

“I OF OLD CONTEMPTES COMPLAYNE”:
MARGARET OF ANJOU AND ENGLISH SENECA

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Goe to, these fierce and furious wordes thou woman mad refraine
(STT 1:21)

[Agendum efferatas rabida voces amove]
(*HF* 397)

Commentaries concerning Margaret of Anjou in history and in Shakespeare's first tetralogy emphasize her threatening status as an androgynous figure who “bare the whole swynge, as the strong ox doth,” and who epitomizes the movement of “monstrous female agency from margin to center.”¹ Such criticism, occupied with the controversies regarding historiography, gender, and the body, ignores or de-emphasizes the influence of dramatic intertextual materials.² Shakespeare's reading of Seneca's tragedies, their influence on him, and his subsequent internalization of them, all help him make Margaret a vibrant and irresistible presence, in spite of the hostile chronicles that encouraged him to portray her as shrill virago and shallow harridan. Lycus's admonition to Megæra in Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (1561 / 1581) foretells these fierce and furious words, both critical and literary.³ Margaret may well exemplify what Naomi Conn Liebler labels the “feminine heroic.”⁴

It is also a commonplace of first tetralogy analysis to explore what Kathryn Schwarz describes as the “simultaneity” of masculine and feminine in

Margaret that “constructs the specifically disruptive effect of female agency,” or what Linda Woodbridge calls, more simply, “sexual chiasma.”⁵ New historicist and gender criticism often locates such troublesome androgyny in “cultural sources” such as conduct books and religious treatises. Yet it may also have roots in Seneca, since some women in his plays anticipate the early modern figure of the *hic mulier*. The boy who played Margaret in Shakespeare’s theater surely enhanced the masculine tendencies of her character, and thereby continued a tradition associated with the staging of the Latin versions of the *tragoediae* during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Rome, St. Paul’s School, Westminster School, and Cambridge, when young men performed the women’s roles.⁶ So notions of androgyny not only contributed to the construction of feminine subjectivity in the formation of European drama before Shakespeare, but may have provided its norm. This seems to have provided an impetus for the translators in Thomas Newton’s anthology, *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies, Translated into English* (1581): Newton, Heywood, John Studley, Alexander Nevile, and Thomas Nuce. In the gender segregation of the early modern university, these playwrights created feminine dramatic versions of their masculine selves as they reanimated Juno, Megæra, and Medea in their own language, so that English Seneca served as intermediary between Latin Phaedra and Shakespeare’s Margaret.

In an earlier study, I read women in Shakespeare’s plays against a rubric of Senecan tendencies gleaned from the *Tenne Tragedies*: high rhetoric as well as the habit of using Stoic maxims, *scelus* (crime, sense of sin), *furor*, violence, witchcraft, and the capacity for self-definition and self-knowledge.⁷ I do not intend to revisit precisely the same material nor to ignore it, but to determine how Shakespeare rewrites, re-creates, and internalizes Seneca in Margaret. In this, I seek to demonstrate his ability to create dramatic feminine identity out of academic masculine materials, even in her last appearance in the canon (*Richard III* 1.3 and 4.3). Here, Margaret resembles a ghost such as Agrippina in *Octavia*, or a fury such as Megæra in *Thyestes*, or the spiteful goddess Juno in *Hercules Furens*, spitting curses in ahistorical moments that Shakespeare invents for decisive dramatic effect, even in the stage direction “Enter Old Queen Margaret behind” (1.3.108). Her final flyting of Elizabeth Woodville and Richard makes better theater than her pitiful death in exile, alone and unloved at fifty-three. Such vibrancy befits the woman character in Shakespeare with the most lines (collectively), one of only three characters in the canon who appear in four of his plays.⁸

I

Shakespeare criticism will never resurrect the issue of Senecan influence in the canon so that it again constitutes a subdiscipline in the field. The pervasiveness of poststructuralist theory has destabilized the very notions of source, influence, and textuality that allowed the issue to arise in the first place. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commentators such as John W. Cunliffe (1893) and Henry B. Charlton (1921) argued almost unequivocally that Shakespeare read and imitated the Latin Seneca, a tradition culminating in the monumental work of T. W. Baldwin (1944, 1947), who attempted to excavate what he regarded as the typical education of an Elizabethan schoolboy in order to justify such a point of view. Within the site, two complementary rogue strains arose. One represented by F. L. Lucas (1922), Willard Farnham (1936) and Howard Baker (1939) countered that Cunliffe and his fellows had severely overstated the extent of Senecan influence on Shakespeare. The second, evident in the scholarship of Evelyn M. Spearing Simpson (1912, 1920) and in an important essay by T. S. Eliot (1927), held that the *Tenne Tragedies* served as Shakespeare's Seneca. Subsequent commentators have simply created the equivalent of enormous footnotes to both critical trends, with five major voices, G. K. Hunter (1967, 1974), Reuben A. Brower (1971), Frederick Kiefer (1978), Gordon Braden (1985), and Robert S. Miola (1992), the most essential. Hunter argues against Senecan influence of any kind. Brower and Kiefer stress the importance of the Newtonian translations to Shakespeare, whereas Braden discounts this notion of intertextuality in the canon. Miola undoubtedly makes the most credible case for Senecan influence but avoids the language issue, Latin or English, relegating John Studley and his fellows to quotation fodder.⁹

Even a fairly cursory reading of the Newtonian translations by one with a good knowledge of Shakespeare's plays reveals a number of echoes and similarities, although Renaissance imitation theorists from Petrarch onward urge modern imitators of ancient writers to use skill and subtlety in transforming their materials. As a result, precise parallels are not always easy to identify. The ancient writer instead tends to be "present" in his successor in the manner of a shadow or doppelgänger. Stylistic infelicities one might associate with the poetics of Studley surface occasionally: Margaret's description of Humphrey as a "fraudful man" (*2H6* 3.1.81); Humphrey's image of his own uncle, whose "red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice" (154), and warning to his royal nephew: "wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first" (192); and Henry's description of his deceased guardian's "paly

lips" (3.2.141) and desire to express his love "unto his dumb deaf trunk" (144). Other factors may affect the phenomenon of intertextuality, some unanticipated by moderns. Alexander Nevile, nineteen-year-old translator of *Oedipus*, claims that his paraphrases of and additions to Seneca, such as the hero's solemn "What greedy vile devouring Gripe, upon my guts will gnaw?" result from his zeal to identify and punish sin: "*This caused me not to be precise in following the Author, word for word: but sometymes by addition, sometimes by subtraction, to use the aptest Phrases in geving the Sense that I could invent*" (STT 1: 224, 188). So Nevile explains how Seneca is "present" in him intuitively, giving him license to improvise on "quae tigris aut quae saeva visceribus meis / incurret ales?" (*Oed.* 929–30) [What tigress, what ravening bird will pounce upon my vitals?].

Still, a traditional authority as unassailable as Geoffrey Bullough assigns Heywood's *Thyestes* to *Titus Andronicus* as a source, and Spearing nearly accomplishes the same feat with Nevile's *Oedipus* and *Hamlet*.¹⁰ Other similarities manifest themselves. Newton's introduction to Studley's *Hippolytus* mentions that after Phaedra's remorseful suicide, "shee stabbed herself into the Entrailes" (STT 1:136), just as Othello does as he purports to demonstrate his smiting of a "circumcised dog," a "turban'd Turk" (*Oth.* 5.2.353–56). Her Nutrix's counsel about excessive grief, "Leave of thy bitter languishing unto the silie sort" (STT 1:151) [Sepone questus; non levat miseros dolor] (*Hip.* 404), may remind some readers of Gertrude and Claudius urging Hamlet not to seek his father in the dust (*Ham.* 1.2). Her stepson's bitter disavowal of her, to the point of condemning the sex altogether as a "plaguy crabbed kinde" (STT 1:156) [feminas dirum genus] (*Hip.* 564), surely served as model for Posthumus's bitter rant in *Cymbeline* on the woman's part in him (2.5), as well as Hamlet's ruminations on his mother, his lady love, and frailty. Cleopatra's request before her suicide, "Show me, my women, like a queen; go fetch / My best attires" (*Ant.* 5.2.227–28) may owe something to Phaedra's similar injunction to her women: "Maydes, have our purple garmentes hence, and vestures wrought with gold" (STT 1:151) [Removete, famulae, purpura atque auro inlitas / vestes] (*Hip.* 387–88). In Heywood's *Troas*, Andromacha's assessment of Helena as someone who equates sex and death also foretells the lovers in Shakespeare's late play: "To wed she thought it Death, to die she thinkes a wedding day" (STT 2:44) [mortem putabat illud, hoc thalamos putat] (*Tro.* 948); "I will be a bridegroom in my death, and run into't / As to a lover's bed"; "The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch, / Which hurts, and is desir'd" (*Ant.* 4.14.99–101; 5.2.295–96). Antigone's attempts to cure her blinded father's despair by trifling with it in Newton's

Thebais, even to the point of seeming to approach a cliff for the purposes of suicide (STT 1:102–05; *The.* 51–79), unmistakably resonates in Edgar’s ministrations to Gloucester (*KL* 4.6.1–80). In the same pairing of plays, blind Oedipus’s invocation of apocalyptic disorder, “The Gods and all confound, / And throw their Temples on their heads” (STT 1:117) [miscete cuncta [. . .] templis deos obruite] (*The.* 342–44), may remind some of Lear’s rhetoric as he rages in the storm for its elements to strike flat the thick rotundity of the world and otherwise crack nature’s molds. Warwick’s gallows speech seems almost generically Senecan: “Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust? / And live we how we can, yet die we must” (*3H6* 5.2.27–28). So does Guiderius’s part in a famous song from *Cymbeline*: “Golden lads and girls all must, / As chimney-sweepers, come to dust” (4.2.262–63).

