



*“Something as Passionless as
Brilliant Administration”:
Royal Sex and Sexuality in 1970s
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Abstract: Taking as its subject a range of period dramas that depicted the British monarchy in the 1970s, this article argues that debates about the "sexing-up" of recent historical dramas are nothing new. It demonstrates that exploring the sexualities of their subjects have long been central to how such dramas have blended the political and private lives of historical figures. Depictions of sexuality and sex conveyed notions of power, duty, and personal conflict across the different periods and monarchs depicted. Part of a renaissance in costume drama—spurred on, in part, by the coming of colour television—historical biopic serials offered 1970s audiences entertaining and didactic interpretations of British monarchical history. Moving beyond traditional debates around historical realism and dramatic licence, this study takes a public history approach to source material, arguing that these depictions of royals past offer significant insight for historians interested in the conception and nature of monarchy in contemporary society.

Keywords: public history; sex; sexuality; television drama; monarchy; 1970s

In *The Tudors on Film and Television*, William B. Robison notes the "contemporary obsession with sex," which is often "brutal ... and flamboyant" in recent portrayals of the period and its monarchs.¹ Showtime's *The Tudors* (2007-2010) has become "notorious" for prioritising graphic and erroneous sex scenes at the expense of historical authenticity, but there have also been more widespread concerns that serious "factual" and "quality" content of historical television has been sacrificed for ratings-grabbing romanticized "soap opera" drama, gratuitous nudity, and "modern, athletic and spectacular" sexual representations.² These highly-sexualised, internationally-produced and sold

¹ William B. Robison, "Introduction by William B. Robison," in *The Tudors on Film and Television*, ed. Sue Parrill and William B. Robison (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 11

² Elena Woodacre, "Early Modern Queens on Screen: Victors, Victims, Villains, Virgins, and Viragoes," in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex and Power in Popular Culture*, ed. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad, and Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 38; William B. Robison, "Introduction," in *History, Fiction and The Tudors: Sex, Politics, Power and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, ed. William B. Robison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2, 7-8; William B. Robison, "Henry VIII in *The Tudors*: Romantic Renaissance Warrior or Soap Opera Playboy?," in *History, Fiction and The Tudors: Sex, Politics, Power and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, ed. William B. Robison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 27, 37-38, 50; James Aston, Basil Glynn, and Beth Johnson, "Introduction," in *Television, Sex and Society: Analysing Contemporary Representations*, ed. Basil Glynn, James Aston, and Beth Johnson (New York: Continuum, 2012), xx. For further discussion of, and perspectives on, these issues, see: Basil Glynn, "*The Tudors* and the post-national,

“contemporary” versions of history are compared, and *as history* often unfavourably, to those produced by 1970s British Television.³ Priding themselves on historical research and visual authenticity, these were received at the time as “an opportunity to revise your history and take in some good acting,” one reviewer even “envy[ing schoolchildren] ... of today, for series such as this must be a godsend to them in their history studies.”⁴ Keith Michell’s and Glenda Jackson’s titular performances in *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (1970) and *Elizabeth R* (1971) are still regarded as seminal portrayals, numerous re-incarnations later.⁵ They have not, however, been wholly positively received *as entertainment*—either at the time, when one critic accused the BBC of broadcasting “more for students of history than of drama,” or by newer audiences noting dated and low-budget production values, slow pace, and older, less physically attractive cast.⁶ Writers and producers are increasingly comfortable approaching historical material with artistic license, focusing more upon making accessible, watchable drama presenting, Basil Glynn argues, an idea of the past that is both internationally relatable and commercially appealing.⁷ It seems generally assumed that history and entertainment are mutually exclusive, that historical drama can be accurate *or* dramatic, educational *or* sexy. The academy reinforces this impression through parallel but often distinct disciplinary approaches of film and television studies (focusing upon technical, entertainment, or cultural-ideological aspects) and History (focusing upon accuracy, authenticity, and historical reputation).

This article attempts a middle, public history approach, aimed at identifying a 1970s cultural sense of history and understandings of the past by examining the period’s supposedly more “high-brow” historical drama. In accounting for “pervasive characterisation of the 1970s

post-historical Henry VIII,” in *The British Monarchy on Screen*, ed. Mandy Merck (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 309–338; Basil Glynn, “The Conquests of Henry VIII: Masculinity, Sex, and the National Past in *The Tudors*,” in *Television, Sex and Society: Analysing Contemporary Representations*, ed. Basil Glynn, James Aston, and Beth Johnson (New York: Continuum, 2012), 157–174; Sarah Betts, “Power and Passion: Seventeenth-Century Masculinities Dramatised on the BBC in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Conflicting Masculinities: Men in British Television Period Drama*, ed. Katherine Byrne, James Leggott, and Julie Anne Taddeo (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 71–72; and Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad, and Elena Woodacre, “Introduction – Getting Modern: Depicting Premodern Power and Sexuality in Popular Media,” in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex and Power in Popular Culture*, ed. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad, and Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3.

³ See, for instance, user reviews on IMDB for the various series: *Elizabeth R* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066652/reviews?ref_=tt_ov_rt); *Edward the Seventh* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072925/reviews?ref_=tt_ov_rt); and *Six Wives of Henry VIII* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066714/reviews?ref_=tt_ov_rt). See also: Parrill and Robison, *Tudors on Film*, 65; and Maria Hayward, “Fashionable Fiction: The Significance of Costumes in *The Tudors*,” in *History, Fiction and The Tudors: Sex, Politics, Power and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, ed. William B. Robison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 299.

⁴ Terry Metcalf, “Arts Review: Television,” *The Birmingham Post*, 15 January 1972, 2; “Another Look at History,” *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 7 January 1972, 3.

⁵ Bethany Latham, *Elizabeth I in Film and Television: A Study of the Major Portrayals* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 191–192; Parrill and Robison, *Tudors on Film*, 65; Hayward, “Fashionable Fiction,” 299.

⁶ K.A.B., “Shadows on the Screen,” *Coventry Evening Telegraph* 3 March 1972, 3. See, for instance, “40 Years Later,” User Review of *Elizabeth R*, IMDB, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066652/reviews?ref_=tt_ov_rt.

⁷ Robin Hermann, “Postmodern and Conservative: The King’s Ministers in *The Tudors*,” in *History, Fiction and The Tudors: Sex, Politics, Power and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, ed. William B. Robison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 171; Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: In Search of the Tudor’s Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2013), 196–197; Glynn, “*The Tudors*,” 325–328.

as a decade of profound, even existential, crisis in Britain," historians have noted the significance of "moral panic" in the popular press and political rhetoric, and high-profile "anarchic" display in the media. Contemporary attitudes to monarchy are therefore most strikingly remembered with reference to the Sex Pistols and other punk "subvertisements" of the institution. But the decade was also an oft-overlooked 'boom' period for the heritage sector, something the monarchy were actively eager to tap into with grand nostalgic and historicised events such as the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, and were to some extent successful.⁸ As the British Monarchy is both an historic and a live institution, deified through historicism but popularised through accessibility, politically neutral in contemporary society yet widely accepted as an essential component of national heritage and identity, this current study will explore its presentation in 1970s historical television drama as articulations of contemporary historical consciousness, a general understanding of a national (and evolving) past, and of "banal" cultural consciousness (rather than active or overt political engagement with) monarchy as a national institution.⁹ Key to any conceptualisation of monarchy are perceptions of the extent of personal powers and the role in government of individual monarchs and their wider family and dynasties. Much of the appeal of biopic-style television is the personal balance between the public and private lives of individuals, particularly in the case of political figures whose private traits and behaviours can creatively imply and/or articulate political style and competency. Consequently this "consciousness" will be approached through a range of personal royal examples, case-studying portrayals of royal sex and sexualities, and building upon previous work arguing that explicit and controversial modern representations are not merely gratuitous but actually essential in providing an accessible framework through which audiences can engage with history, demonstrating that this was just as applicable in 1970s drama, albeit manifested through different, perhaps less (porno)graphic techniques.¹⁰

The contribution here to royal studies lies not in the minutiae of historical accuracy in biographical portrayals, but in the dramas as texts of public understandings of monarchy and of history, and so analysis will be focused upon history's portrayal, rather than factual minutiae/accuracy.¹¹ By situating the case studies within the context of contemporary television, analysing dramatic content, considering contemporary reception, and comparing and contrasting examples examining different royal figures and historical periods, this article aims to elucidate 1970s conceptions of monarchy as an institution and political system both historical and contemporary.

