not attempt to involve herself in the issues (unlike Margaret). In Act IV, scene i, she interrupts the argument between Edward, Clarence and Richard to speak to them:

> My lords, before it pleas'd his Majesty
> To raise my state to title of a queen,
> Do me but right, and you must all confess
> That I was not ignoble of descent,
> And meaner than myself have had like fortune.
> But as this title honors me and mine,
> So your dislikes, to whom I would be pleasing,
> Doth cloud my joys with danger and sorrow. (67-74)

Edward IV quickly dismisses any worry she may have, refusing to acknowledge his brothers' concerns. He feels that as king, his desires and actions cannot be questioned.

The new queen fulfills her role as a woman and a wife by providing Edward IV with an heir in a short period of time. Rather than becoming concerned with the political chaos that surrounds her husband's reign, she devotes all her attention and energy to ensuring the healthy birth of the child, the future heir:

> Till then fair hope must hinder live's decay;
> And I the rather wain me from despair
> For love for Edward's offspring in my womb.
> This is it that makes me bridle passion,
> And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross;
> Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear,
> And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,
> Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
> King Edward's fruit, true heir to th'English crown. (IV.iv.16-24)

She flees to a sanctuary where she is afforded protection. Despite the fact that Elizabeth embraces her gender-determined role as a woman in a patriarchal society, she will still be a force to reckon with. She will, in Richard III, come up against her brother-in-law, Richard. She will defy him, not by military action or political manoeuvring, but through subterfuge, and she will be successful.

Despite the fact Elizabeth does not subvert her gender role, her marriage to

Edward weakens the king's power. Howard and Rackin state that Edward's

> insistent pursuit of Lady Grey, and eventually his marriage to her, are represented as the catalyst that separates him not only from his treacherous, self-seeking brother, Richard, but also from his chief champion, Warwick, and from his formerly loyal brother, Clarence. (93)

Edward has, through his marriage, strengthened Margaret's position, providing her with new allies–Warwick and the king of France. He also alienates his brothers. Rather than arranging profitable marriages for them, he marries many wealthy women to his new wife's brothers. This infuriates Clarence and offends Richard. While Richard, who has ulterior motives, remains supportive of his brother, Clarence changes his allegiance, marrying a daughter of Warwick and supporting Margaret. (For Richard, it is not loyalty or a sense of family which keeps him from leaving, but his own desire to gain the throne for himself: "My thoughts aim at a further matter: I/Stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown" (IV.i.125-126). If Edward were to lose the crown to the Lancastrians, his own chances of seizing it would be reduced.) Despite the defection of his supporters, Edward IV is, in the end, victorious. Clarence switches his allegiance again, Warwick and Margaret are defeated in battle, and the Princes of Wales is murdered, as is his father, Henry VI. Though he appears to have the affairs of England in order, the audience knows that things are far from settled. Edward IV appears to have it all: a young wife whom he loves, a newborn boy who will be his heir, and two brothers who are affectionate and loyal. Though he does not know it, one of those brothers has aspirations to his throne.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester begins to emerge in Henry VI, Part 3 as a threat to the social, political, and patriarchal order. Initially in the play, he supports his father's

pursuit of the crown with dedication and power. His persuasive abilities as an orator only add to his strength. It is Richard who convinces his father to ignore the vow he made to Henry VI to not seek the crown during Henry's lifetime. He feels genuine affection and love for his father. He is grief-stricken and angered by his father's death and immediately turns his sorrow to thought of revenge:

> To weep is to make less the depth of grief:
> Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me.
> Richard, I bear thy name, I'll venge thy death,
> Or die renowned by attempting it. (II.i.85-88)

Smidt characterizes Richard's determination and persuasive ability:

> he is a man of iron will and scrupulous performance coupled with exceptional gifts of persuasion and dissimulation. What he resolved to do he does, and his confidence in telling us of his intentions leaves no room for doubt that they will be carried out successfully. (55)