Seneca may fuel Shakespeare’s amplifications of and divergences from his chronicle sources regarding Margaret. The stichomythic mourning of Margaret, Eleanor, and Elizabeth in *Richard III*, who complain that they had someone until a Richard killed him (4.4.35–60), closely resembles the ritualized keening of Andromacha, Hecuba, and Helena in *Troas* (STT 2:45; *Tro.* 968–79).¹¹ However, Margaret had already died alone in penurious exile (1482) by the time this incident could have actually happened (1483). Events in *Thebais*, *Agamemnon*, or *Hippolytus* may well inform the self-interest that John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, exhibits in negotiating Margaret’s scandalously dowerless marriage to Henry and in initiating their adulterous love affair (*1H6* 5.3; *2H6* 1.1, 3.2), since no historian at any time posits such a relationship. In fact, the most authoritative recent account of Suffolk’s life pointedly makes no mention of any involvement with Margaret, and even implies that his mother, Alice, served as a kind of duenna for the sixteen-year-old who spoke no English.¹² The chronicles stress that she was greatly feared when queen, but do not record her most notorious deeds in Shakespeare, such as the box on the ear she gives Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester (*2 Henry VI* 1.3), as well as the undeniable complicity and actual participation in the death of the Duke of York (*3 Henry VI* 1.4), which may also originate in the primal violence of Senecan heroines (Medea, Phaedra, Clytemnestra).

Of course, any essentialist notion of a “real” Margaret of history has long ago been discredited as ahistorical for Shakespeare and for us, since he is engaged in, as Nina S. Levine puts it, “writing the present onto the past.”¹³ If he had been able to gain access to some chronicles, and known that this queen, dressed in rags, had escaped from her enemies in Flanders in a hock-cart (1465), and that she was exhibited in a chariot as captive during

Edward IV's triumphal entry into the City of London on his re-accession over six years later (21 May 1471), he might have created a heavily symbolic tableau with these two similar modes of transport in contrasting scenes, as he is wont to do in other contexts. Squalor affords escape and survival, barbaric and ironic splendor provides the setting for her capture and defeat.¹⁴ His Cleopatra, it should be observed, chooses death over the possibility of submitting to the latter indignity for fear of a boy actor parodying her in the posture of a whore.

Margaret might well be described as the presiding spirit of the first tetralogy, yet the two major articles that discuss the origin and nature of the genre do not mention the crucial figure of this controversial French queen as the binding agent of the four plays.¹⁵ Hers may well be the most multifaceted female role in Shakespeare, another example of the angry woman, *femina furens*, with rhetorical mastery of sententiae and tropes of exhortation and imprecation; androgynous in her words and deeds; capable of sorrow, pity, and anger at the weakness of her poor silly ass of a husband. Her symbolic value is also ambiguous: her participation in a kind of *pietà* with her son, murdered before her eyes; her membership in the monstrous regiment of women, her vileness and insanity in her complicity in the murder of Richard, Duke of York. Finally, she survives to fill the world with words, much to the chagrin of her victim's mentally and physically deformed child, a future king whose pitiable and miserable reign would not even last a thousand days.¹⁶

II

Although Schwarz argues that *2 Henry VI* defines Margaret almost solely by her body, "first as an object and finally as an agent of acquisition," as well as "a royal accessory [. . .] acquired at a cost,"¹⁷ this analysis may only be valid for parts of the first few scenes in which she appears, such as the initial symbolic tableau. The English soldiers remove the devil-conjuring Pucelle (Joan of Arc), presumably by the hand, as York's "Damsel of France, I think I have you fast" (*1H6* 5.3.30) implies. A moment later, said damsel's "I prithee give me leave to curse awhile" (*1H6* 5.3.43) reverberates in the gloom of defeat, and the ensuing stage direction reads: "*Enter Suffolk, with Margaret in his hand*" (44 sd). Yet here Shakespeare allows his protagonist to create her identity in statements of self-definition, in a milieu especially hostile to women. Like his own Joan and Seneca's Medea, Margaret will be no man's sexual accessory to be handled or handed over by men such as Suffolk, who hopes to "rule both her, the King, and realm" (*1H6* 5.5.108).

Shakespeare reproduces the self-assurance of Seneca's queens in Margaret and others like her. To Suffolk's inappropriate sexual overtures in querying her identity, gazing at her (45 sd) and referring to her as his "prisoner" (45), Margaret's dignified reply echoes Senecan style: "Margaret my name, and daughter to a king" (51). Similarly, Medea defines herself in statements that progressively become less gnomic, more fulsome, first by her lineage, "My Father was a King" (STT 2:62) [rex meus fuerat pater] (*Me.* 168); and "of my Cosen Phaëton a wyldefyer flake I have" (STT 2:90) [vivacis fulgura flammae / de cognato Phaethonte tuli] (*Me.* 826–27); and finally by her own deeds: "Still conversaunt with wicked feates Medea am I made" (STT 2:94); [Medea nunc sum] (*Me.* 910). So Medean Margaret retorts to Suffolk's "would you not suppose / Your bondage happy, to be made a queen?" (*IH6* 5.3.111) as if she had overheard his "She's beautiful; and therefore to be wooed: / She is a woman; therefore to be won" (78–79), anticipated his harassment, then prepared her answer beforehand:

To be a queen in bondage is more vile
Than is a slave in base servility;
For princes should be free.
(112–14)

In this Medean, sententious last line, Margaret forges her identity against the very concept of serving as the sexual possession of a man, be he the dashing and rakish Suffolk or her prayer-book-holding, strangely androgynous husband. She can dissemble if necessary: "Tush, women have been captivate ere now" (107). One might even hear patriarchal Elizabeth's ambiguously gendered notion of herself as "prince" in her famous speech to the troops at Tilbury in the face of the approaching Armada. Margaret similarly refuses to be any man's convenience. She will be neither bounded nor bonded, even when she is taken by the hand and "*led out forcibly*" at the end of *3 Henry VI* (5.5.81–82) as Edward Capell surmises, creating symmetry with her initial appearance in the first play of the tetralogy.¹⁸ She refuses to acquiesce; she prefers to be dragged.

Chronicle sources provided Shakespeare with the notion of Margaret as a royal yet dowerless bride. He may also have noted Seneca's manipulation of such an awkward status for dramatic effect.¹⁹ In Newton's *Thebais*, the anguished Jocasta warns her son Polynices about making such a match:

Adrastus, Father to thy Wife, and father in lawe to thee,
 With Daughter his, hath not defraide much store of golde or Fee.
 No Dower hath he bestowde on her, her wealth was very small,
 Of Citties, Landes, and Revenewes hee gave her none at all.
 Warre, Warre, is it thou onely hadst, by taking her to Wyfe:
 In lew of other gyfts, hee helpes to kindle all this Stryfe.
 (SST 1:127–28)

[dona non auro graves
 gazas socer, non arva, non urbes dedit;
 dotale bellum est.]
 (*The.* 508–10)

The Duke of York makes much the same point in a violent and emotional speech, along with the good Duke Humphrey, when he discovers that Suffolk has contrived *le mariage sans dot*, without cities, lands, or any store of gold or fee whatsoever:

France should have torn and rent my very heart
 Before I would have yielded to this league.
 I never read but England's kings have had
 Large sums of gold and dowries with their wives,
 And our King Henry gives away his own,
 To match with her that brings no vantages.
 (2*H6* 1.1.126–31)

The catastrophic battles between the English factions, as well as the eventual losses of French territory, suggest that war is the single most important result of taking Margaret, this “dear-bought queen” (252) to wife, that it is, ultimately, all England has. But she is never an inert piece of property, defined solely by her body, in the manner of Jocasta's daughter-in-law. Instead, Margaret herself confronts these difficulties and defines herself against them—Polynices's wife, Argeia, by whom her father Adrastus hopes to control Thebes, is never even named in Seneca's play.²⁰ The new queen's dowerlessness, in short, has consequences for her as well as for her husband and his infuriated uncles. And it provides further motivations for Suffolk, whose defense of Margaret, “Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit, / (More than in women commonly is seen) / Will answer our hope in issue of a king” (1*H6* 5.5.70–72), really means: “Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king; / But I will rule both her, the king, and realm” (107–08).

She must negotiate and obliterate other unforeseen patriarchal obstructions, as well. In *2 Henry VI*, when her disoriented husband notes the peregrinations of Humphrey's falcon, he appears to comment on this soon-to-be-dispossessed uncle: "what a point, my lord, your falcon made / And what a pitch she flew above the rest" (*2H6* 2.1.5–6). But it also symbolizes Margaret's ambition, as well as her function with the king. As the consort who refuses to subordinate herself, "the proud insulting Queen," she becomes the actual bird of prey, of the same "feather" as "many moe proud birds" (*3H6* 2.1.170). This business also inverts another part of the speaking picture that makes up the scene. A stage direction that some editors add to the First Folio version of *2 Henry VI* (the traditional copy text) from the 1594 quarto, *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, reads, "Enter the King and Queene with her Harwke on her fist" (2.1.1.sd). That image suggests that Margaret, not her husband, is the keeper, and that she is now a possessor, not the possessed, as the stage direction at the end of *1 Henry VI* implies. Her wry comment about her bird, "ten to one, old Joan had not gone out" (*2H6* 2.1.4) provides a strange echo of the exit-Pucelle, enter-Margaret tableau and heightens the effect that her stewardship of the falcon creates. The dowerless bride whom amoral men had fitted for concubinage now defines herself as their leader.