⁸ Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, "Introduction. The Benighted Decade? Reassessing the 1970s." in *Reassessing 1970s Britain*, ed. Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 13–14, 17; Anthony Taylor, *"Down with the Crown": British Antimonarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 230–233; Jeffrey Richards, "The Monarchy and Film, 1900–2006," in *The Monarchy and the British Nation 1780 to Present*, ed. Andrzej Olechnowicz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 259.

⁹ Andrzej Olechnowicz, "Historians and the modern British monarchy," in *The Monarchy and the British Nation 1780 to Present*, ed. Andrzej Olechnowicz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33–34.

¹⁰ Betts, "Power and Passion," 71–90.

¹¹ For basic historical information, as well as casting and nickname information, see the appendix.

Royal Lives on Television in the 1970s

Late-1960s Britain witnessed two major landmarks for television drama. First, the BBC's *The Forsyte Saga's* (BBC, 1967) "phenomenal" international success garnered a new reputation for "period drama" as "quality" event television, sustained over a number of weeks with a serious, *and seriously engaged*, audience.¹² It also, as Katherine Byrne argues, "irrevocably changed" editorial and authorial approaches to screening history as drama, "inspir[ing later productions] ... to make the past more accessible and entertaining by fore-grounding romance and sexual-desire."¹³ Second, adoption of colour television added to, and increased motivation for, minute attention to detail in the visual (re)creation of period settings and costumes, both supporting and enhancing appetite for a costume drama "Golden Age" decade.¹⁴ Amongst these dramas can be witnessed what has been described as a "seeming fascination" with the British Monarchy.¹⁵ Eight serials from 1969-1979, with historical settings ranging from 1152 to 1937, but all featuring British monarchs, will be examined here (Table 1).

Year	Title	Approximate period covered	British Monarch(s) covered	Broadcaster	Number of Episodes
1969	<i>The First Churchills</i>	1673-1714	Charles II, James II, William III & Mary II, Anne	BBC	12
1970	<i>The Six Wives of Henry VIII</i>	1501-1547	Henry VIII	BBC	6
1971	<i>Elizabeth R</i>	1549-1603	Elizabeth I	BBC	6
1972	<i>The Shadow of the Tower</i>	1485-1503	Henry VII	BBC	13
1975	<i>Edward the Seventh</i>	1841-1910	Edward VII, Victoria	ITV (ATV)	13
1978	<i>The Devil's Crown</i>	1152-1216	Henry II, Richard I, John	BBC	13
1978	<i>Edward and Mrs Simpson</i>	1929-1937	Edward VIII	ITV (Thames)	7
1979	<i>Prince Regent</i>	1780-1821	George IV	BBC	8

Table 1: TV Serials featuring British Monarchs, 1969-1979

Six have a "starring" royal life, but all feature other royal characters, most prominently Henry's *Six Wives*, and Edward VII/"Bertie"'s parents. The other two case studies follow

¹² James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo, "Introduction," in *Upstairs and Downstairs: British Costume Drama Television from "The Forsyte Sage" to "Downton Abbey,"* ed. James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 11, 1–2.

¹³ Katherine Byrne, *Edwardians on Screen: From Downton Abbey to Parade's End* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 24.

¹⁴ Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI, 2015), 121; Glynn, "The Tudors," 318–319.

¹⁵ Byrne, *Edwardians*, 26; Laurel Foster, "1970s Television: A Self-conscious decade" in *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure*, ed. Sue Harper and Justin Smith (London: BFI, 2012), 89.

multiple monarchs of the Angevin and Stuart dynasties. *First Churchills*, though not nominally a royal historical drama, is worthy of comparison here because, as the earliest production, it in many ways trailblazed this sort of drama and portrayal of monarchy. Tracking the marriage and careers of John and Sarah Churchill at the forefront of late-seventeenth-century court life and politics, all the post-Restoration Stuart rulers feature significantly. *Devil's Crown* and *First Churchills* comprise particularly interesting material for studying the portrayal of royal sexuality, as they feature two monarchs now widely speculated about in terms of same-sex relationships, Richard I and Anne.

Success and acclaim for the historical accuracy of *Six Wives* and *Elizabeth R*, has garnered some scholarship, regularly featuring in studies of both historical afterlives and costume dramas.¹⁶ Both, along with *Shadow of the Tower*, feature in *The Tudors on Film and Television*, comprising weightier entries in what is essentially a descriptive filmography.¹⁷ Outside of catalogue form, Robison briefly compares portrayals in *Six Wives* with modern counterparts in *The Tudors*, as does Susan Bordo's work on Anne Boleyn.¹⁸ *Elizabeth R* is often discussed in relation to Elizabeth's wider screen image, most significantly by Bethany Latham.¹⁹ *Devil's Crown's* Eleanor of Aquitaine receives detailed, though brief, analysis in Michael Evans's *Inventing Eleanor*.²⁰ The Prince Regent features only fleetingly in filmographical listings, but mentions of *Edward and Mrs Simpson* appear in accounts of television drama inspired by ("non-fiction") literature, the interwar period, or those aiming for the American market through featuring transatlantic interest, intrigue and romance.²¹

Edward the Seventh is listed as part of a 1970s "Edwardian Revival," a "fascination" with the period, whose prevalence in visual culture has been partly attributed to *The Forsyte Saga*.²² Katherine Byrne goes further, noting the "fruitful" potential of King Edward himself as a character, "in keeping with the general draw of the Edwardian era" (broadly defined).²³ In addition to *Edward the Seventh*, he appeared in *The Edwardians* (BBC 1972), *Fall of Eagles* (BBC

¹⁶ Byrne, *Edwardians*, 24–26; Glynn, "The Tudors," 318–319; Michael Klossner, *The Europe of 1500–1815 on Film and Television: A Worldwide Filmography of Over 2550 Works, 1895 through 2000* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002), 304; Homer B. Pettey, "Elizabeth I and the Life of Visual Culture," in *Rule Britannia! The Biopic and British National Identity*, ed. Homer B. Pettey and R. Barton Palmer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018), 41–66; Latham, *Elizabeth I in Film*, 191–215.

¹⁷ Parrill and Robison, *Tudors on Film*, 3–12, 65–75, 101–136, 200–218.

¹⁸ Robison, "Introduction," 9; Bordo, *Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 198–199; Susan Bordo, "The Tudors, Natalie Dormer, and Our 'Default' Anne Boleyn," in *History, Fiction and The Tudors: Sex, Politics, Power and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, ed. William B. Robison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 77–96.

¹⁹ Pettey, "Elizabeth I and the Life of Visual Culture," 41–66; Latham, *Elizabeth I in Film*, 191–215.

²⁰ Michael Evans, *Inventing Eleanor: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Image of Eleanor of Aquitaine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 118–121.

²¹ Klossner, *The Europe of 1500–1815*, 304; Ellen Baskin, *Serials on British Television, 1950–1994* (London: Scholar Press, 1996), 163; Leonard Mustazza, *The Literary Filmography, A–L* (New York: McFarland, 2006), 155; A. Bowdoin Van Riper, "Good-Bye to All That: *Piece of Cake*, *Danger UXB*, and the Second World War," in *Upstairs and Downstairs: British Costume Drama Television from "The Forsyte Sage" to "Downton Abbey"*, ed. James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 153; Clare Monk, "Pageantry and Populism, Democratization and Dissent: The Forgotten 1970s," in *Upstairs and Downstairs: British Costume Drama Television from "The Forsyte Sage" to "Downton Abbey"*, ed. James Leggott and Julie Anne Taddeo (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 15.

²² Byrne, *Edwardians*, 23; Monk, "Pageantry and Populism," 15–16.

²³ Byrne, *Edwardians*, 26

1974), as a recurring but significant figure in Thames Television's *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (1974), and as a major character in LWT's *Lillie* (1978). He also appears in two original fictional serials—*Upstairs, Downstairs* (LWT, 1972), and briefly but essentially in the set-up of *The Duchess of Duke Street* (BBC, 1976).