Richard's true character is reflected by his physical appearance, highlighted by a variety of characters. Margaret, in Act I, scene iv, while taunting Richard of York asks "And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy" (75). In Act II, scene ii, Clifford says to Richard, "Ay, crook-back, here I stand to answer thee" (96). Richard himself draws attention to his physical deformities, and Henry VI, towards the end of the play, also alludes to his appearance. Richard slowly reveals that his deformity goes beyond the physical. In Act III, scene ii, he states his ambitions and the reasons behind it. Since love and the usual other spheres of enjoyment are not open to him because of his appearance, he plans to pursue his ambition to seize the crown, regardless of the cost. In a soliloquy he says he will use whatever means are available to him to achieve his goal, whether it

involves murder, acting, crying, or talking: "Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?/Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down" (III.ii.194-195). After murdering Henry VI, Richard states his intention to dismiss any familial emotions or ties:

> I have no brother, I am like no brother;
> And this word "love," which greybeards call divine,
> Be resident in men like one another,
> And not in me: I am myself alone. (V.vi.80-83)

Pearlman acknowledges that in this speech, talking of brotherhood, Richard "suspends his loyalty to Edward, George, and Edmund, but he also means that he no longer participates in the brotherhood of man" (47). He effectively distances himself from relationships with others, disregarding the values traditionally associated with society. His intent is to achieve complete control, illustrating the point made by Marilyn French in Beyond Power that

> A person who values control over anything else is incapable of any relation that might weaken or penetrate that surface of control; thus such a person becomes almost incapable of intimacy, equality, or trust, each of which requires the abdication of control. (323)

Richard makes a conscious decision to forgo any human relationships in order to pursue the crown. He feels absolutely no sense of loyalty or love for his bothers. His actions are completely contrary to the rules of patriarchal society, and the role he has as a younger son. Instead of protecting the rights of his brothers and nephews (as Gloucester tried to do for Henry VI), ensuring that the line of succession is preserved and extolled, he will destroy those rights by whatever means are available to him. Kissing his young nephew, Richard says "To say the truth, so Judas kiss'd his master,/And cried 'All hail!' when as he

meant all harm" (V.vii.33-34).

Richard has taken an extreme approach to his role as a man, forgoing all affection and emotion in order to achieve his goals. He is unafraid to pursue his dreams, he is not afraid of violence or bloodshed, and he is not hampered by feelings of love or affection. But his rejection of filial ties (appropriate and essential in the patriarchal world), and of honour (which the men in the play have been progressively moving away from) makes him an extreme example of manhood. (Robert Bly would attribute Richard's actions to what happens when a man fails to be socialized correctly. In Iron John Bly shows that the early warrior has both a good and twisted side. The latter results in situations of rape, mutilation and massive killings (153). If men cannot come out of the warrior mode they will remain violent (191).)

The disintegration of the social order, which began with the death of Henry V, has reached a desperate state: "3 Henry VI presents a nightmare world so hideous it is capable of breeding a Richard, who will incarnate its values and take it to its full degradation in the last play in the tetralogy" (French, Shakespeare's 57). All those who honoured the old patriarchal order and values have been destroyed. Furthermore, the presence of men and women who subverted their gender roles provides Richard with the opportunity to seize the throne. While the two most prominent reversers of gender roles, Henry VI and Margaret, have been destroyed, the impact their reign had on the patriarchal order remains. Richard's ambitions will ensure that the court, and all of England, will remain in a period of instability and danger. The horror of his rule and the extent of his depravity will emerge

in the last play of the tetralogy.

Conclusion:

Cunning and Chaos/Honour and Order

Shakespeare's first tetralogy culminates in Richard III. This play marks a departure from the characterization of men and women which has been prominent in the earlier plays. In its conclusion, Richard III will bring a return of patriarchal order to English society, through the re-establishment on the throne of a Henry VII, who competently and willingly fulfills the characteristics required in a man and a king. He will be supported by a woman who, like him, accepts her gender determined role as a woman, a wife, and a queen. Their rise to the throne will mark the end of civil war. Before this point will be reached, however, the country will endure its greatest period of chaos and disorder, caused by the machinations of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III.