III

Seneca's tragedies imply that the inhabitants of an amoral environment must adapt to it or become prey. Some of his protagonists, fueled by craft and guile, employ individual initiative to survive. Others find it just as useful to think in programmed patterns or to live by aphorisms.²¹ In *Hercules Furens*, the unfortunate Megæra does not so much accept her lot as aggressively delineate it, defiant rather than resigned: "the ende of one affliction / Beginning of an other is" (STT 1:15) [fnis alterius mali / gradus est futuri] (*HF* 208–09); "What wretches doe most chiefly wishe of all, / They soone beleve" (STT 1:18) [Quod nimis miseri volunt / hoc facile credunt] (*HF* 313–14).²² Jocasta reminds Oedipus, ironically, that he should bear his woes with more equanimity: "Stoutly to beare adversity, is fitste for Kings estate" (STT 1:195) [regium hoc ipsum reor— / adversa capere] (*Oed.* 82–83). These women create what is in effect a milieu with such sententiae. Margaret's own pragmatism may well be rooted in Stoicism of this type, which she shows in this Senecan sentence to King Lewis against Warwick: "how can tyrants

safely govern home, / Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?" (*3H6* 3.3.69–70). Her "princes should be free" speech to Suffolk (*1H6* 5.3.114) establishes her dignity and, in a word, honor. Her perdurable toughness makes an expected counterpoint with her husband's piety, and complements the brutality of her enemies, more cruel to her than she could possibly be to them or to herself. Yet her Megæra-like aphorisms, those that begin and end the speech that precedes the murder of her son that her enemies force her to witness, seem pitiful indeed: "Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss / But cheerly seek how to redress their harms" (*3H6* 5.4.1–2); "what cannot be avoided, / 'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear" (37–38). In these lines, Margaret resembles Shakespeare's favorite and most-employed Senecan figure, Medea, mother of Katherine the shrew and Prospero the magus, as well as Goneril and Lady Macbeth, whose female natures sliver and disbranch as they turn to deadly use: "Exile all foolysh Female feare, and pity from thy mynde" (STT 2:57) [*pelle femineos metus*] (*Me.* 42); "Let Fortune fight agaynst my case as list her elvish will, / Yet never shall it grieve my heart, repent my deede I nill" (STT 2:66) [*fortuna causam quae volet nostrum premat, / non paenitet servasse tot regum decus*] (*Me.* 242–43).

Similarly, Senecan Margaret's environment forces her to repress the empathetic impulse so that she can participate in the cycle of revenge that results in the death of York, one that redounds against her as she endures a sight no mother should ever have to see. Shakespeare does not design her as an object of sentimentality, nor as someone who feels much compassion. She lives King Lewis's prescription for adapting to misfortune: "Yield not thy neck / To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind / Still ride in triumph over all mischance" (*3H6* 3.3.16–18). She approves of Suffolk's amorality as he schemes to unseat Humphrey: "that is good deceit / Which mates him first that first intends deceit" (*2H6* 3.1.264–65); "things are often spoke and seldom meant" (268). Even her parting from him, meant to be romantic, seems like an assault on him, impatience with his ease at giving in and accepting his fate: "banishèd I am, if but from thee" (3.2.351).

The episode of Simpcox the Citizen provides evidence for these tendencies early in the second play of the tetralogy. He pretends to be blind and lame for financial reasons and suffers exposure as a fraud. A traditionalist schooled in the techniques of Cleanth Brooks or G. Wilson Knight might say that Simpcox's feigned lack of sight underscores the spiritual blindness of his betters: Margaret, Henry, Suffolk, Humphrey, Warwick. Someone of a Marxist bent might note that the beggar simply reacts to the economic conditions to which he has been subjected—fueled by war, hunger, and

deprivation of other kinds—which may account for his comic invocation of the miraculous, horrifying to Henry: “O God, seest thou this, and bearest so long?” A Freudian might read Margaret’s response as an emblem of her personality: “It made me laugh to see the villain run” (*2H6* 2.1.149–50). Her disgust with Henry results in some humorous and peculiar comments: “I would the college of the cardinals / Would choose him pope and carry him to Rome” (1.3.59–60). To her, Simpcox, Suffolk, Henry, York, his feral sons, and her own father illustrate the follies and dishonesty of humankind, which should not surprise, disappoint, or be of consequence. Her husband’s naïveté and her own worldly cynicism represent two different mindsets and world views in counterpoise, one of many dichotomies in the four plays: York and Lancaster, France and England, waste and thrift, male and female. Her observation of Henry, that he is “Too full of foolish pity” (3.1.225), foretells Goneril to Albany, impatient with a “Milk-livered man, / That bear’st a cheek for blows” (*KL* 4.2.50–51) who is possessed of what are, to her, obstructing scruples: “Fools do those villains pity who are punished / Ere they have done their mischief” (54–55). Her warning about Humphrey, that he is “as the snake roll’d in a flow’ring bank” (*2H6* 3.1.228), resembles Lady Macbeth’s advice to her husband, to “look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under it” (*Mac.* 1.5.65). She appears serpentine indeed in her protestation, “God forbid any malice should prevail” (*2H6* 3.2.23), before her malicious prosecution of Henry’s uncle.

In unsentimental Margaret’s very act of anatomizing others, she tacitly and ironically describes herself. Her disingenuous comment to Henry about Humphrey fits her much better than his beloved yet meddling uncle, of a piece with the earlier and subtler invocation of herself as a bird of prey: “Seems he a dove? His feathers are but borrowed, / For he’s disposèd as the hateful raven” (*2H6* 3.1.75–76). Her criticism of him as overproud is also ironic, considering the source, the very charges that the Yorkists level against her, with justification: “How insolent of late he is become, / How proud, how peremptory, and unlike himself?” (4–8). We could also say that Margaret knows that the aforementioned men, as well as their wives, mothers, and daughters, are images of herself, as she is of them: all part of her adaptation to an amoral Senecan environment.

IV

Perhaps the basic notion of cultural femininity that Margaret violates most completely is the injunction to defer to masculine authority, with its corollaries of obedience and silence.²³ In effect, she turns monstrous by transgendering herself, becoming masculine, exhibiting an ability to change her form, which she ironically invokes in her deceitful attempt to undo Duke Humphrey: “Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit?” (2H6 3.1.79). Phaedra, Antigone, and Megæra are Senecan paradigms from which this aspect of Margaret seems descended: strong-labored women who would be happy to have the whole rule of the land.

How do men become women, and how do women become men? Some early modern writers imply that men who display excessive sexual interest in women become feminized. Margaret’s odd chastisement of Suffolk supports this theory. In her mind, both his status as her lover and his lack of resistance to his captors make the woman of him: “Fie, coward woman and soft-hearted wretch. / Hast thou not spirit to curse thine enemy? (2H6 3.2.307–08).²⁴ Seneca and Shakespeare make the complementary observation that women who pursue men too aggressively become manly, such as Hippolytus’s stepmother, overwhelmed by erotomania: “In me I beare a violent and mighty payse of love, / And no mans comming home againe to terrour may me move” (STT 1:144) [Amoris in me maximum regnum puto / reditusque nullos metuo] (*Hip.* 218–19). It makes her angry and insane, generating *furor*: “fury forceth mee at worsere thinges to reach” (STT 1:143) [furor cogit sequi / peiora] (*Hip.* 178–79). Monstrous by birth, Antigone in *Thebais* gives her blinded and disgraced parent commands: “Good father leave this mind, / And take a better if you can: from this your selfe unwynd” (STT 1:102) [Paucā, o parens magnanime, miserandae precor / ut verba notae mente placata audias] (*The.* 182–83); “Resist these pangues, subdue these dumpes by valour of the mynd” (STT 1:104) [victasque magno robore aerumnas doma; resiste] (*The.* 78–79). To her mother-sister Jocasta: “Poast, poast, be gone, and trudge for life” (STT 1:121) [Perge, o parens, perge et cita celerem gradum] (*The.* 403). Her father complies: “Commaund me (Daughter) I thy hestes am ready to fulfill” (STT 1:115) [tutandum impera] (*The.* 312). Megæra, a Fury, and female, orders the Ghost of Tantalus in Heywood’s *Thyestes*, “Go forth thou detestable sprite / And vexe the Goddes of wicked house with rage of furies might” (STT 1:55) [Perge, detestabilis / umbra, et penates impios furiis age] (*Thy.* 23–24). Anger is her meat, and should be his: “let Ire thinke nought unlawfull to be doon”; “Disturbe thou

fyrst thys house with dire discord" (STT 1:56, 57) [nihil sit ira quod vetitum putet; ante perturba domum] (*Thy.* 39, 83). Clarence's fleeing question over the corpse of Clifford suggests how such manlike behavior was received: "Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?" (*3H6* 2.6.75).

Margaret demonstrates how Shakespeare internalizes Seneca's transgenerating tendencies in constructing the masculine-feminine. In the manner of a Fury, or Medea, or Antigone, she dominates her husband, her lover, and her son, taking the chance of anger, which makes Suffolk's original sales pitch to Henry hilarious: "with as humble lowliness of mind / She is content to be at your command" (*1H6* 5.5.18-19). She insults her subordinates in a tone resembling Megæra's: "Away, base cullions!" (*2H6* 1.3.38). She refuses to countenance the aristocratic pretensions of other women of her humor, such as Duke Humphrey's Eleanor: "Not all these lords do vex me half so much / As that proud dame" (73-74), a "Contemptuous base-born callet" (81). Phaedra-like, she helps conspire further against her husband's beloved aunt and uncle, disdainful of the latter's assertion, "These are no women's matters" (115), and physically violent against the former. "She gives the Duchess a box on the ear" (136sd), and calls her "minion" for failing to supplicate herself by picking up the fan Margaret dropped to make her stoop. This queen, impervious to the King's criticism of her "subversion" of Humphrey's "harmless life" (3.1.208), literally makes men fear her and flee her presence. Exeter and the King encapsulate this assertion in three lines when the first says, "Here comes the Queen, whose looks bewray her anger. / I'll steal away," and the second concurs: "Exeter, so will I" (1.1.211-12). Henry is not so fortunate to escape his wife and her fearsome presence. She commands him and uses the insulting familiar: "Enforced thee? Art thou king, and wilt be forced? / I shame to hear thee speak" (230-31); "Thou hast spoke too much already. Get thee gone" (258); and, almost triumphantly, "What are you made of? You'll nor fight nor fly" (5.2.74). Margaret's ability and strength as a leader could be Antigone's as she orders her husband to adopt an optimistic viewpoint or suffer the consequences: "Our foes are nigh, / And this soft courage makes your followers faint" (*3H6* 2.2.56-57); and vicariously knights her own son by the ironic means of her unchivalric Henry: "Unsheathe your sword and dub him presently. / Edward, kneel down" (59-60). Father and son obey. It is tempting to apply Katherine Eggert's ingenious argument about *Henry V* to the playwright's vision of Margaret. Shakespeare's vision of that king, goes her theory, constitutes an argument for a strong masculine monarch to the point of exhibiting hostility to female rule such as Elizabeth's, one which applies to the alleged feminized sexual space of the theater. If this is so, it is hard to imagine, at least in this context, what kind of comment