In 1978, Colin McArthur described *Edward the Seventh's* "central ideological project" as "the humanisation of the British Monarchy," a view endorsed by later scholars.²⁴ Citing attempts to combat contemporary anti-monarchy, "anti-establishment" feeling by invoking sympathetic and empathetic feelings from television audiences, Byrne points to Edward's central characterisation in both *Edward the Seventh* and *Duchess of Duke Street* as "flawed but loveable," whilst McArthur highlights familiarisation of a potentially aloof institution through the added "frisson" of "hear[ing] the crowned heads of Europe and their wives address each other by their first names and nicknames."²⁵ This article considers this "frisson" and language of sexualised "humanity" as a device for the dramatic exposition of monarchy, exploring this element of royal characterisation across different chronological case studies to unpick 1970s concepts of the nature, and *changing nature*, of British monarchy. The next two sections will explore and compare the drama's sexual characterisations of individual royal figures and their implicit ideals of efficient monarchy. The final section discusses depictions of the operational "business" of monarchy within the context of the ideas of the past(s) presented.

Virginity, Chastity, and Fidelity

Life magazine's 1972 review of *Elizabeth R* expressed supposed cultural incredulity that, compared to "romantic" Mary of Scotland—"all those men, all that blood"—it would be difficult to create "compelling" television out of a successful, but *virgin*, queen, "something as passionless as brilliant administration."²⁶ Later, the increasing "sexing up" of screen Elizabeth has been widely noted, and Latham concludes that, conversely, *Elizabeth R's* attention to "accuracy and ... pedagogic[al] instructi[on]" sometimes "sacrifices" entertainment value and engaging *character-driven* drama, rendering sections of the series "tedious," citing lack of passion and "chemistry" between Jackson's Elizabeth and Robert Hardy's Dudley as fundamentally undermining the drama *as drama*.²⁷ A contemporary British critic also noted that, "since every schoolboy knows that Elizabeth remained the Virgin Queen," the Alençon marriage negotiations episode was, "far from being dramatic," a ninety-minute build-up to a "non-event."²⁸ However, whilst *Life's* review does note that Elizabeth here is "not exactly a sex object," it ultimately concludes that the only tentative "complaint ... is that the politics of the court, sexual and otherwise, predominate."²⁹ This last is certainly true. Throughout, Jackson's protagonist is intensely passionate and highly sexualised. This passion and sexuality is integral to *Elizabeth R's* content, as both biography and political history.

Whilst modern viewers, acclimatised to young and athletic stars, may question Hardy's

²⁴ Colin McArthur, *Television and History* (BFI: London, 1978), 36; Byrne, *Edwardians*, 26–27; Cooke, *British Television*, 121–123.

²⁵ Byrne, *Edwardians*, 27; McArthur, *Television and History*, 37.

²⁶ "The Virgin Queen in Six Chapters," *Life*, 10 March 1972, 16.

²⁷ Latham *Elizabeth I in Film*, 215–216, 199–200, 202.

²⁸ "A Royal Non-happening," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 4 March 1971, 3.

²⁹ "Virgin Queen in Six Chapters," 16.

casting (in his forties) as romantic lead, at the time he had some reputation as a "good old TV heartthrob," "swooned over" by many a BBC-viewer, and his "fluid" Dudley was received as demonstrating "all the panache the man must have had."³⁰ Highly respected actors, Hardy and Jackson brought to life what one critic justifiably described as a "love in the true meaning of the word: tempestuous, complex, jealous and all-consuming," a passion beyond "an affair of shadowy bedroom gymnastics," but rather conveying, through anguished thespian nuances, "tortured, doomed" forbidden love and desire.³¹ They never consummate their relationship, but Jackson's Elizabeth demonstrates both sincere emotional attachment and sexual longing for Hardy's "Robin." She considers seriously, if wistfully, marrying him, receives him in her bedchamber, cherishes his picture, and behaves jealously towards his wives. She openly declares her love, provoking concern at home and mockery abroad. She is disbelieving that her cousin could prefer another suitor ("How *could* she marry Darnley? I offered her *Leicester!*"), and devastated when he *does* re-marry, temporarily losing emotional control and rational monarchical perspective. When she learns of his death she is broken and physically floored. Screen portrayals of Elizabeth's virginity are widely assessed with emphasis upon her inherently dramatic choice between queenly "duty" and private desire, a choice alternatively judged as a necessity, representative of a former time of (relative) female subjugation, or an empowered modernisation of the character for post-feminist audiences viewing her as equivalent to a "business-" or "career-woman."³² *Elizabeth R*'s Elizabeth frequently refers to her personal sacrifices for her country, as "a queen [who] may not follow [her] own desires as an ordinary woman may do." But, though framed as patriotic, and frequently alluding to the real Elizabeth's imagery and iconography as a deified "Virgin Queen," maintenance of her virginity is more complex than merely feminist statement or inhabitation of maximum virtue. As she observes, amidst things it has become "second nature" for her to give up for her country, "my virginity [in itself] is of no use to me or to anyone else."

It is, however, an essential protective tool both diplomatically and personally. Elizabeth repeatedly attributes her aversion to marriage to her mother and stepmothers' memories, reiterating, "As I am now, I owe my life to no man's goodwill, except the goodwill of the people, and I have always known how to keep that." This exposes her key feelings on both marriage and queenship. In the first episode, both her sister and stepmother lose independence, rationality and health through marriage. Her fears of the married state, the marriage bed and the childbed spiral as the Alençon match nears fruition, ultimately overwhelming her in a physical response akin to that demonstrated earlier on her imprisonment in fear of execution. She cannot go through with it.

Comparison with Mary I is stark. Though a virgin, Elizabeth is sexually knowledgeable and world-weary. When we first meet the young, vulnerable princess, she is embroiled in sexual (and political) scandal involving her guardian and stepfather, Thomas Seymour. During interrogation, flashbacks show Seymour smiling at her, opening her bed-curtains and touching

³⁰ Roy West, "Look Ahead with Roy West," *The Liverpool Echo*, 24 February 1971, 2; Deborah Thomas, "Short-sighted, Fortyish and Devastating," *Daily Mirror*, 17 August 1971, 9; Mary Malone, "Night Out for the Armchair Athletes," *Daily Mirror*, 25 February 1971, 14; Leslie Duckworth, "Television," *The Birmingham Post*, 25 February 1971, 2.

³¹ Harry Thompson, "When a Queen Must Say No to Her Love," *The Journal*, 27 February 1971, 11.

³² Woodacre, "Queens on Screen," 27–50; Julianne Pidduck, *Contemporary Costume Film: Space, Place and the Past* (London: BFI, 2004); Latham, *Elizabeth I in Film*, 199.

her sheets and body, approaching her with his dagger, cutting her gown to pieces whilst her stepmother holds her. We hear Elizabeth laugh, cry, pant, scream, protest her innocence, and implore how she could either resist Seymour's actions or help her own attachment to the man of "wit ... but ... little judgment," and are ultimately confused, as apparently is she, over her feelings towards him. But we also see her contrastingly excellent judgment in mastering her emotions to save herself. This troubling backstory is formative in developing her sexuality, simultaneously awakening carnal desires, and heightening fear of intimacy. It is a lesson for her in the arts of charm and flirtation, and a cautionary tale about discretionary and public boundaries. Her conscious sexuality becomes both weapon and armour in her personal and political careers. In contrast, when Mary marries upon accession she is an innocent, and to some extent remains one through desperate devotion to her uncaring and unfaithful husband, Philip of Spain. Having "believed him pure," learning of his promiscuity horrifies her. Personally disappointed, she is totally distracted from government. Her poignant wait for him on their wedding night, and subsequent bending to his will against her own judgments and inclinations, undermines both her practical interest and skill in government, and her popularity with her subjects, two core tenets of monarchy which Elizabeth later maintains so carefully. When Elizabeth bellows, "I am an *absolute* Princess!" she means it in every sense, as autocratic monarch, independent woman, and pure maiden, *virgo intacta*. She is virginal, but not ignorant about sex, which she discusses with varying degrees of candour with suitors, courtiers, doctors, and attendants.