Unlike his predecessors, Henry VI and Edward IV, Richard is not weakened by his love for a woman. Indeed, personal relationships, love, whether filial or passionate, and loyalty, are commodities which he devalues and dismisses. While Henry VI and Edward IV bring trouble to their kingdoms because of their "feminine" weakness in placing personal relationships above matters of state, Richard, with his wholesale rejection of all relationships (except for the one he shared with his father in the earlier plays), displays another extreme which is also unacceptable in patriarchal society. (Moulton argues that Richard's dismissal of patriarchal values begins after the death of his father, whom he loved and respected. "York's death comes to serve as an emblem for his son Richard's

alienation from the patriarchal masculine community, and the change in Richard's social position is manifested by a precise physical change" (260).) This rejection of the ideals associated with patriarchal society (loyalty, honour, nobleness) has been gradually emerging since the beginning of Henry VI, Part 1. The filial ties which are so important in a patriarchal society (through which brothers, sons and father, and uncles help to secure and support each others' power) are dismissed by Richard. Claiming to be motivated by his inability to have another love him (I.i.14-31), he sets into motion the events which will allow him to seize the crown. (Marilyn French in Shakespeare's Division of Experience makes some interesting points about Richard's claim that since he cannot have love, because of his physical deformity, he will seek power and advancement. She points out that he does, in fact, convince a woman (Anne) to marry him, and that his physical deformity, if as severe as is suggested, would surely affect his ability to take part in battle, but it doesn't (64).)

Richard causes a rift between his two brothers, Clarence and Edward IV, leading Edward IV to imprison Clarence. Provided with access and opportunity, he has Clarence killed in order to help clear the way to the throne for himself. When Edward IV becomes ill and dies, Richard immediately begins to plan his seizure of the throne. He has the brothers and son of Queen Elizabeth imprisoned and killed on trumped up charges of treason. He has men who have been his supporters beheaded (such as Hastings), also on charges of treason, because of their desire to see the Prince of Wales crowned king. He eventually has his nephews, the young Prince of Wales and Duke of York imprisoned, and

later murdered. The murder of the young princes reveals a depravity which is particularly disturbing: they are killed by their father's brother, a man who is supposed to be acting in their own, and the country's, best interests. He has, in essence, fulfilled his vow to disregard all ties which are normally valued and preserved in the patriarchal world. Richard exceeds the limitations of acceptable behaviour for a man in a patriarchal society. Though he certainly fulfills the precepts of being a strong man through his ability to make decisions, set goals, act quickly, fight in battle, and his resistance to feminine allure, his dismissal of all family ties makes his characterization unnatural.

Richard exemplifies what can happen when aggressiveness is unrestrained. Moulton mentions the difficulty controlling behaviour when violence, such as in the form of warfare, is praised and valued: "one of the greatest structural problems facing any patriarchal society is the control of the masculine aggressivity, violence, and self-assertion that constitute patriarchy's base" (251). Richard forgoes all loyalties and familial connections, he murders indiscriminately, he uses subterfuge (characterized by Talbot in Henry VI, Part 1 as ignoble) to succeed, and he places his own needs and desires above the well-being of England. He is out of control. Though he dismisses all the values and relationships which are promoted as essential to the patriarchal world, his repeated references to God and Heaven throughout the play indicate that he understands and accepts that these are the socially sanctioned values (French, Shakespeare's 66). Historically, the representation of Richard's character as evil and uncontrollable has continuously been debated, in contemporary sources and right up to the present. Some

historians refer to Richard's reputation as the Tudor myth, believing that his vilification was prompted by his successors' desire to glorify their own reign, and he was actually a competent leader, while others point out that negative comments were being made about him even during his lifetime, and his black reputation was deserved (Dockray 6, 27). His physical deformity, which is stressed so much in Shakespeare's plays, is probably fictitious and developed, "only after his death" (Hicks 22). (An x-ray of his portrait in the National Portrait Gallery in London revealed that his deformity had been exaggerated sometime after it was painted.) Shakespeare's sources unanimously present Richard as a black, evil character. Hall describes him as "malicious, wrothfull and enuious" (2A1v), while Holinshed called him a "cruell tyrant" (447).