Margaret was supposed to be on the monstrous regiment of women and their sexual spaces.²⁵

V

The men in the tetralogy despise Margaret as “a shameless callet” (*3H6* 2.2.145) and a “false woman” (149) whose hide wraps a tiger’s heart. Such epithets appear to be simply misogynistic, the slanders of the chronicle histories that the playwright reproduces to demonstrate the injustices that her world perpetrates against her, or to function as an authorial political voice in the plays. Yet some of the behavior that Shakespeare ascribes to Margaret does not seem explicable or defensible by either the subject or her creator. In what may be one of the more intriguing examples of internalizing the Roman playwright, he invents two macabre Senecan episodes in her career with Biblical overtones, and which feature beheading as a motif. They represent puzzling attempts to manipulate audience response, as well as wildly different phases of her consciousness. They seem quite different from Edward’s triumphant vow to the captured Warwick, which describes virtually the same act in grisly detail:

This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair,
 Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,
 Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood,
 “Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more.”
 (*3H6* 5.1.54–57)

Why should this not appear jarring or completely repulsive? Why should something similar seem so with Margaret, and to what purpose?²⁶

One effect created seems to be comical emotional incongruity. The first occurrence is in *2 Henry VI*, when Margaret soliloquizes with the bloody head of her lover Suffolk cradled in her presumably snowy bosom, steeling herself with the Medean imperative, true to her character:

Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.
 But who can cease to weep, and look on this?
 Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast,
 But where’s the body that I should embrace?
 (4.4.3–6)

It seems almost impossible to recover the original dramatic purpose of such a moment, or the audience response that it was supposed to elicit, especially in the adjective “throbbing.” The word, designed to suggest Margaret’s passion for her lover, as well as fear and grief at his fate, encompasses the revolting as well as the hilarious. The incident foretells Imogen keening over the headless body of one whom she thinks to be her husband Posthumus, but who is actually the horrible Cloten (*Cym.* 4.2.299–335): or, in a more familiar locus, Hamlet with Yorick’s skull (*Ham.* 5.1.183), albeit obversely and strangely on both counts. Margaret’s sense of culpability, however, recalls another queen, Phaedra, lamenting her role in the death of her beloved in *Hippolytus*: “(aie me) where is thy beauty fled? / Where are our twinckling stars thine eyes? alas and art thou ded?” (STT 1:179) [quo tuus fugit decor / oculique nostrum sidus? exanimis iaces?] (*Hip.* 1173–74); “O sweete Hippolytus thus I behold thy battred face / And I it is, I wretch (alas) that brought thee to this case” (STT 1:179) [Hippolyte, tales intuor vultus tuos talesque feci?] (*Hip.* 1168–69). Margaret’s passion is not incestuous, nor does Theseus’s queen indulge in carnal relations with her stepson. Yet both figures share a sense of responsibility for the death of their beloved. Margaret also resembles Phaedra’s Amazonian predecessor, Hippolyta.²⁷ And Studley’s painfully accurate translations of Seneca’s physical imagery seem to have informed Margaret’s tasteless analogy. Would she embrace Suffolk’s disembodied torso along with his severed head, beholding his battered face?

Margaret’s contact with the grisly relic of her lover occasions her second experience with headlessness (so to speak). It motivates her to order the death of Richard, Duke of York in *3 Henry VI*, as revenge for the murder of Suffolk by the one-eyed jack, Walter Whitmore, and the desecration of his body occasioned by a grim pun on his name, de la Pole: “rather let my head” he vows, “dance upon a bloody pole / Than stand uncovered to the vulgar groom” (*2H6* 4.1.124, 127–28). Both incidents may well stem from a Senecan atrocity. In Newton’s translation of *Thebais*, Oedipus recalls to Antigone the episode of Agave and her frenzied Maenad sisters at the behest of Bacchus, “pleasing well her selfe in that her fact and mischiefe donne, / Pitcht on a Poale the grisly head of him that was her Sonne” (STT 1:101) [gaudens malo / vibrante fixum praetulit thyrsu caput] (*The.* 17–18). This son would be Pentheus, whose fate Ovid recounts in the *Metamorphoses* (3.701–33).²⁸ With no hint from Holinshed, Shakespeare has Margaret perform exactly this deed, the vileness of which rivals the mutilation of Lavinia and the blinding of Gloucester. She precedes it with mockery:

Look, York! I stained 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.

(3H6 1.4.79–83)

Her bestowal of a paper crown constitutes a vicious parody of the crown of thorns, as well as a cynical embodiment of Old Clifford's final words, "*La fin couronne les oeuvres*" (2H6 5.2.28), himself murdered by the man under discussion. Holinshed reports this detail, along with the order for York to stand on a molehill, but only as a rumor—the "historical" Margaret was not physically present. Here Shakespeare makes her the orchestrator. She stabs the family patriarch (as Nicholas Rowe conjectures), and then suggests Agave's remedy for Pentheus: "Off with his head and set it on York gates, / So York may overlook the town of York" (3H6 1.4.179–80).²⁹ The three brothers, Edward, Clarence, and Crookback, punish her cruelly at play's end, when they force her to watch them kill her son in front of her eyes, each ritually stabbing him in turn (5.5.38–41), a truly Senecan tableau without any analogue in the ancient tragedian's canon.

Shakespeare may also be creating subversive Biblical analogues to Margaret's experience with the heads of her lover and her enemy: the story of Salomé (Matthew 14.6–12; Mark 6.22–29), and that of Judith and Holofernes (Judith 12, 13). Unfortunately, no John the Baptist mystery play features this terpsichorean catalyst of the saint's death performing the Dance of the Seven Veils or speaking bizarrely to his severed head, as in Oscar Wilde's eponymous play and Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations (1894).³⁰ No pageant or interlude mentions her name, or reveals its original source in Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae*, a text scarce in any language in the sixteenth century and not fully translated into English until 1609, courtesy of Thomas Lodge.³¹ Yet the popular genre devoted to the deeds of famous and infamous women, exemplified by Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* (c. 1360), Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (c. 1390), and Thomas Heywood's *Gunaikeion* (1624), was fully functional. Thomas Bentley, a student of Gray's Inn, amplifies the story in *The sixt lampe of virginitie containing a mirrour for maidens and matrons* (1582). He identifies "Salomen" as "a very wanton wench and dauncing damosel, laciuously brought vp, vnder an vnchaste mother," Herodias, on whose behalf she demanded the head of John the Baptist, with the concluding moral: "And thus wee see what a great mischief

and inconuenience vnto the Church and Saintes of God came, by the lewde licentious life of a dauncing damosell. *Mat. 6.12.*³²

This stern judgment approximates the Yorkist image of Margaret in her Phaedra pose. Beware of dancing damsels, as well as those who wield swords or pitch grisly heads on poles, such men might say. Shakespeare and his characters were just as likely to know the Senecan story of Judith and Holofernes, since the Apocryphal book named for the heroine was always printed in Geneva versions of the Bible between the Testaments. Although one may wish that Shakespeare had seen the paintings of Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi on the subject (c. 1598; 1612–30; 1620), this Geneva version (1595) captures the heroine's triumph:

Then shee saide to them with a loude voyce, Prayse God, praise God: for hee hath not taken away his mercie from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by mine handes this night. So she tooke the head out of the scrippe and shewed it, and sayd vnto them, Beholde the head of Olofernes, the chiefe captaine of the armie of Assur, and beholde the canopie, wherein he did lie in his drunkenesse, and the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman.

(Judith 13.14–15)³³

The story fulfills an archetypal Senecan pattern, as Margaret bears some responsibility for Suffolk's beheading, smites York, and loses a son: revenge, revenge, and by the hand of a woman, also. "I priethee grieve, to make me merry, York" (*3H6* 1.4.86), she says, so that her victim's point seems well taken: "How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex / To triumph like an Amazonian trull" (113–14). Even Jack Cade, striking London Stone with his staff in hopes of making Pissing-Conduit run with claret in a wicked parody of Moses (see Exodus 17.6), does not seem more contemptible (*2H6* 4.6.1–6).