For viewers inherited from *Six Wives*, Elizabeth's knowing, controlled chastity and associated regnal success, contrasted with Henry, whose kingship becomes increasingly ridiculous with every successive sexually desperate match. It also echoed, both directly and thematically, the *Wives'* varied sexual identities and behaviours, and their relative success as queens. Jane Seymour's modesty, piety, and virginity, attract and endear her to Henry, whose frustrations with her refusal to enter a relationship outside of marriage propel her swiftly into the consort throne. Jane's virtuous attitude promotes marital harmony and softens and humanises Henry. Her family's interests are secured, and she prominently uses her influence to reconcile the king with his eldest daughter. But conversely, her willingness to play the pawn in her brother's court-politicking, her deep-rooted fear of, and ultimate capitulation to, Henry undermine queenly autonomy and authority. Anne Stallybrass conveys strict personal morality, and whilst Jane is innocent of devious *personal* ambition for the throne, and sincerely loyal and affectionate to both King and family, she is haunted by her role in "innocent" Anne Boleyn's downfall. Homely, shy and demure, Stallybrass's Jane is ill-suited to political machinations and court-intriguing, and is piteously tragic, ushered toward death by others' desires and ambitions, a carnal sacrifice to Seymour advancement and to Henry's personal and political triumph in fathering a son.

Henry's short-lived, unconsummated union with Anne/"Anna" of Cleves traditionally gets rather short shrift on screen, but *Six Wives* gives it screen time equalling the other five. This screen time is surprisingly preoccupied with royal sexuality and personal desire and its intersection with court, national, and international politics. Sexual judgments, implications, and innuendos abound throughout. Though politically arranged, both parties have sexual expectations and hopes from the marriage. Henry, emotionally and intellectually unattached, talks abstractly of his prospective bride's alleged physical attributes, frequently confusing her with her sister. Holbein explicitly sets out to sexually entice—"Please one king?! Generations

will lament that they did not live to be Anna von Kleve's lover"—and Henry becomes increasingly excited for her arrival. Anna indulges in fantasies of queenly position alongside rumours that "King Henry is the handsomest and most courtly king ever born." Travelling to England, she is impatient, expressing both some "longing" for her bridegroom and light-hearted and *knowing* hope that this anticipation is reciprocated.

Again, this knowing wit is key to portraying her virginity *and* consequent skill in negotiating, even *managing*, both the political machinations of the court and Henry's emotional volatility. Though undoubtedly a virgin, and, her brother boasts, "carefully taught ... [knowing] nothing of music and dancing and dress and such doings ... [that] only encourage lovers and lead to expense," Anna is both acutely aware of her deficiency in, and (initially) eager to learn these skills in order to properly undertake her role as a "courtly" Queen, and sexually please her husband, and, like Elizabeth, she participates in innuendo-laden gossip. Their first meeting is a disaster, Anna shocked into momentary undisguised physical revulsion, followed by an implied sexual assault from the over-excited king, and when she finally proceeds to her wedding her sexual trepidation is intensified by worldly understanding, as she says to Cranmer, "remember your wedding night, and then imagine mine." Once married, Henry is initially willing to demonstrate "all the skills of a man" in pursuing "the most tiring part" of marital "duty." Anna regroups, resolving to preserve her virginity to provide means of escaping the marriage. She repeatedly resists his advances through capable initiative, expertly wooing him with friendly companionship, and mutually interested political co-conspiracy. She demonstrates and utilises astute judgment of his character, manipulating him through massaging his ego, and crucially foregrounding an understanding of the pre-eminence of *his* sexuality and desires—"How can you bed with a woman who does not please you? ... Can any honest woman thrust herself upon a man who is repelled by her ugliness?" She proves herself expert, as her brother worried she might, in comprehending and managing "men's affairs," explicitly defined as "politics," but is implicitly shown to include intellectual worldliness about sex and marriage. Thus, she ultimately secures life, dignity, a generous divorce settlement, and comfortable retirement from queenship. Underlining the link between preserving her virginity and the development of her political skill and autonomy, Elizabeth, the future Virgin Queen, is seen, a child, learning craft at her stepmother's knee.

Unusually for major characters, Elizabeth and Anna remain virgins throughout, so it is particularly interesting that they demonstrate such worldliness in their attitudes and understandings of sex and marriage. The majority of these series' royal virgins are destined for marriage and sex and, the women at least, are often young, innocent, and naïve. In contrast to Anna and Elizabeth's active choices to sacrifice personal desires to build political and bodily security and autonomy, the portrayal of childhood (or childlike) virginity in other case studies underline royals' personal sacrifice to political expediency/duty, and also their pawn-like roles within government and monarchy. Comparing dramas set at different points in British history highlights differences in levels of personal agency available to participants in royal sex and marriage, an interesting reflection of inherent 1970s cultural ideas about the civilising and sexually progressive nature of modernisation, particularly with regard to the changing nature of monarchy as a power structure. *Devil's Crown* depicts twelfth-century manipulation of royal virgins as Henry II marries his children to Louis's child-heiresses. The series witnesses the small children at the altar grow to teenaged emotional and sexual pairings within the home, and under the supervision, of Henry as sovereign and patriarch. The fifteenth-century opening

of *Shadow of the Tower*, sees Elizabeth of York wait, throughout the episode, for Henry VII to claim her as his bride as part of his post-Bosworth victory spoils. Whilst he does employ some effort in courtly wooing, she is effectively powerless to direct or rebuff his overtures. In the drama's final episode, as in *Six Wives*'s first episode, Henry plays puppet master in marrying their son, Arthur, to teenaged princess Catherine of Aragon. Henry's role goes beyond contract negotiation. He personally leads Arthur to Catherine, demanding access to her private quarters and her veil's removal to enable physical inspection of his purchase. The couple's lack of agency is underlined by juvenile casting (of Arthur in *Six Wives*, and both in *Shadow of the Tower*), and by their shyness and/or lack of participation in the dialogue, particularly pronounced in Arthur in *Six Wives*, who appears briefly, passively, at his father's side, silent, gulping and staring in awe as his bride is revealed to him, before the story cuts away to his tomb.

First Churchills also touches upon virginal youth and lack of agency. Depicting the post-civil war seventeenth-century, there is some tone of disapproval or at least human sympathy with brides, Mary of Modena, closer in age to her stepdaughters than husband, and Princess Mary/Mary II who dissolves into tears of fear and disgust as she marries her cousin, William, at her uncle's behest. With Anne's marriage however, there is a definite sense of semi-empowerment when, though marrying George of Denmark by the king's arrangement, she successfully voices her strong opposition to an initial suggestion of George of Hanover, consequently entering marriage more willingly than her sister. That royal marriage should involve personal consent is more openly assumed in still later-set dramas. So too is that physical desire, mutual respect and even emotional attachment form some integral part of that consent. Though frustrated by his daughter's rejecting his original choice for her, the Prince Regent accepts Princess Charlotte's own preference of Leopold, a less prestigious husband, but one with whom she is well matched (as portrayed here) in emotional and sexual temperament and desire. Though both virgins, Anne and Charlotte have eyewitness experience of sexualised and marital relationships and even on-screen personal history of flirtation prior to meeting their husbands. Both use this prior experience to develop their own sense of romantic and sexual preferences and both are empowered by it into asserting and negotiating their own will, experience that prepares them for future rule.

In *Edward the Seventh*, Victoria and Albert's children's marriages are arranged as matters of state, but elements of personal inclination and consent are still more strongly foregrounded. Although Bertie's younger sisters do not choose their husbands, they do all consent. Eldest child, "Vicky" and her intended are given time to get acquainted before committing to marriage, and even then Vicky is kept at home until considered old enough. Vicky and "Fritz" are shy and sexually inexperienced but clearly attracted to each other and eager for premarital alone time, including a forbidden (if rather chaste) kiss. Bertie is clear his own duty lies with his parents' choice, but emphasises that the match must afford some sort of personal fulfilment. His family acknowledges that the bride should be not only suitably virginal, but physically attractive and sexually alluring if she is to hold Bertie's interest enough to adequately provide the beneficial influence and essential support required of his future queen. It is universally considered important that the couple should meet before committing. Alexandra/"Alix" is young, wholesome, unaffected, and vivacious in appearance and manners. She accepts arranged marriage as her filial duty, but her parents, though eager for the match, do not force her into it. She gossips about Bertie's charm and appearance, and declares herself unable to

"marry without love" for the sake of duty, material consequence, and "power." Later generations are given more freedom for personal feelings. When Bertie and Alix's eldest son, "Eddy," dies, his brother "Georgie" marries Eddy's fiancée, "May." The grieving parents' sensibilities (and the modern audience's) are assuaged through emphasis that the new couple's sincere, mutual grief had fostered genuine intimacy and love. Georgie and May's indisputable purity renders the incident more palatable for characters and audience alike, as does the subtle but clearly happy and wholesome portrayal of their resulting marriage.