Richard's relationships with the women of the play marks a definite departure from the relationships portrayed between men and women in the earlier plays of the tetralogy. Edward IV and Henry VI had married for love and passion, putting aside all other concerns, while Richard marries, or seeks marriage, in order to secure his own social position. He sees women as commodities whose usefulness lies in the advantages they may bring him, not an unusual sentiment for a man to have--women were often seen as vehicles through which men could secure lineal successions, cement political alliances and secure monetary funds. Moulton remarks that even though Richard is a misogynist, "he cannot afford to ignore women. For in patriarchal society in which property and social status are passed from father to son, women are crucial to male power" (266). Richard convinces Anne, the widow of Henry VI's son, to marry him so he can consolidate his

holdings and his power. His ability to persuade her to marry him, despite the fact that he murdered her father-in-law and her husband, is a testament to his oratorical skills which are a prominent element in Richard's success.

Anne is not the only one who is fooled by his oratorical skills. He is able to persuade those around him of his loyalty, his wisdom, and his suitability to serve as king. He convinces Clarence that the Queen and her brothers are maligning him to the king, while he leads Edward IV to believe Clarence is plotting against him. Of course, his actions begin to reveal his true inner state, and it is not long before his oratorical gifts are not enough to secure his position. Richard bears Anne no affection, and when her usefulness to him is at an end, he has her disposed of. He has Catesby spread the word that she is ill: " Rumor it abroad/That Anne, my wife, is very grievous sick" (IV.ii.50-51), though she is not. Her death is reported by Richard in the next scene, clearing the way for him to seek an even more advantageous marriage, though one that is also incestuous. He wants to marry his own niece, Elizabeth, daughter to Edward IV, in order to secure his hold on the throne of England.

It is a testament to his own belief in his verbal skills that Richard thinks he has persuaded Elizabeth, dowager queen, to give him her daughter, despite the fact that he killed her sons. It is Elizabeth who points out that such a marriage would be incestuous. Richard appears untroubled by such considerations. For him, the desire to rule and be king outweighs any moral dilemmas, as is evidenced by his behaviour throughout the play. While his willingness to contract marriages for political and dynastic reasons is certainly

acceptable, even expected in the patriarchal world (Henry VI's and Edward IV's failure to contract politically advantageous marriages weakens their authority and power), the women he chooses to contract such marriages with create relationships which are unnatural. The part he played in killing Anne's husband and father-in-law makes his relationship with her abhorrent, and his desire to marry his niece goes against everything that is considered right and holy. In contrast, Richmond's marriage to Elizabeth will have no stigma attached to it.

More women appear in Richard III than in any other play of the first tetralogy, though none of them possesses the power or the authority which the women (Eleanor Cobham, Joan de Pucelle, and Margaret of Anjou) in the earlier plays had. Rackin remarks that "the subversive power associated with female characters in the earlier plays is demystified, and all the power of agency and transgression is appropriated by the male protagonist," Richard ("History into Tragedy" 37). The women do not take part in battle, they do not involve themselves in matters of state or in political affairs, and they do not plot against their enemies to further their husband's and their children's social positions. Neither do they attempt to subvert the traditional gender roles they are expected to fulfill as women: they have been "confined to domestic roles and domestic settings" (Howard and Rackin 116). They are also not exposed to the kind of criticism women endured in the earlier plays, though Margaret's transgressions are not allowed to be forgotten, as is evidenced by the charges laid against her when she first appears in the play. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin also point out that while "[women] are much more sympathetically

portrayed," in Richard III, "they lose the vividly individualized voices and the dangerous theatrical power that made characters like Joan and Margaret potent threats to the masculine project of English history-making" (105). However, this does not mean that they give up all their power and rights.

There are five women who either directly, or indirectly, affect what happens in the play. The first woman to appear in the play is Anne, the widow of Edward, Prince of Wales. Her depiction is troubling. She is clearly a loyal wife and loving daughter-in-law, who is first shown following Henry VI's casket. She curses Richard who murdered him. Despite the fervour of her hatred, and her absolute belief in Richard's guilt, she is manipulated by Richard into agreeing to marry him. She is told by him that her beauty and his desire for her led him to kill her husband and her father-in-law. She responds with disgust: "If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,/These nails should rent that beauty from my cheeks" (I.ii.125-126). She eventually cannot resist his continued arguments, however, and she gives in to him. He turns her anger and hatred against him onto herself. In doing so, he confuses her, making her question the facts as she knows them. Her capitulation is presented as a clear indication of his oratorical skills, but it also exhibits her own weakness and gullibility. By marrying him, she brings the curses which she had previously placed upon him and his family, onto her own head: "If ever he have wife, let her be made/More miserable by the [life] of him/Than I am made by my young lord and thee!" (I.ii.26-28). Anne is not motivated by any desire or ambition of her own to be queen: in fact, when she hears that she is to be made queen, she becomes grief-stricken:

> O would to God that the inclusive verge
> Of golden metal that must round my brow
> Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brains!
> Anointed let me be with deadly venom,
> And die ere men can say, "God save the Queen!" (IV.i.58-62)

Rather than being cursed for her decision to marry him, she is pitied by the other women in the play. Elizabeth, Edward IV's widow, feels sorry for her: "Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory,/To feed my humor wish thyself no harm" (IV.i.63-64). Anne comes to desperately regret her weakness and she pays dearly for her mistake. She finds herself married to a man she does not love or respect, one who will have her crowned queen to the detriment of two young boys, and who will eventually have her killed (or so, at least, it is suggested). While Anne is perhaps the best example of someone who is hoodwinked by Richard's sweet tongue, she is not the only one. Men also fall prey to his honeyed words, most notably his brothers and Hastings.

The Duchess of York is another woman who is essentially powerless to prevent Richard's (her son's) actions. She has had to endure the loss of her husband, the murder of young Rutland, the death of her eldest son, and now, at the hands of Richard, the death of Clarence and her two grandsons. She has no illusions about Richard's true nature and she is certain he is the orchestrator of these latest tragedies. Her hatred for his actions are apparent, and she curses him. She wishes that she had not borne him and comments on the unnatural circumstances surrounding his birth. (Levine raises the question of whether or not the Duchess of York can be held responsible for his deformity, which he has had since birth ("Accursed Womb" 22), and must therefore have contracted in the womb. Thomas

More, in his history of Richard III, states that Richard accused the queen and Jane Shore (Edward IV's mistress), and also implicated Hastings, of causing his deformity through witchcraft (48).) She wishes she had killed him before he was born (IV.iv.137-139). Her willingness to contemplate such an act brings to mind Lady Macbeth's speech in Macbeth:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
> Have done to this. (I.vii.54-59)

While the Duchess of York's motive is to prevent unnecessary violence, the act itself, a mother killing a child, is unnatural and horrendous. The other women in the play do not blame her for her role as his mother.

Instead of honouring and respecting his mother, Richard dismisses her and maligns her reputation. When she and the other women want to talk to him, he orders the drums to play loud so that her, and the others', accusations would be drowned out. As well, he has rumours spread that Edward IV was actually an illegitimate child, that he was conceived when his father was away campaigning. Richard's willingness to malign his mother's reputation in order to help secure his hold on the throne indicates his disregard for all relationships, even the maternal one. He does acknowledge, however, that this action is disturbing: "Yet touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off,/Because, my lord, you know my mother lives" (III.v.93-94). His decision to temper the spreading of this rumour, while not exonerating him from his decision to label his mother an adulteress, indicates he knows what he is doing is reprehensible. This makes his decision to continue with his plan

even more troubling. The Duchess, despite her sorrow and anger over the death of her family members, does not attempt to halt Richard's progress. She has little power except as a mother, and since Richard clearly does not value her role enough to abide by her advice, that power is negligible. She is left to grieve and suffer, but she does have the ability to curse (one of the few powers allowed the women in the play), and she uses it:

> My prayers on the adverse party fight,
> And there the little souls of Edward's children
> Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
> And promise them success and victory.
> Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
> Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend. (IV.iv.191-196)

The most effective curser, however, is Margaret of Anjou. She once again appears in this last play of the tetralogy, though she no longer has the power to act as she once did. She does not lead troops into battle, she does not involve herself in affairs of state, and she cannot manipulate political events. Her power has been taken from her through the death of her husband and son. She does have the power to curse, however, and her curses come true. She returns because she wants to watch and see what will become of those who orchestrated her own, and her husband's and son's, destruction. Responding to Richard's query about her banishment, she says: "I do find more pain in banishment/Than death can yield me here by my abode" (I.iii.167-168). She first appears in the English court again when the courtiers and the women are squabbling after the death of Edward IV. They quickly turn on her (Richard refers to her as "Foul wrinkled witch" (I.iii.163)), and she curses each of them. Though the men and women in the play at first dismiss her ravings, they learn, as the play progresses, that her forecasting has been accurate. Margaret stays

at the court long enough to see that the destruction of her enemies is inevitable, and that Elizabeth, her counterpart, will take over her role as the cursing, retribution-seeking, woman.