VI

The torrent of figurative language coursing through *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, or *Hercules Furens*, the fierce rhetoric of their speakers, provides Seneca's most recognizable characteristic, as well as what seems most "Senecan" in the poetics of his emulators such as Shakespeare. It can even be difficult to discuss this topic without indulging oneself in some colorful prose in unconscious imitation of the master.³⁴ His protagonists and their Tudor

reanimations conflate passion, physicality, and instinct so that these qualities become indistinguishable entities, potentially fertile material for the many enthusiasts who concern themselves with the concept of “the body” and its functions in early modern studies.³⁵ Megæra invokes physical extremes as emotional correlatives in many passages, such as chills, starvation, and pressing to death (*HF* 414–21). Hecuba instructs the chorus of women to demonstrate their grief bodily, with unbound locks, slumping shoulders, bare breasts, and lacerated skin, as she herself will do (*Tro.* 82–98). The Nutrix describes Medea’s psychological disintegration as a type of elaborate analogy and blazon. Therefore, each physical manifestation of her grief has its natural metaphorical complement, the weight of her wrath like a boulder so that “exundat furor” [madness overflows its bounds] (*Me.* 392; 380–94). So Phaedra describes her psychological state in bracingly physical terms, as is her wont:

Pectus insanum vapor
 amorque torret. intimis fervet ferus
 [penitus medullas atque per venas meat.]
 visceribus ignis mersus et venas latens
 ut agilis altas flamma percurrit trabes.
 (*Hip.* 640–44)

[‘Tis burning love scorches my maddened heart. A hot fire glows deep in my inmost vitals [goes deep within my marrow and my veins] and hides darkly in my veins, as when nimble flames dart through deep-set timbers.]

She evokes love as Dido experiences it in the *Aeneid* (4.54–89), less sentimentality or sentiment than burning sensation: stomach ache; sexual ardor; severe menstrual cramps; adrenaline rush; or bone cancer. Her language refines the sensation by processing it through four different word-clusters that produce interrelated images of fire, a species of what George Puttenham labels “*Sinathrismus*, or the Heaping Figure.”³⁶ Phaedra’s colors in Studley’s translation of *Hippolytus* glow a little longer and brighter with the aid of alliterative fourteeners:

A vapor hoate, and Love doe glow within my bedlem brest:
 It raging ranke no inwarde juyce undried leaves in rest:
 The fier sonk in skalded guts through every vayne doth frie,

And smothering close in seething bloud as flashing flame doth flie,
 With egar sweeping sway along up burning beames on hie.
 (STT 1:159)

Studley's flourish of a triplet rhyming "frie" / "flie" / "hie" helps anglicize Seneca's invocation of physical sensation, these monosyllables approximating his terse substantives: "medullas," "venas," "ignis," "flamma." His imagery emphasizes the sensuous as well as the sensual so that Phaedra becomes what she describes: flowing "inward juyce," and "seething bloud." At hearing of the barbarous death of his father, the future King Richard describes himself in similar fashion, as if his body were an overworked heating element:

I cannot weep; for all my body's moisture
 Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart;
 Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burthen,
 For self-same wind that I should speak withal
 Is kindling coals that fires all my breast
 And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.
 (3H6 2.1.79–84)

Since his breath stokes his heart's fire, it cannot be quenched by tongue or tears. Who can know whether this elaborate protestation to his brother, whom he will vilify after his death, is another pose? He can "add colors to the chameleon, / Change shapes with Proteus" (3.2.191–92). Perhaps this state is temporary, for as he puts it in his play, "Richard loves Richard, that is, I [am] I" (R3 5.3.183). His model in deceit, Protean Margaret invokes the body and makes Phaedra's transference from symptoms to self as part of her identity. Her physical functions, like Phaedra's, will affect her surroundings. Here, she dissembles to Henry about Humphrey's death in hopes of quelling his anger at his knowledge of her liaison with Suffolk:

for myself, foe as he was to me,
 Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans
 Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,
 I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
 Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,
 And all to have the noble duke alive.
 (2H6 3.2.59–63)

The high style and somewhat inflated rhetoric, as well as the use of “the Heaping Figure,” suggests an inheritance not just from Seneca but from the Newtonian translators, especially in the pairings of adjectives and nouns. Combinations such as “liquid tears,” “blood-consuming sighs,” and “heart-offending groans” are in the tradition of “seething blood,” “flashing flame,” and “burning beames.” Margaret, it should also be said, uses such colorful language as a means of dissembling just as Richard will. Senecan flourishes, *bomphilogia*, and graphic overstatement couched in the language of her own physical suffering certainly sound convincing. Who would not believe someone who would tempt fate by wishing anemia, nausea, and blindness on herself to make her point? Perhaps someone who utters such eye-stinging lines as “The fier sonk in skalded guts through every vayne doth frie.”

Such passages in Shakespeare’s first tetralogy appear Senecan, although attempts at finding philologically precise parallels between the two authors may prove unsuccessful. Yet a contemporary scholar’s failure in this area suggests Shakespeare’s general success in said enterprise, reanimating and transforming the classical precedent, as imitation theorists from antiquity onward recommend. That “bloody Clifford,” bearing down on York’s son Rutland with the looks of rugged Pyrrhus, serves as an amalgam of all avengers:

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.

(3H6 1.3.30–34)

Shakespeare parodies soul-tormenting *furor*, a hallmark of the Senecan speaker, in Ancient Pistol and others, yet not in this instance. Such verbiage fills the tetralogy and for no one more intensely than Margaret, whose speeches serve as a kind of delta for all the Senecanism in the four plays.

Margaret’s enemies note her prolixity, with justification.³⁷ For this reason, Gloucester, her unwitting disciple in garrulousness, offers to kill her: “Why should she live to fill the world with words?” (3H6 5.5.44). In this he echoes his own parents: his father’s nasty valediction for the Pucelle, “she hath liv’d too long, / To fill the world with vicious qualities” (1H6 5.4.34–35), and his mother’s observation at Margaret’s final exit: “Why should calamity be full of words?” (R3 4.4.126). Perhaps it is just to say that she, in the manner of her Senecan predecessors, fills her world with words that some think vi-

cious and calamitous, as Studley's Clytemnestra would say of her daughter in *Agamemnon*: "Hereafter shall I tame, and teach thy gyrlish tongue to prate" (STT 2:137) [Indomita posthac virginis verba impiae / regina frangam] (*Ag.* 964–65). Yet the men refuse to acknowledge Margaret's considerable verbal facility, an ability that outpaces their own, or which must have been instructive to the future king, Richard, that layer of plots and inductions dangerous. Simply put, Margaret can talk her way out of or into any number of different situations. Henry acknowledges her skills in persuading a monarch such as the king of France: "Her sighs will make a batt'ry in his breast, / Her tears will pierce into a marble heart" (*3H6* 3.1.37–38). Perhaps he recounts her ability to deflect his attention from her unsubtle fornications with Suffolk by lamenting the state of their marriage, one to which she acceded without much of a second thought (*2H6* 3.2.82–84). To upbraid her husband with the possible disinheritance of their son for the sake of peace with the Yorkists, she disavows their entire union:

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.
(*3H6* 1.1.216–18)

Phaedra's complaint about her marriage to Theseus as a justification for her unnatural leanings makes similar claims in the same way. Who could blame her for unlawful behavior or ungovernable passions?

Why force ye mee that yeelded am, a pledge to those I hate?
And given in Bridall bed to bee my enmies Spousall mate,
To languish out my time in teares, in woe to leade my lyfe?
My husband lo, a runnagate is gon from mee his Wyfe
(STT 1:139)³⁸

Henry's devotion to his religion and loyalty to Humphrey makes him a kind of "runnagate" who is "gon" from his "Wyfe." Yet Margaret's own adultery and capacity for deceit resemble Phaedra's. Her perfectly serpentine first speech on meeting Henry, sixty words uttered with scarcely a breath taken, shows how she can downplay herself disingenuously (*2H6* 1.1.24–31), just as Medea can. Margaret's "If it be fond, call it a woman's fear" (*2H6* 3.1.36) in her appeal to pathos to unseat Henry's uncle, and her dissembling epithet for herself in the next play, "a silly woman" (*3H6* 1.1.243), has its analogue in Medea's

self-description: “me a wretch [. . .] I aske [. . .] some couching corner vile” (STT 2:66–67) and “forsoke and left alone, / A wyddow while my husband live” (2:65) [miseriis angulum ac sedem rogo; sim clade miseranda obruta, / expulsa supplex sola deserta] (*Me.* 249; 207–08). Shakespeare internalizes Seneca’s concept that one must adapt to an amoral environment in order to survive, and then recreates the phenomenon in Margaret.

York’s son Richard, “that valiant crook-back prodigy” (3*H6* 1.4.75), who happily usurps Humphrey’s dukedom and who by degrees hijacks the tetralogy, spouts much Seneca-imbued verse. Margaret could have spoken these lines, some of the best in any of the plays: “Sword, hold thy temper; heart, be wrathful still: / Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill” (2*H6* 5.2.70–71). Other rhetorical linkages exist. Shakespeare’s remarkable and ornate device in which he uses Margaret and Richard to accomplish double occupancy of a single pentameter line constitutes dialectical imitation of Senecan stichomythia. At the end of a string of curses, Gloucester caps her “Thou rag of honor! thou detested—” (R3 1.3.233) with

G: Margaret!
 M: Richard!
 G: Ha!
 M: I call thee not.
 (233)

Too strange to each other for misunderstanding, as T. S. Eliot says in another context, they simultaneously fill in each other’s names to finish the epithet and compete to finish the string of insults in a bemused and ironic demonstration of respect for each other, a bizarre exchange of recognition and solidarity. Studley’s attempt at such stichomythia may seem long and jangling by comparison, the fourteeners blunting the attempts at short verbal bursts and assaults, such as this climactic conversation in *Medea* between the title character and Jason:

J: While thou hast time to goe, be gone, for most seveare and harde
 The kings displeasure ever is. M: Thus wouldst thou dodge mee out?
 Thy hated trull cast of thou dost, that please Creuse thou mought.
 J: Doest thou Medea upbrayde mee with the breach unkynde of love?
 M: And slaughter vyle, with trechery, whereto thou didst me move.
 J: When all is done what canst thou lay my guiltines to stayne?
 M: Even whatsoever I have done.

(STT 2:77)³⁹

Shakespeare's antagonists mean to engage each other in the same type of verbal combat, albeit in greatly condensed form. Richard would happily expel Margaret from his sight and dominions in favor of his own family and faction. She upbraids him with the murder of her husband and son as well as the unkind breach of love, vile slaughter and treachery. Whatever happens to him results from his own actions against her. The whirligig of time brings forth his revenges.