Portraying fidelity and chastity of *married* royal characters differs according to time period setting, status/political role (and gender) of the individual(s), and each relationship's mutuality. Across the series, it is clear that the contemporary consensus of all these past settings, however near or distant, was (fairly accurately) that royal wives were expected to practice fidelity but tolerate spousal infidelity. Henry II is incensed by both suspicion of Eleanor's own infidelity, and her outrage at his. *Six Wives's* Henry VIII jealously guards access to Anna, even though he himself publicly rejects and ignores her. *First Churchills* portrays Charles II's and James II's queens differently, but sympathetically, as exemplary wives and consorts, despite their husbands' well-known infidelity. Catherine of Braganza is a very minor, virtually silent role with little screen time. Whilst Charles's mistresses are openly and vocally active in his Court and company, Catherine's biggest moment is off-screen when Charles affectionately entreats her "pardon" for his sexual (mis)conduct via a deathbed message. Mary of Modena is a more considerable part, and as their relationship and political role mature, she and James usually appear together as openly affectionate and supportive, whilst James's own infidelities and indiscretions are offscreen and barely alluded to. Although both King and public sympathise with Caroline of Brunswick over the Prince Regent's behaviour, overall, she is expected to tolerate her husband's mistresses without complaint or self-compromise. Only on reaching *Edward the Seventh's* late nineteenth-century setting is royal *male* sexual conduct really challenged, but although *she* is clearly framed as the injured party, Alix is still expected to publicly overlook (and even entertain) Bertie's indiscretions.

Portraying the marital fidelity of queens regnant is more complex, because their interlinked political identities and abilities are more central in depicting the institutional operation of monarchy. As Mary's one-sided devotional obsession with Philip in *Elizabeth R* renders her ridiculous and disempowers her as both woman and ruler, so *First Churchills's* Mary II's love and desire for her cold, distant, and womanising husband distracts her totally from political interests and abilities. In contrast, Anne, and later *Edward the Seventh's* Victoria, draw both personal and political support from their husbands. Anne and George are portrayed as genuinely, and mutually, loyal, affectionate, and supportive companions through relentless family tragedy and political intrigue. Though openly acknowledged as intellectually and politically inert, this amiable character of George provides Anne, as queen, with personal support rather than political dominance or challenge, so her love for her foreign husband doesn't undermine her pre-eminence and duty as British sovereign. Even in this portrayal however, there is one incident that warns against the consequences of monarchical over-obsession with a spouse, when Anne withdraws from her work at George's death—a theme still more pronounced in *Edward the Seventh* after Albert's. Whilst Victoria's infamous withdrawal from public life is a recurring theme in the six episodes between her widowhood and death, even during Albert's lifetime their strict fidelity and her extreme and obsessive devotion to him impacts upon the portrayal of their respective royal roles. Victoria dotes upon Albert

but is jealous of, and over, him. She passionately desires him but resents pregnancies (which physically and socially restrict her personal political role), and to some extent the children (who steal portions of Albert's attention and affection). Albert's strict adherence to the sanctity of marriage, and his simultaneously emasculated position as a powerless, uncrowned consort, leave his position, personally and politically, at the whim of Victoria's emotional volatility. Without solace in mistresses, Albert over-invests in his children. Intent on moulding Bertie into the perfect monarch, he emotionally banishes his eldest son to a lonely and high-pressured education. Simultaneously, he cherishes and delights in Vicky, viewing her as an intellectual protégée-turned-equal and finding such emotional, almost conjugally idyllic, fulfilment with her that he feels private desolation that he will be totally "alone" when she marries. On a personal level, Victoria and Albert's sometimes unfulfilling but indissoluble and sexually exclusive marriage is respectable. It is also relatable, as is their internal struggle over gender roles within the symbiotic spheres of their family and work lives. Ultimately though, Victoria's overwhelming feelings for Albert (alive or dead) dominate her personal and political behaviour, shaping (and often undermining) her sovereignty and her role in the development of modern constitutional monarchy.

Seduction and Promiscuity

Despite this preoccupation, Annette Crosbie's Victoria is not devoid of either political or sexual aptitude. In *Elizabeth R*, Alençon admires Jackson's "coquettish" Elizabeth as a "game-player," using sexual charm and charisma to dominate political negotiation. Victoria is in a constitutional setting, wielding softer power, but still utilises sexual confidence to flirt for political ends. She is also susceptible to flirtation and sexualised passions, a susceptibility sometimes utilised by her ministers to gain royal assent, other times alienating her from family, government, and/or subjects, undermining her monarchical credibility. Across these dramas, skills in seduction in, or of, royal figures equate to political skills, whilst royal susceptibility to manipulation through sexuality is portrayed as compromising monarchical operational integrity.

Edward and Mrs Simpson opens with Edward/"David" as Prince of Wales, holidaying with one married lover, Thelma, with another, Freda's, blessing and encouragement as effective *maitresse-en-titre*. David is established as jet-setting womaniser and rule-breaker, resisting traditional royal life and duty, frequenting fashionable clubs, absconding from official duties for *al fresco* sex on safari, and hosting extravagant and fashionable house parties. The tone is further set by the show's theme tune, which dissolves the national anthem into Herbert Farjeon's popular 1927 song, "I've Danced With a Man Who's Danced With a Girl Who's Danced with the Prince of Wales," written at the height of the real David's glamorous celebrity and mass popularity. Whilst they hope he will eventually make a suitable matrimonial choice, his parents will not force one, and, though dreading his monarchical destiny, he is comfortable in his sexual relationships, like everyone else, aware of the political potential of his seductive personal charm. He repeatedly declares his intention to be a modern, demystified, more human and relaxed style of monarch, better suited to post-war Britain's subjects and culture, but this instinctively regal altruism is undermined by continual indications that he wishes to retain royal perks whilst neglecting his duties, that the modernity he seeks is personal freedom rather than political and socially responsible innovation. Any appearance of

autonomous, innovative, or responsible sovereignty is undermined by his lovers' domination of him. Damningly, the women are portrayed, *and were received*, "unflatteringly" as "predatory," "sharks," "ambitious," and "social-climbing."³³ Cherie Lunghi's Thelma is physically appealing but substantively "a particularly unattractive example of the idle rich species," whose company entices David into frivolous and selfish preoccupations, distracting from his royal role.³⁴ In portraying Wallis, previewed as being "a woman the British public saw as a cross between Mata Hari and Lucretia Borgia," Cynthia Harris was "arch and bitchy," a "self-assured," "calculating hussy," "a scheming, ambitious, society parasite."³⁵ The women's marital status partially absolves the womanising prince's sexual guilt. Sexually mature lovers nullify hints of royal *droit du seigneur*, whilst *his* comparative bachelorhood renders him their sexual pawn. As one reviewer summed up, Harris's Wallis purposefully "set[s] her cap at ... [David,] the gleam of conquest shin[ing] so bright in her eyes."³⁶ This dynamic reflects poorly on David's monarchical persona. He is presented here as almost an antithesis of Elizabeth in *Elizabeth R*. She puts the will and needs of her people above her personal needs and desires, and, *a knowing virgin*, harnesses flirtation and sexuality for the advancement or protection of her political agenda, ultimately remaining unmarried to preserve her independence. The Edward-actor, Edward Fox, claimed there was "more" to the king's life than Mrs Simpson and the Abdication and thus it would be "unfair to regard ... the series as the whole picture of the man," but the series clearly constructed this particular picture of his intertwined royal and personal identity, *a naïve sexually active bachelor*, easily manipulated by women, allowing personal feelings to overcome public duty until, ultimately, marriage destroyed his political position.³⁷

Michell's Henry is chief continuity marker throughout *Six Wives's* six independently authored episodes, but each wife is successively the protagonist of their respective episode. Henry's life and reign are filtered through each woman's personal experiences of, and effects upon, the passions and sexuality of a single man who wields autocratic sovereignty whilst, as one courtier in the series observes, seeking "in marriage what other men find in marriage, three mistresses and a brothel." Damage (psychological and physical) to all Henry's wives is clear, but they are not mere arm-candy malleable to the charms, whims, and violence of an all-powerful tyrannical husband. All (to varying degree) utilise their own sexuality to negotiate and manipulate their marriages. As Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves both, in different ways, utilise their maidenly virtue, so Catherine Parr charms and survives Henry through pious and virtuous marital fidelity, but with the sexual and marital experience of a twice-widowed goodwife, experience Henry clearly values at this stage in his life. The active role of sex and seduction is more pronounced in the portrayals of the other three wives. In episode one,

³³ Terry Grimley, "Steering Clear of Critics' Little Boxes," *The Birmingham Post*, 12 June 1979, 10; Emma Soames, "The Predators," *Evening Chronicle*, 9 December 1978, 3; Terry Grimley, "Television," *The Birmingham Post*, 9 November, 1978, 6; Ruth Morrison, "A Right Royal Fuss About Nothing," *The Press and Journal*, 11 November 1978, 9; Ken Burgess, "Royal Scented Soap Opera," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 10 November, 1978, 3.