Margaret is just a ghost of the figure she used to be. Instead of dominating the stage and the play with her dramatic, strong presence, she appears as an ephemeral figure who hovers in the background, moving forward to offer curses and predictions. She has assumed a role which is acceptable (if disturbing) for a woman--her sword is now her tongue. While she may have power, it is not the power of a virago, but of a woman for whom swords and political intrigue are impossible. Nevertheless, Margaret is clearly unwilling to cede all power to the men, or to those who have betrayed her. Her relationship with the other women in the play is particularly interesting. While they state that they mourned for her losses, she shows no such compassion for their grief. In fact, she seems to relish and welcome it. She sees it as retribution for the fate which she has endured at the hands of the men in their lives. She does, however, state that Elizabeth will take over her role as curser. She passes on to another woman the only power that she has left...though she is, in the end, unwilling to show that woman how to curse--she merely tells her to do so. Once Elizabeth has reached the point where she is willing to take on this role, Margaret is free to leave: "Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke,/From which even here I slip my [weary] head,/And leave the burthen of it all on thee" (IV.iv.111-113). There is someone else who will see that Richard III does not survive. Margaret leaves the play quietly and unobtrusively. This woman who arrived in England

as a young girl, who refused to accept her socially sanctioned role as woman, who led men in battle and engaged in political machinations, cedes the stage, allowing another woman, and another era, to emerge.

Elizabeth, the widow of Edward IV, takes on Margaret's challenge to be the one to curse Richard's actions. Unlike Anne, Elizabeth is able to resist Richard III's oratorical skills and persuasion. From the beginning of the play she is concerned about what will happen to herself and her sons if her husband, who is ill, should die. She is maligned by Richard, who tells others she is to blame for the king's decisions (while it is in fact himself who fills Edward IV's ear full of stories about Clarence's and others' treasonous behaviour). Though she denies it, she clearly has no opportunity for recourse. When her husband does die, Richard acts quickly to weaken her support system, removing any threat to his own advancement to the throne. Her brothers and a son from an earlier marriage are arrested and executed--supposedly for treason. Elizabeth flees with her youngest son to a monastery, seeking sanctuary. Her fears prove to be realistic. Richard has both the young Prince of Wales and the Duke of Gloucester placed in the Tower of London and later killed in order to secure his own position. Elizabeth is left with no husband and no brothers to protect her. She has also witnessed the death of several of her sons. She urges Dorset, a son from her previous marriage, to fly to Richmond and support him, which he does. She has only her daughter, Elizabeth, left. In the end, Richard wants her too, as his wife, in order to secure his position as king. As mentioned above, he does not care that he is her uncle. In a debate, Elizabeth clearly shows that she is aware of Richard's true

nature, and proves to be a match for him verbally. When he attempts to swear that he will protect her daughter, Elizabeth quickly undermines his oaths by pointing out he has already profaned the things he is swearing by. She has also learned from him. Though he believes she has capitulated and agreed to convince Elizabeth to marry him, she actually arranges a marriage between her daughter and Henry of Richmond, who will prove to be Richard's nemesis. Williamson points out that "here Richard's misogyny proves his weakness, for he misjudges Elizabeth, who gives her daughter heartily to Richmond, as we discover shortly after" (55). (French, in Shakespeare's Division of Experience, disagrees with this notion that Elizabeth was intentionally tricking Richard. She believes Elizabeth simply changed her mind later on, that during this conversation she was willingly agreeing to the betrothal between Richard and Elizabeth (70).)

Elizabeth is essentially a woman who knows her place and accepts it. She never tries to subvert her position (which makes Richard's accusations ironic), but neither does she give up all power altogether. She utilizes what power is available to her as a woman. Though she cannot save her sons, she does change the fate of her daughter, and by doing so, helps Richard's enemy in his claim to the throne, and helps return England to a period of peace. The marriage of her daughter and Henry of Richmond will usher England into a period of prosperity and peace, which it has not enjoyed since the death of Henry V.