A speech that most obviously reflects Shakespeare's Senecanism in the tetralogy occurs in *2 Henry VI*, Margaret's bitter attack on Henry (3.2.73–121). She criticizes as immoderate her husband's grief at the murder of Humphrey and his distrust of Suffolk, and disingenuously, since she engineered the downfall of this beloved uncle with the latter, her lover. This set-piece, with its relatively great length of fifty lines, semi-Ciceronian structure, and scaffolding as a series of rhetorical questions that she answers, is consciously "rhetorical" and immensely descriptive, as if it were spoken by a Senecan nuncio who scene-paints the blinding of Oedipus or the horrific death of Hippolytus. It also possesses some of the characteristics of a soliloquy, even though its speaker addresses another person rather than the audience. The speech seems self-revelatory and imitates, in its topical shifts and emotional modulations, a mind at work, deceitful as well as self-deceived, without the colloquial naturalism of later plays, as Margaret discusses herself in the first and third persons with the help of classical allusions. Its Tudor, Newtonian origins suggest themselves in its alternatively chiming and deep vowel sounds and conscious alliterative pairings, as well as a hint of the schoolroom, perhaps even exhibiting five of the six aspects of *inventio* that Pseudo-Cicero recommends in *Ad Herennium: exordium* (introduction); *narratio* (statement of facts); *divisio* (points of argument); *confirmatio* (proof); *confutatio* (refutation); and *conclusio* (conclusion).⁴⁰

The first nine lines constitute the *exordium* and *narratio*, the opening line a statement of theme for the entire passage, the following eight containing three of seven questions that appear to be rhetorical but which Margaret in turn answers, thus stating the conflict in a highly stylized way:

Be woe for me, more wretched than he is.
 What, dost thou turn away and hide thy face?
 I am no loathsome leper, look on me.
 What? art thou like the adder waxen deaf?
 Be poisonous too, and kill thy forlorn queen.
 Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb?

Why then Dame [Margaret] was ne'er thy joy.
 Erect his statue and worship it,
 And make my image but an alehouse sign.
 (73–81)

Her questions constitute an attack; her answers are meant to destroy. For one who has not heretofore shown much interest in wifeliness, she appears clever and dissembling to blame Henry for alienating her affections when she appears to have been coupling with Suffolk from the beginning. Like Medea or Hecuba, Margaret confronts her male object and covers him with shame, making her attack personal and physical. Her husband should kill her because he loves his uncle more, since she is nothing but a leper turned advertisement. Subtle devices of sound strengthen her imprecation. Long “e” and alliterative “w” in the first line, the internal rhyme of long “a” in the second, and the triple “l” alliteration in the third make her sound mellifluous and credible, along with the exaggerated comparisons and strong language “poisonous,” “loathsome,” “wretched,” and in a celebrated line, the idea that her husband is as deaf as an adder.

The next section approximates *divisio*, the matter agreed on or contested, which Shakespeare crafts with the next triple dose of rhetorical questions, each of them this time not answered individually, but by its ensuing fellow. The simplicity of the point of contention (Henry’s statement of desire for her was false) may well be belied by the complexity of the rhetoric: “Was I for this nigh wrack’d upon the sea [. . .]?” (82), “What boded this [. . .]?” (85), and “What did I then, but curs’d the gentle gusts [. . .]?” (88). She cursed the wind because it appeared to prevent her from fulfilling her vow to assume her duties across the Channel even though this natural unruliness, the omen of a storm, foretold the unfeasibility of her future queenship by nearly causing shipwreck. Her ensuing mention of Aeolus, who “would not be a murderer, / But left that hateful office unto thee” (93–94) leads into the elaborate and vivid description of a tempest that could not kill her:

The pretty vaulting sea refus’d to drown me,
 Knowing that thou wouldst have me drown’d on shore
 With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness.
 The splitting rocks, cow’r’d in the sinking sands,
 And would not dash me with their ragged sides,
 Because thy flinty heart, more hard than they,
 Might in thy palace perish [Margaret].
 (95–100)

The overstatement in the description, heightened by the many adjectives appended to virtually every noun, corresponds to Seneca's many descriptions of ships in storms as portents or analogues to emotional states, especially by women. She repeats the performance even more elaborately in her analogy of the Lancastrian ship of state endangered by the sea, quicksand, and rock represented by the brothers York (*3H6* 5.4.1–38). Thomas Nuce's Octavia, as she vows never to bed her husband more, invokes "the roaring froathy seas, / And mounting flashing flaws" that "ymatch the skye" (STT 2:155) [Iungentur ante saeva sideribus freta] (*Oct.* 222). The Messenger in Newton's *Thebais* reports that Jocasta is so shattered by the wars her sons will make on each other that "Shee runnes apace, like one of wit and senses all distract," so that, compared to her, "no Ship with Sayle ful thwacke / With wynd at will more way can make" (STT 1:122) [vadit furenti similis aut etiam furit [. . .] / qualis insana ratis / premente vento rapitur] (*The.* 427, 429–30). Or, as the chorus of women tells Deïanira, in Heywood's *Hercules Oetaeus*, who has already bestowed the shirt of Nessus on her unfortunate husband, Hercules: "from rough wyndes my sayles fayne would I kepe, / Least I be driven into the daungerous deepe" (STT 2:218) [stringat tenuis litora puppis / nec magna meas aura phaseles / iubeat medium scindere pontum] (*HO* 694–96). Margaret provides the proof of her claim, the *confirmatio*, with a brief story. Her tale of throwing a jewel overboard and having it swallowed by the sea (101–113) demonstrates her cruelly disappointed hopes in a marriage. Henry alone is to blame for its ruin. A curious literary allusion clinches the argument:

How often have I tempted Suffolk's tongue
 (The agent of thy foul inconstancy)
 To sit and [witch] me, as Ascanius did
 When he to madding Dido would unfold
 His father's acts commenc'd in burning Troy!
 Am I not witch'd like her? or thou not false like him?
 (114–19)

In disavowing Henry's charges of Margaret's adultery with Suffolk, she actually confirms the deed. Even Henry probably does not believe that Suffolk played the part of procurer in the mode of Ascanius (presumably, Shakespeare knew that Cupid impersonated Aeneas's son at their mother's behest) for altruistic reasons. She is "witch'd" for Suffolk, and "false" herself, rather than Henry, so her analogy comparing them to "madding Dido" and

pius Aeneas seems not only specious but brazenly hypocritical. The *conclusionem* comprises an expression of despair and a restatement of her thesis: “Ay me, I can no more! Die, [Margaret!] / For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long” (120–21). Again, she claims to be more “wretched” than the dead Humphrey she supplants.

VII

In an apocryphal and anachronistic moment at the end of the BBC production of *Richard III* (BBC / Time Life, 1982), the director, Jane Howell, presents Margaret (Julia Foster) with the dead Richard (Ron Cook) in her arms at Bosworth atop a pile of corpses, expressing herself by exultant and demoniacal laughter, as if all of her prophecies had finally come true.⁴¹ In some respects, this represents *femina furens* at her most threatening, the embodiment of what men fear: the witch Medea with her revenge exacted, unaccountable now to any man. The Duchess of York, bereft of a husband and son through Margaret’s agency, recognizes her powers: “O thou well skill’d in curses, stay awhile, / And teach me how to curse mine enemies” (*R3* 4.4.116–17). The old woman seems to be a witch herself, an overbearing, overwhelming, malignant presence who takes little joy in witnessing “the waning of mine enemies” (4), in the manner of Megæra, Medea, or Heywood’s Juno in *Hercules Furens*: “I of old contempes complayne: me, one dire, fierce, and shrewde” (STT 1:9) [Sed vetera querimur: una me dira ac fera] (*HF* 19). It could be countered that dire and fierce Margaret, finally, has only shrewishness, and no power, in contrast to the fierce Roman goddess. And, to some extent, one could argue that Howell effects something that the tetralogy does not entirely justify.

Yet Howell’s production decision invalidates such an argument, since “curse” and its variants show up fifty times in the tetralogy, most frequently in *Richard III*. This fact certainly allows for a risen Margaret who cradles the slaughtered little king in fulfillment of her prophecies, the two of them resembling a parodic Senecan version of the *pietà* or foretelling a famous father who repeats “Never” five times with his dead daughter in his arms. Earlier on, her stichomythic shock-of-recognition moment with Richard (*R3* 1.3.233) may remind some of the encounter between Megæra and the ghost of Tantalus in *Thyestes*, two damned souls in hell. “I follow thee” (STT 1:58) [sequor] (*Thy.* 100), says one to the other. Earlier in the play, Margaret, also a ghostly presence, a spirit, a fury, undercuts not only Crookback but his

brother's widow: "Which of you trembles not to look on me?" (*R3* 1.3.159). They are afraid of her and she knows it. She uses "curse" ten times herself, exhibiting the *furor* of Studley's Medea and Heywood's Juno, respectively: "My burning breast that rowles in wrath, and doth in rancour boyle, / Sore thyrsteth after bloud, and wounds with slaughter, death, and spoyle" (STT 2:57) [*mens intus agitat—vulnera et caedem et vagum / funus per artus*] (*Me.* 47–48); "Goe ire, goe on" (1:11) [*Perge, ira, perge*] (*HF* 75).⁴² "Bear with me," she tells the Duchess of York, "I am hungry for revenge" (*R3* 4.4.61). Margaret replaces Joan; Richard displaces Margaret; Margaret, thanks to Howell, erases Richard and is the last one standing.