³⁴ Grimley, "Television," 6.

³⁵ Moya Jones, "The Perfect Mrs Simpson," *The Liverpool Echo*, 24 October 1978, 6; Ken Burgess, "Tonic From the Doctor," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 24 November 1978, 3; Hazel Holt, "The Author Must Take the Blame," *The Stage and Television Today*, 21 December 1978, 16; Frederick Whitehead, "The Fast Buck and A Love Affair," *The Birmingham Post*, 6 December 1978, 4.

³⁶ "Broadcasting Guide: Personal Choice," *The Times*, 8 November 1978, 33.

³⁷ Moya Jones, "The Blue Eyes Smile and a Prince Reigns Again," *The Liverpool Echo*, 23 October 1978, 6.

courtiers raise concerns that "matrimonial devotion [though] a virtue ... can be carried to excess" and that a royal (particularly sovereign) couple "are not husband and wife ... [but] fluctuating sources of power," that national "government" is compromised whilst its ruler is sexually enthralled by his foreign wife. Later dialogue conveys that this anxiety goes beyond xenophobia, as weary advisors hope that Henry, finally father of a male heir, will remain a celibate widower and refocus on political sovereignty allowing "no more trouble about the women," "upturning" policy through Henry's blinkered sexual obsessions.

Echoes of Anne Boleyn are clear. Bordo is relatively impressed by Dorothy Tutin's Anne, but argues she lacks "coherence" because of "the very different views of her" held by the authors of the two distinct episodes in which she appears—fleetingly in "*Catherine of Aragon*," as "coldhearted, gossipy, and cackling," what a contemporary viewer called "a hard, scheming, high-priced tart," and then in "*Anne Boleyn*," "dignified, principled, and much more sympathetic."³⁸ This is reasonable criticism, but there *is* actually some consistency in the portrayal. Because *Anne Boleyn* is mostly concerned with her downfall, the differences in portrayal are more marked between moments of triumph and despair, than between the different episodes. At the height of her sexual and political power Anne is imperious, demanding, and passionate. The couple's good times are hardly screened, but what is conveyed is Henry's intense, almost aggressive, physical desire for her, caressing her neck in eerie foreshadowing of all-consuming love's mutation into virulent hate. Her manners, expressions, and gestures sexually entice and then fight to dominate him. Her clothing is fashionable, elaborate, relatively low-cut and brightly coloured. Costume designer, John Bloomfield, purposefully delineated different court factions through colour coordination, and Anne's personal share of the Howard-affiliation "reds and oranges" are not only "really striking," but sexy and flirtatious in comparison with other courtiers and queens.³⁹ Even in the more sympathetic *Anne Boleyn*, Tutin's Anne in scarlet or orange and her front-laced bodice enthralls Henry but is not particularly endearing to the audience. In downfall she becomes more sympathetic, vulnerable and undressed after her miscarriage, and following arrest and de-queening she becomes increasingly desexualised. Her necklines get higher, her clothing style and colouring become simpler, gentler, and demurer, her attitudes become softer and more measured. She transforms into a tragic but pious and dignified queenly figure.

Contrastingly, Henry becomes ever more tyrannical and sexually sinister. Physical changes, as highly-acclaimed costume and make-up age and obesify Michell, transform him from attractive and virile renaissance prince to lecherous, physically-repulsive and sexually-inadequate old man. His statesmanship becomes increasingly ridiculous and despicable, unrecognisable from the cultured, ambitious idealist youth absorbed in mutual respect, physical desire, and intellectual inspiration with wife, *and partner*, Catherine of Aragon. Dramatically, however, Henry remains not only salaciously entertaining but (mostly) sympathetic. Greg Walker attributes Henry's long-lasting dramatic-hero "appeal" on screen to empathy with him as a persistent conceptualisation of typical "laddish" heterosexual masculinity, "victim" rather than instigator of his personal troubles, "prey ... to a succession of more experienced, more

³⁸ Bordo, *Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 198–199; Ann Purser, "Skill With This Much Told Tale," *The Stage and Television Today*, 8 January 1970, 21.

³⁹ Judith Cook, "A Midland Couturier to the Court of Henry VIII," *The Birmingham Post: Saturday Magazine*, 30 January 1971, 7.

cunning, demanding women" as he pursues tripartite fulfilment in sexual gratification, fatherhood, and marital bliss.⁴⁰ Aside from ignoring both extreme abuse of regal power over the bodies, lives, and even souls, of his wives and subjects, and the external manipulation of each marital coupling by other political and material stakeholders, this is a credible, well-reasoned verdict on Henry's screen afterlife. Michell's portrayal certainly has some endearing personal vulnerability to him, despite physical and emotional decrepitude. The sense of Henry's sexual victimhood peaks in "*Catherine Howard*." The seediness of the almost-quinquagenarian invalid Henry lusting after a healthy and vibrant teenager is mollified for the audience through casting Angela Pleasance who, though young (29) is definitely neither a child, nor particularly child-like in appearance. As in *Edward and Mrs Simpson* the uncomfortable notion of *droit du seigneur* is nullified by her willingness to engage in her uncle Norfolk's machinations to seduce Henry, and by her own sexual experience and agency. For her, adultery is a *calculated* risk reflecting political and dynastic ambitions *and* personal sexual desires. From the start, the victim-role skews towards Henry, as Norfolk successfully hopes to entice him with the vision of his ripe but pure niece. Both men comment upon her increased attractiveness since the previous summer, viewing it as adolescent physical maturing, but the two men's predatory lust is inverted by viewers' pre-knowledge that the true, direct source of her bloom was willing and voraciously enjoyed loss of virginity. In the guise of a virgin, her sexual knowledge and experience seduces Henry. His political credibility and autonomy are undermined by both Norfolk's and Catherine's manipulation, but this is neither total nor irredeemable. Dialogue, with Norfolk, and previously with Anna of Cleves, demonstrate sufficient acumen to recognise court factions' potential to sexually bait him for political advancement. Furthermore, in later courting Catherine Parr he exhibits some sense of learning from his past and attempting to re-establish his personal reign by sensibly stabilising his domestic life. This courtship is not an ardent, chivalric, lustful pursuit of nubile youth, but a mature, objective negotiation based upon both aesthetic appreciation, intellectual respect, and mutual realism—emphasised by Rosalie Crutchley's performance who, at 50, better conveys the sense of a mature, later-in-life choice than the historical union of the middle-aged King with the 31-year-old Catherine. Even as Henry's body and character deteriorate, he demonstrates some level of self-knowledge, political acumen, and crafty agility in his Lordship.

In all the dramas, self-knowledge, adaptability, and responsible maturing in sexuality consistently act as shorthand in conveying to the audience degrees of political skill, success, or laudability within royal lives and monarchical operation. In *Prince Regent* and *Edward and Mrs Simpson*, the titular characters penchant for older, married women infantilise them. Their extravagance and womanising, though constituting a deliberate power play and rebellion against paternal disapproval, ultimately make them seem remote from, and careless of, governmental concerns. However, George's relative self-awareness, (temporary) willingness to marry pragmatically, and ability to self-deprecate, render him more sympathetic than David's stubborn arrogance in the face of regal duty. Wallis's ultimate dominance renders her more dangerous than George's fluctuating succession of favourites. Even at the heights of his passion (and monogamy) for Mrs Fitzherbert, when seen becoming *politically* reclusive,

⁴⁰ Greg Walker, "A Great Guy With His Chopper?": Henry VIII on Screen and in the Flesh" in *Tudorism: Historical Imagination and the Appropriation of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Tatiana String and Marcus Bull (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 240–241.

disinterested, and indolent, he is tempted back into an intertwined world of general debauchery and opposition politics. Likewise, in *First Churchills*, we see that Charles II's *multiple* paramours dilute their potential to overwhelm his personal government. He is aware of Barbara Villiers's sexual and emotional incontinency, and her influence is at *his* indulgence, whilst discussions with James demonstrate his prioritisation of political expedience above personal feelings.