The subversion of gender roles has allowed the state to fall to such a low level of integrity that it allows an individual like Richard III, who is portrayed as evil personified, to seize control of the crown. As Moulton states, "over the course of the three Henry VI

plays, effeminate rulers and mannish women destabilize the traditional patriarchal power structure and gender hierarchy of England, leaving the realm in chaos" (255). Richard III is the product of this chaos. His reign is the culmination of a period which has progressively dismissed and disregarded the values which are associated with the patriarchal order. It is because Henry VI and Margaret failed in their duties as man and woman, and as king and queen, because Richard, Duke of York attempted to seize the throne, and because Edward IV did not consolidate his power through an arranged marriage, that Richard III is able to rise up and take control of the state:

> In the absence of strong masculine royal authority, English manhood, unruled and untamed, turns to devour itself. It is this unregulated, destructive masculine force that is personified in the twisted and deformed body of Richard III. (Moulton 258)

Of course, this disorder also provides the means by which his enemies can beat him. Henry of Richmond, as predicted by Henry VI, proves to be England's saviour. He destroys Richard III in battle, despite Richard's superiority in numbers of troops, and returns stability to England. He is able to do this because he embraces the roles expected of him as a man. He is brave, he is an effective leader, and he is a good soldier. He is also a good orator, as revealed by his speech to his troops, and he is fighting as a religiously motivated man, who asks for God's help in destroying Richard III:

> O Thou whose captain I account myself,
> Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
> Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,
> That they may crush down with a heavy fall
> The usurping helmets of our adversaries;
> Make us thy ministers of chastisement,
> That we may praise thee in the victory!

> To thee I do commend my watchful soul
> Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
> Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! (V.iii.108-117)

This contrasts sharply with Richard's repeated rejection of God and Heaven throughout the play. Richmond sees his mission not as a personal need for power, but as a necessary action to save England. When he succeeds in destroying Richard, he offers clemency to those who fought for his enemy. He is evidently wise, compassionate, flexible, and God-fearing. In essence, he exhibits all the characteristics which are desirable in a king. Holinshed states "he had asmuch in him of gifts both of bodie, mind and fortune, as was possible for anie potentate or king to haue" (542). Furthermore, he arranges a marriage based not on love or lust, like most of the men in the first tetralogy, but on a need to consolidate and confirm his power, taking into consideration the needs of his country. His marriage to Elizabeth, Edward IV's daughter, means that England will once again have a king who knows how to govern, and a queen who acts appropriately. Elizabeth never appears in the play, and the audience never sees their marriage, yet it is certainly suggested that she will graciously assume her role as queen and wife. With the re-establishment of gender roles, the kingdom can enjoy a period of peace and prosperity: "Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again./That she may long live here, God say amen!" (V.v.40-41). The civil war is ended.

Male writers are only now beginning to follow the example set by feminist critics who have sought to explore the limitations and expectations placed on individuals because of their sex. Gender inevitably affects the way all individuals are perceived and judged.

Shakespeare's first tetralogy contains a plethora of men (Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III) and women (Joan de Pucelle, Margaret of Anjou, Eleanor Cobham) who fail to fulfill their socially determined gender roles, and also their hierarchical roles, within the patriarchal society. The results of this subversion are staggering. The women are publicly humiliated, verbally abused, and killed. The men suffer similar fates for their transgressions. Throughout the first three plays of the tetralogy women of power, and men who cannot, or will not, control their women, dominate the stage. Richard III marks the disappearance of "manly" women and "womanly" men from the stage, but the damage has already been done. The impact of these individuals' subversion is not only felt in their personal lives. Instead, the entire country suffers for their mistakes. England is plunged into a civil war that marks the disintegration of the underlying values of the patriarchal state. The country will experience the reigns, successively, of two ineffective, self-centred kings, and a final king who dismisses all the values normally held by the patriarchal world. Chaos and confusion rule. Normalcy and peace can only be achieved when the gender roles are once again embraced, and the values associated with patriarchal society are re-established.

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