Margaret exhibits tendencies associated with various cursing and witch-like Senecan women. She resembles a malignant presiding goddess who threatens to redress *scelus* with *furor*. Her potentially fearsome "Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven? / Why then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!" (*R3* 1.3.194–95) fulfills the request for education that the mother of her son's murderers had made earlier. The lines carry enough rhetorical weight to blister the whitewash off a medieval church wall, perhaps to reveal the pre-Reformation painting underneath. They seem connected to an even earlier kind of art, descended from the type of utterance that the angry Juno calls down on the hero in *Hercules Furens*:

Let hateful hurt now come in anger wood,
And fierce impyety imbrew himselfe with his owne bloud,
And errour eke, and fury arm'd agaynst it selfe to fight.
This meane, this meane, let wrath of myne now use to shewe my
might.

(STT 1:12)⁴³

Heywood's fourteeners are especially meet for the purpose, their long, heavily stressed iambic lines clanging together in rhyme, with metrical space provided for the multisyllabic abstractions and the adjectives meant to buttress them, in a typically Tudor approximation of the more florid Senecan style. The nature of the curse itself foretells the Shakespearean intermingling of the personal and the political in the minds and voices of his speakers, such as Cleopatra's angry rejoinder to Enobarbus: "Thou hast forespoke my being in these wars, / And say'st it is not fit" (*Ant.* 3.7.3–4). One could also say that Juno's drive to overwhelm a male entity in Hercules is analogous to Margaret's desire to demolish the Yorks, against whom she struggles to revenge herself, calling down disorder against those who claim she is not fit. A more exact analogy to

these fifteenth-century politics may be found in Heywood's *Thyestes*, whose Fury, Megæra, so despises the house of Atreus that she urges the ghost of Tantalus to plunge his nephews irretrievably into discord:

let fury blynd enflame theyr myndes and wrathful will,
Let yet the parentes rage endure and longer lasting yll
Through childrens children spreade.

(STT 1:56)

[mentes caecus instiget furor,
rabies parentum duret et langum nefas
eat in nepotes]

(*Thy.* 27–29)

The classical curse waxes biblical, as if to say, yea, unto the generations, one to pierce the clouds and enter heaven, to overwhelm a male entity, nearly every noun with its adjectival supplement. And the overstatement, perhaps unintended overkill, of the schoolboy translators, resurfaces in the potential humor of Margaret's nebulous invocation. It runs strangely comic, in the manner of the Pucelle's conjuring of devils who "*shake their heads*" and "*depart*" (*1H6* 5.3.19, 23 s.d), refusing to do her bidding. In the simpler Shakespearean way, Margaret's sparer diction suggests that she will not broach heaven. Only a fool shouts into the sky.

The act of enjoining cosmic disorder to visit one's enemies is quite Senecan, as with Studley's Medea, who with "cursed throat" hopes to "conjure" the "grisly Ghostes" to "revenge this deede so dyre," in this case Jason's betrayal with Creusa: "Bring in your scratting pawes a burning brand of deadly fyre" (STT 2:55) [atram cruentis manibus amplexae facem] (*Me.* 15). When Henry and Warwick prepare to purge the realm and Margaret's bed of Suffolk, she wishes aloud for similar heavenly catastrophes, but turns her curses against the perpetrators who oppress her, rather than outsourcing it to a third party of grisly ghosts:

Mischance and sorrow go along with you;
Heart's discontent and sour affliction
Be playfellows to keep you company.
There's two of you; the devil make a third,
And threefold vengeance tend upon your steps.

(*2H6* 3.2.300–04)

Her politics are personal in her cursing quest for vengeance, her abstractions recalling Juno's above, their miserable malignancy having no efficacy besides the dramatic. As a much older person two plays later in the tetralogy, her curse embodies what was once called the providential Tudor view of history, yet still echoes necromantic Joan and her ineffective wish that "darkness and the gloomy shade of death / Environ you" (*1H6* 5.4.89–90):

O, but remember this another day,
 When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
 And say poor Margaret was a prophetess!
 Live each of you the subjects to his hate,
 And he to yours, and all of you to God's!
 (*R3* 1.3.298–302)

Let blind fury enflame their minds, indeed. The possibility of God's "hate" crowning the mutual hatred of Richard and his subjects seems nastier than anything the translators say in their Senecanism. Margaret is both Medea and the Ghost of Tantalus—not so much sowing discord as commenting on the discord already sown. She is also a despitful Juno as prophetess, hoping to overwhelm a male entity, either single or corporate. Yet Margaret also seems to be a wry critique of this type of wish-fulfillment, since one invents goddesses for the purposes of revenge because such cosmic justice never really occurs.

As a recent article reminds us, any early modern history play is problematic in its representation.⁴⁴ Current fragmented academic culture must make Margarets of its own time, one in which received notions of gender must be reversed so that she does not fulfill cultural stereotypes, or if she does, it is not her fault. In what would once have been described as a noble sentiment, Shakespeare causes Margaret's doomed husband to say of her, "she's a woman to be pitied much" (*3H6* 3.1.36). But it does not seem to have been this way at the beginning, at least according to the endlessly indeterminate historical record. Henry commissioned no less a poet than John Lydgate to write commendatory verses for her entry into London in 1445.⁴⁵ On her actual wedding day, she figured in royal iconography as the personification of Peace, one of the Four Daughters of God, with analogies to divine Truth according to the anagogical reading of Psalm 85.8–13: Truth, Mercy, Righteousness (or Justice) and Peace. In Suffolk's innocuous and Machiavellian phrase, she was "the fairest queen that ever king receiv'd" (*2H6* 1.1.16), a very pretty bride indeed. The pageant for the royal entry

into Coventry in 1456 depicted her as St. Margaret, the female counterpart of St. George.⁴⁶ This seems entirely appropriate for an armored Margaret as Shakespeare imagined her, who fulfills both senses of Juno's "I of old contempts complayne" in the title of the present essay. She voices grievances of long standing; and she too is of long standing, a Senecan queen of old skilled in many things besides curses.

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Notes

1. Respectively: Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the two noble and Illustrate famelies of Lancaster and Yorke* (London: Richard Grafton, 1548): "although she ioynd her husbnde with hir in name, for a countenance, yet she did all, she saied all, and she bare the whole swynge, as the strong oxe doth, when he is yoked in the plough with a pore silly asse" (fol. C1jr); and Kathryn Schwarz, "Fearful Simile: Stealing the Breech in Shakespeare's Chronicle Plays," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49 (1998): 140–67; 141.

2. Gender-based materials besides Schwarz include Phyllis Rackin, "Anti-Historians: Women's Roles in Shakespeare's Histories." *Theatre Journal* 37 (1985): 329–44; and *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990); Marilyn L. Williamson, "When Men Are Rul'd by Women: Shakespeare's First Tetralogy," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 41–60; Shirley Carr Mason, "'Foul Wrinkled Witch': Superstition and Scepticism in Shakespeare's Margaret of Anjou," *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 52 (1997): 25–37; Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997); Nina S. Levine, *Women's Matters: Politics, Gender, and Nation in Shakespeare's Early History Plays* (Newark: Delaware UP, 1998).

3. All references to Newton's anthology follow the pagination of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English*, ed. Thomas Newton, introduction by T. S. Eliot (London: Constable, 1927; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964). Since this reprint has no line numbers, volume and page numbers preceded by the acronym STT must suffice. Immediately following, I include the Latin Seneca in square brackets, with the standard play title acronyms and line numbers following in parentheses. If the original text seems lengthy and thereby prevents such felicitous inclusion, I relegate it to the endnotes. For the Latin text and occasional prose translations, see *Seneca: Tragedies*, 2 vols., ed. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1917; rpt. 1979). All references to Shakespeare follow the lineations of *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

4. Liebler takes issue with some feminist critics who insist on the old binary model in Renaissance tragedy—male playwrights, inevitably misogynistic, depict passive women as virtuous, the strong as inherently evil. See "Wonder Woman, or the Female Tragic Hero," in *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 1–32. This excellent anthology of criticism inexplicably devotes very little space to Margaret, save mention in Liebler's own essay (18, 20), and Judith Weil's "Visible Hecubas" (56, 66; 51–70). In rejecting the facile Lacanian argument that Shakespeare's history plays are themselves hostile to women, Martha A. Kurtz argues, "we should not forget the theatrical effect created by a few women on a stage crowded with men: their gender, highlighted by their costumes, sets them apart and draws a particularly intense attention to everything they say and do, giving them a theatrical power that goes considerably beyond the number of lines they speak or the political power they are able to exercise in their fictional worlds." See "Rethinking Gender and Genre in the History Play," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 36 (1996): 270; 267–87.

5. Respectively: "Fearful Simile," 142; *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540–1620* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1985), 184.

6. Bruce R. Smith discusses the early modern resurgence of interest in the original-language performance of Seneca's plays. See *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500–1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3–6; 59–97.

7. *Fated Sky: The Femina Furens in Shakespeare* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2000).

8. One may count Henry's ghost in *Richard III* as participation in a fourth play, but practically speaking, only Bardolph and Mistress Quickly share Margaret's distinction, since they both appear in *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. For Margaret, over four plays, 847 lines: 33 in *1 Henry VI*, 317 in *2 Henry VI*, 279 in *3 Henry VI*, and 218 in *Richard III*. See Marvin Spevack, *A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*, 9 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968–80), 2:662, 789, 916, 1064. The 300-line mark is most common for women in Shakespeare and the boys who played them. In comedies, larger women's roles are Isabella (*MM*), 424 lines; Helena (*AWW*), 477; Portia (*MT*), 578. Rosalind (*AYL*) is the largest women's part in the comedies with 721 lines (Spevack 1:338, 1082, 893, 789); in tragedy, Cleopatra, with 670 (3:1213). For comparison's sake, the largest men's parts seem to be Hamlet, 1507 lines; Richard III, 1145; and Henry V, 1036 (3:834; 2:1027, 553).