The Devil's Crown showcases Henry's II's interlinked self-interested and despotic approach to kingship, and rampant, insatiable, chauvinistic sexual appetite. Returning from months abroad, his first priority is taking Eleanor to bed having "not had a woman in ten days." His personal gratification drives him throughout. Obsessed with the laws, etiquettes and dividends of feudal lordship, he demonstrates little sense of personal responsibility, benevolence, or stewardship. Pursuing Eleanor is a heady combination of covetous desires for his liege lord's immensely wealthy, politically and strategically significant, beautiful and sexy wife. He glories (personally and politically) in winning her from Louis but paves the way for recurring, cross-generational bellicose feuding. Once married, his constant womanising and increasing disregard for Eleanor as a woman, and disrespect for her as a sovereign duchess, undermines their relationship and his ability to manage the political and military intrigues of their sons, chipping away at the "Imperial" stretch of his Lordship. The sexualised aspect of this is emphasised through juxtaposition with the depiction of Eleanor. As Evans notes, this "carefully ... [balances traditional historiographical] accusations against her to add colour ... [with] scepticism about their veracity ... [they are] alluded to without being confirmed or explicitly denied."⁴¹ She is not innocent, indeed she is in many ways sexually empowered, open about her own desires and mostly realistic about Henry's. She *willingly* leaves Louis for Henry, even explicitly referencing sexual boredom with her "monk-like" ex-husband. Her judgment temporarily blinded by desire for Henry, her cultivation of troubadour culture promoting courtly love and "rule by women" reasserts her personal, sexual, and political autonomy and liberty against Henry's uncivilised, barbaric sexual behaviour. Her son John later accurately cites the time of his own conception, when Eleanor discovered Henry's Rosamund Clifford affair, as the moment when Angevin family, and consequently Empire, began disintegrating. This is underlined for viewers who witnessed this violent moment in which Henry invoked the Devil to subdue, rape, and impregnate his wife. This catalyses Eleanor ending her sexual and political partnership with Henry and also her long-term antipathy to John. Significantly, Henry never acknowledges this abuse of his wife, nor appreciates it as the causation of the marital and family woes that overspill into military and political strife.

John, shown in youth as sexually corrupted in nature by his diabolical conception and in nurture by his position as his father's favourite and protégé, does at least demonstrate some self-awareness. As royal spare, he unashamedly pursues personal comfort, greedy, womanising, lustful but callous, siring bastards, and neglecting and despising his (never-seen) wife. Once King, however, he remarries, is depicted as an affectionate (and seemingly monogamous) husband, enjoying his wife and fathering a dynasty—embracing notions of domestic and political lordship and husbandry. Ultimately, he is unable to escape his father's despotic legacy. John exerts his feudal position to enter his vassal's home, where, motivated by both political expediency and sexual attraction, he commandeers his hosts' intended child-bride, Isabella of Angoulême (heiress of another vassal). John does gain Isabella's father's consent, and John and

⁴¹ Evans, *Inventing Eleanor*, 119–120.

Isabella are later portrayed as *partners* in bed and in ambition, but this material and carnal seizure of his *droit du seigneur* fundamentally undermines his reign from the start, provoking war, alienating his vassals, and demonstrating his intractable approach to royal authority. He has half-learned from his father's example, contrastingly demonstrating some respect and desire to please his wife *throughout* their marriage. However, Isabella is still considered largely a tool for his personal gratification and dynastic security. Their first post-marriage scene witnesses Isabella crying in bed whilst John explains, "what we do together means I love you." He views his rights to her body as an integral and primordial component of marriage, just as he will later view his royal prerogative over his subjects.

As several scholars note, the family dynamics of the Angevins familiar in popular perception owe much to the 1968 film, *The Lion in Winter*.⁴² Set long before John's accession, his reign and concurrent relationship with his queen a relatively blank-slate.⁴³ It did however, in terms of popular legend, building upon decades of "ambiguous" hinting in Hollywood and historical revisionism of the "Lionheart" hero, definitively "out" his elder brother, Richard, as homosexual.⁴⁴ Historian John Gillingham has suggested that the notion is a useful apparatus of cultural stereotyping for the interpretation of Richard's rule:

Looking upon him as homosexual seems to make it easier to see him as an irresponsible king who enjoyed the pleasures of the present but took no thought for the future—a king who was reluctant to get married and who made no effort to produce an heir to the throne, a king's primary political obligation to which Richard was perversely indifferent.⁴⁵

This chimes with his portrayal in *The Devil's Crown*, which unambiguously demonstrates both his sexual preference for "boys" and disinterest in England beyond its economical plunder for his personal gain. John prizes England as "the Crown," independent from the French King, but Richard never identifies as English and seems indifferent to the establishment of stable dynastic monarchy, abandoning short-lived half-hearted attempts to procreate with his wife, Berengaria. Tormented with thoughts of sin, hell, and afterlife, he does not live *totally* in the moment, but does embrace hedonism when possible. Previously preoccupied with military action (in contrast to Henry and John's gambling and womanising) Richard is distracted from both domestic kingly duties and crusade by his first truly acknowledged sexual infatuation with a serving boy. Disparity of age and status, heightened when he offers his protegee literacy

⁴² Carey Fleiner, "She is my Eleanor": The Character of Isabella of Angoulême on Film – A Medieval Queen in Modern Media," in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex and Power in Popular Culture*, ed. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad, and Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 97–100; R. Burton Palmer, "Queering the Lionheart: Richard I in *The Lion in Winter* on Stage and Screen," in *Queer Movie Medievalisms*, ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Tison Pugh (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 45–60; Evans, *Inventing Eleanor*, 111–112.

⁴³ For more on this, see: Fleiner, "She is my Eleanor," 95–97.

⁴⁴ Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "Now Starring in the Third Crusade: Depictions of Richard I and Saladin in Films and Television Series," in *Hollywood in the Holy Land: Essays on Film Depiction of the Crusades and Christian-Muslim Clashes*, ed. Nicholas Haydock and E.L. Ridsen (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009), 102–103; Palmer, "Queering the Lionheart," 45–60; Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "He's not an ardent suitor, is he, brother?": Richard the Lionheart's Ambiguous Sexuality in Cecil B. De Mille's *The Crusades* (1935)," in *Queer Movie Medievalisms*, ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Tison Pugh (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 61–65; John Gillingham, "Some Legends of Richard the Lionheart: Their Development and their Influence," in *Richard Coeur de Lion in History and Myth*, ed. Janet L. Nelson (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1992), 60–61.

⁴⁵ Gillingham, "Legends of Richard," 61.

tuition, makes Richard's desires rather distasteful. Embracing regal freedom after Henry's death, he lounges on a beach half-dressed, procrastinating crusade whilst gazing hungrily at his still more scantily-dressed serving boy whilst his advisers mourn previous "great hopes" for the new king. Only when jolted out of his reveries by the boy's murder does Richard finally embark for Holy War and, whilst abroad, is repeatedly seen in the intimate company of younger, lower-class men, declaring his love to a local boy in Arabic, or cross-dressing in side-alley orgies.