9. The sources cited are Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (London: Macmillan, 1893); Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy: A Reissue of an Essay Published in 1921* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1946); Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944), and *Shakspeare's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1947); Lucas, *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922); Farnham, *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1936); Baker, *Induction to Tragedy: A Study in a Development of a Form in "Gorboduc," "The Spanish Tragedy," and "Titus Andronicus"* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1936); Simpson (as Spearing), *The Elizabethan Translations of Seneca's Tragedies* (Cambridge, England: Heffer, 1912), and "Alexander Nevile's Translation of Seneca's *Oedipus*," *Modern Language Review* 15 (1920): 359–63; Eliot's introduction to the Constable edition of Newton's anthology (1927) is included in *Selected Essays* as "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), 51–90; Hunter, "Seneca and the Elizabethans: A Case Study in Influence," *Shakespeare Survey* 20 (1967): 17–26, and "Seneca and English Tragedy," in *Seneca*, ed. C. D. N. Costa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 166–204; Brower, *Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1971); Kiefer, "Seneca's Influence on Elizabethan Tragedy," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 21 (1978): 17–34, and "Seneca Speaks in English: What the Elizabethan Translators Wrought," *Comparative Literature Studies* 15 (1978): 372–87; Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985); and Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1992). Much of this material is covered in *Fated Sky*, 21–39.

10. Bullough assigns *Thyestes* to *Titus* as source in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols. (New York: Columbia UP, 1957–75), 6:58–71. For Spearing (Simpson), see note 9. She also serves as editor of *Studley's Translations of Seneca's "Agamemnon" and "Medea"* (Louvain: A. Uystpruyt, 1913).

11. See H. F. Brooks, "Richard III, Unhistorical Amplifications: The Women's Scenes and Seneca," *Modern Language Review* 75 (1980): 721–37.

12. See J. A. F. Thomson, "John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk," *Speculum* 54 (1979): 528–42. D. McCulloch and E. D. Jones say that Richard, Duke of York deployed Suffolk to find a French princess for his son Edward (unsuccessfully), the only known instance of his being enlisted for such a purpose. See their "Lancastrian Politics, the French War, and the Rise of the Popular Element," *Speculum* 58 (1983): 95–138.

13. *Women's Matters*, 19.

14. For accounts of these incidents, see Desmond Seward, *The Wars of the Roses through the Lives of Five Men and Women of the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 129, 189.

Patricia-Ann Lee provides what is probably the best shorter narrative of Margaret's life, "Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 183–217. She suggests that Margaret was "pitiless and cruel but she was also a woman of energy and determination who dared to seize and exercise power" (183), a reflection of Polydore Vergil's thesis that she was "a figure of tragedy rather than of evil" (207). Lee argues that hostility toward Margaret was personal and gendered in the early modern period because male historians did not like idea of a woman ruler (210). See also *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington*, ed. Cecil Monro (Westminster: Camden Society, 1863); Philippe Erlanger, *Marguerite d'Anjou, reine d'Angleterre* (Paris, éditions Emile-Paul frères, 1931); J. J. Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England* (London: Herbert Jenkins [1948]); Helen E. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2003).

15. See Paul Dean, "Shakespeare's *Henry VI* Trilogy and Elizabethan 'Romance' Histories: The Origins of A Genre," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982): 34–48; and Mary Thomas Crane, "The Shakespearean Tetralogy," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985): 282–99. Robert K. Turner and George Walton Williams make the same case: "2 and 3 *Henry VI* remain rather sprawling plays which lack a strongly represented central character, either good or evil, about whom incidents within their complicated plots could have been arranged." See *The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), 474. Dean also argues that the love triangle with Margaret, Suffolk, and king derives from similar involvements in romance histories, such as Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (43). Thomas H. McNeill holds that the anonymous *King Leir* (1595) serves as essential precedent in this fashion. See "Margaret of Anjou: Romantic Princess and Troubled Queen," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9 (1958): 1–10.

16. Richard and his wife Anne Neville were crowned in Westminster Abbey on 6 July 1483. The battle of Bosworth occurred on 22 August 1485. See Desmond Seward, *Richard III: England's Black Legend*, revised ed. (London: Penguin, 1997), 137, 240.

17. "Fearful Simile," 154.

18. Most subsequent editors follow Capell's interpolated stage direction, almost certainly based on Edward's "I charge ye bear her hence" (*3H6* 5.5.79). See *The Works of Shakespeare*, 10 vols. (London: Printed by Dryden Leach for J. and R. Tonson [1768]) 6:98.

19. The historical Margaret, truly dowerless and quite penniless, initially cost the royal coffers £5000, and was then assigned a revenue of £6000 for her household, catastrophic for a financially-strapped England. See R. L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), 49.

20. Seneca mentions Adrastus exactly once in *Thebais* (374). Newton supplies the name at this point of his translation presumably for the sake of clarity. Apollodorus (c. 180 BCE) describes the marriages of Adrastus's daughters, Argeia and Deipyle, to Polynices and Tydeus, respectively, the lion and boar whom they were destined to wed. See *Bibliotheca* 3.2.58–59.

21. See Thomas G. Rosenmeyer's excellent *Senecan Drama and Stoic Cosmology* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989). See also Charles Segal, "Boundary Violation and the Landscape of the Self in Senecan Tragedy," *Antike und Abendland* 29 (1983): 172–87.

22. Most modern editors such as Miller (q.v.) assign "finis [...] futuri" to Megæra's father-in-law, Amphitryon, as part of his rather large speech to her (*HF* 205–78). In an interesting move, Heywood credits Megæra with these seven words. His probable Latin source, the Aldine edition of Hieronymus Avantius (Venice, 1517), actually gives her the whole speech.

23. Two excerpts from the Paston Letters confirm the "historical" Margaret's tripartite transgression in these areas: "the Queene hath made a bille of five articles, desiring those articles to be graunted; wherof the first is that she desireth to have the hole reule of this land; the second is that she may make the Chaunceller, the Tresorer, the Prive Seelle, and all other officers of this land"; "The Quene is a grete and stronge labourid woman, for she spareth noo peyne to sue hire thinges to an intent and conclusion to hir power." Respectively: Letter #275, John Bocking to Sir John Fastolf, 9 Feb 1456; Letter #195 News Letter of John Stodeley, 19 Jan 1454. See *The Paston Letters 1422–1509 A.D.*, 3 vols., ed. James Gairdiner (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910), 1:378; 265.

24. Woodbridge: "When Shakespeare's female characters express a wish to be men, it is almost always to shame some man into taking action; and they usually pervert the meaning of manhood to exclude pity and compassion, on the illogical principle that if women are compassionate, men cannot be" (200).

25. "Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*," *English Literary History* 61 (1994): 523–50.

26. Or, as Kurtz puts it: "In the *Henry VI* plays Margaret can be seen as a different kind of critique of the values of the masculine world of war: what is horrifying in men is more vividly horrifying in her because it is unexpected. We can see the nightmare violence for what it is more clearly in a woman than in a man because we are less accustomed to it there, the way a cigarette looks more shocking in a child's mouth than an adult's" (271).

27. Schwarz notes the parallel of Theseus-Hippolyta with the Henry-Margaret union (142).

28. Arthur Golding's bracing translation, "holding from his bodie torne his head in bloudie hands" (3.914), recounts the Maenads's dismemberment of Pentheus, but makes no mention of heads on poles, since Ovid omits this detail. See *Shakespeare's Ovid: Arthur Golding's Translation of the "Metamorphoses,"* ed. W. H. D. Rouse, (New York: Norton, 1961), 81. The other source for the incident, Euripides' *Bacchae*, was not accessible to Shakespeare.

29. For Rowe's stage direction, "Stabbing him" (3H6 1.4.176), concerning Margaret's act, see *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, 6 vols. (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1709), 4:1554. "Putting a Paper Crown on his Head" is also Rowe's interpolation (4:1552).

30. *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Ellery Mathews and John Lane, 1894).

31. *The famous and memorable workes of Josephus, a man of much honour and learning among the Jewes. Faithfully translated out of the Latin, and French, by Tho. Lodge, Doctor in Physicke* ([London]: Printed by Humfrey Lownes, for G. Bishop, S. Waterson, and Tho. Adams, 1609).

32. See Thomas Bentley, *The sixth lampe of virginitie containing a mirrour for maidens and matrons: or, the severall duties and office of all sorts of women in their vocation out of Gods word, with their due praise and dispraise by the same: together with the names, liues, and stories of all women mentioned in holie Scriptures, either good or bad . . . Newlie collected and compiled to the glorie of God,* by T.B. Gentleman (London: Thomas Dawson, 1582) 230. The Biblical citation in the text is a gross error, since Matthew 6.12 is approximately halfway through the Beatitudes. Salomé's story occurs in Matthew 14.6–12 and Mark 6.22–29. She was the daughter of Herod Philip and Herodias, but is not named in either Gospel account. Josephus tells her story and identifies her in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 18.5.4.

33. *The Bible, that is, the Holy Scriptures, contained in the Olde and newe Testament translated according to the Ebrewe and Greeke, and conferred with the best translations in diuers languages; with most profitable annotations vpon all the hard places, and the other things of great importance.* (London: By the Deputies of Christopher Barker, 1595).

34. See Jane O. Newman's review of M. L. Stapleton, *Fated Sky: The "Femina Furens" in Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55 (2004): 233–36. "The one stumbling block in Stapleton's book" besides its theoretically "monodirectional" nature, "is that it often vies with Seneca and the Newtonians in its rhetorical flourishes, such gems as 'Shakespeare finds the Senecan diamond in the entrails of Studley's fourteeners'" (236).

35. E.g., Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). There are many, many articles devoted to the subject, but none about sixteenth-century recreations of Senecan characters.

36. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Richard Field, 1589), 197.

37. In analyzing these episodes in the first tetralogy, Woodbridge observes, "the Renaissance never actually said that women talk more than men: it maintained that women talk too much" (210). The last word on early modern men's fears of women's prolixity is Lynda E. Boose, "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991): 179–215.

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