Coming to ransom him from imprisonment, Eleanor is appalled to find Richard no longer a fit, athletic soldier, but grown fat and apathetic. Finding in reclusive captivity his pinnacle of personal freedom of expression, he is dressed in pink (like "a Venetian Barber"), with "perfumed" breath and no political or dynastic ambition, the inversion of her ideals of Kingship or prodigal son. Characterisation of Richard embraces many familiar stereotypes and symbols of gay culture and identity of increasingly prolific gay-rights activism of the late 1970s, and showcases the personal tragedies of enforced sexual conformity and casual homophobia. Eleanor beats her newly crowned son out of "love" to persuade him into his duty of siring heirs before procuring him a bride. Later, increasingly desperate, she takes him to touch (ironically) the penile-relic of "Attila." Richard "surprises" virginal Berengaria on their wedding night, initially inspiring their nickname of "donkey" for her. This later takes on less-sexual connotations, however, as she becomes for him essentially a combination of superfluous baggage and baby-carriage (though she miscarries). Berengaria is hopelessly in love with him despite his openness that he can never love or truly sexually desire her. There are moments approaching friendship and, though largely indifferent to her, he is not unkind. His later refusal to divorce her is borne out of sympathy combined with personal disinclination towards other women. He sees marriage as merely a public and politically convenient arrangement rather than personal or religious commitment, as evidenced by his casually offering his widowed sister as a bride for Saphadin during peace negotiations. Trapped in a world where he is unable to fully express his identity or pursue his sexual desires unless AWOL on a beach or languishing in prison, Richard's story is one of personal tragedy and dereliction of public duty. Oppression and suppression of his sexuality destroy his physical, mental (and spiritual) health and ultimately overwhelm his sovereign inclination and ability.

Richard is one of the most familiar figures of British royalty on screen and in popular history, so although it is surprising that such overt display of Richard's sexuality in *The Devil's Crown* appears to have inspired little comment from contemporary press or public, this does perhaps reflect a developing wariness around public homophobia but also familiarity with him as gay, and general acceptance of the idea that this was a defining feature of his (poor) sovereignty in England.⁴⁶ Contrastingly, it has been argued that Stuart "Queen Anne has no fixed image in our national consciousness," that even as regnant rather than consort, "none of the glitter that surrounds Elizabeth [I or] Victoria ... seems to have rubbed off on" her.⁴⁷ This

⁴⁶ Andrew Higson, "From Political Power to the Power of the Image: Contemporary 'British' Cinema and the Nation's Monarchs," in *The British Monarchy on Screen*, ed. Mandy Merck (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 342–343; Ronald Hutton, "Why Don't the Stuarts Get Filmed?," in *Tudors and Stuarts on Film: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 246; Stock, "He's not an ardent suitor," 61.

⁴⁷ Ophelia Field, "Is the Favourite Historically Accurate in its Depiction of Queen Anne's Lesbianism?," *New Statesman*, 2 January 2019, <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/film/2019/01/favourite-historically-accurate->

is changing following the release of *The Favourite* (2018), a cinematic depiction of Anne's lesbianism, rumoured since her own lifetime, but with previously little popular currency or reflection upon her queenship.⁴⁸ As many of the rumours of Anne's sexuality, and also historical sources upon her court and personality, involve, or originally emanated from, Sarah Churchill, *First Churchills*'s co-protagonist, it is inevitable that the series devotes considerable time and drama to their relationship.⁴⁹ *The Favourite* is laden with sex scenes and entirely focussed upon relations, sexual and otherwise, between Anne, Sarah, and Abigail Masham. Male characters and political events essentially serve as ephemeral scenery, reflecting a time when female same-sex desires are not only increasingly acknowledged and accepted but where wider-representation and cultural-visibility is being actively pursued in anglophone screen culture. The 1969 series is heavily focused upon national and international political and military events and contains no hint of lesbian sex or explicit desire. Actress Susan Hampshire has specifically stated her belief that although Sarah had a very active sex-life with her husband, she did not have a "physical" relationship with Anne. But Hampshire did not read the women's relationship as passionless, believing them to have an intellectual and emotional connection, which turned into extreme (and "hormonal") "hurt" on both sides when their relationship deteriorated, and which she worked diligently, *and in tandem*, both on- and off-screen with Margaret Tyzack to convey.⁵⁰ Their friendship's intensity is well-relayed throughout, as is their deep, mutual, "egalitarian" investment in it, deftly depicted through familiar gesture and easy rapport between themselves (privately nicknamed "Mrs Morley" and "Mrs Freeman") and their husbands. They are a convivial and mutually-affectionate foursome; Sarah is easy and informal with George, who in turn is actively and genially interested in advancing the Churchills, *as part of* supporting his wife. Anne is openly affectionate to Marlborough, indicating personal intimacy (via Sarah's mediation) through the moniker, "Mr Freeman." When Tyzack's Anne finally breaks with Sarah, she is clearly deeply moved and internally heartbroken in spite of her resolute public coldness. Sarah too, though seemingly the less (emotionally) invested of the pair, is personally distraught as well as politically and materially disadvantaged. The single (indirect) verbal reference to a potential sexual relationship between the two comes in Sarah's denial of culpability in spreading such rumours about Abigail's influence over Anne. Historians have pointed out that these rumours, spread by the historical Sarah, if true, obviously inferred much about her own prior relationship with the Queen.⁵¹ In the series, the manners of both, with the obvious implications of intimate betrayal which both Anne and Sarah recognise in the idea of Sarah as the source of this gossip, do hint at the previously intimate passion of their relationship.

[its-depiction-queen-anne-s-lesbianism](#); and Hutton, "Why Don't the Stuarts Get Filmed?," 250. For more on Anne's lack of popular legacy, see: Robert O. Bucholz, "Queen Anne: Victim of her Virtues?," in *Queenship in Britain, 1660–1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 94–95.

⁴⁸ Field, "Is *The Favourite* Historically Accurate?"; Hannah Greig, "*The Favourite*: The Real History Behind the New Queen Anne Film," *History Extra*, 23 January 2019, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/stuart/real-history-the-favourite-film-queen-anne-olivia-colman-hannah-greig/>

⁴⁹ Bucholz, "Queen Anne," 103–107, 113–114; Rachel Judith Weil, *Political Passions: Gender, the Family and Political Argument in England, 1680-1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 204–222.

⁵⁰ Interview with Susan Hampshire, *The First Churchills*, Television Series. UK: Acorn Media, 2005.

⁵¹ Weil, *Political Passions*, 209–212.

Though not wholly flattering, *First Churchills* is naturally sympathetically and dramatically invested in the eponymous couple. This inevitably impacts upon Anne's portrayal. An image as politically disengaged, personally insipid, weak and easily manipulated, accords with the then-dominant view of her reign.⁵² However, Tyzack, praised for maintaining "human" credibility in an action-stuffed but "over-simplified" focus upon complex historical events, is dramatically and emotionally engaging, tender hearted and passionate, but also principled and pragmatic.⁵³ Abigail is unflatteringly scheming, opportunistic and vitriolic, and Anne's political and intellectual credibility are certainly undermined by her apparently naïve susceptibility to the (clearly calculated) kind words and tender bodily ministrations on offer in sharp contrast to Sarah's almost-signature "shrewish" "scolding" honesty. But ultimately, Anne does defensively tilt her political malleability to retain long-term sovereign autonomy and impact and to promote deeply held personal beliefs, especially in regard to Anglican integrity. This she does in spite of the triumvirate onslaught of both Marlboroughs and Godolphin and at great personal sacrifice of her relationship with Sarah. Anne seeks comfort elsewhere, but Abigail's mental and political ascendancy never reaches her predecessor's heights. The intimate physicality of her relationship with the Queen is centred around caring for a sickening and aging woman, in comparison to the warm and loving embraces and passionate attachment of Anne's youth and emotional (and sexual) maturing supported by Sarah as she navigated the political waves of Glorious Revolution and establishment of constitutional monarchy.

The earlier production, the innate "invisibility" of lesbianism, and the lower profile of both Anne, and the period, in collective imagination compared to Richard undoubtedly account for the different approaches to homosexuality in portraying these rulers in *First Churchills* and *The Devil's Crown* respectively. However, other important differences between Anne and Richard in relation to how monarchy might be popularly conceptualised and represented exist. Though she died childless, Anne's harmonious marriage and succession of seventeen pregnancies protect her from accusations of neglecting her "obligation" to provide an heir. Her concern for her kingdom is further demonstrated by her commitment to the national Protestant succession in spite of personal losses. Additionally, understandings of the difference between the personal despotic prerogatives and powers of Medieval sovereignty and, the limited, and accountable nature of constitutional monarchy limits the potential political and national damage of the monarch's personal sexuality.

Set, Setting, and the Business of Monarchy

Citing *First Churchills*'s success as "gripping and popular" drama, Ronald Hutton explains the Stuart period's lack of blockbuster profile as inherently, "that it takes a series to cope" with its political and historical "complexities."⁵⁴ The particular perspective on monarchy conveyed through television serial format versus feature film is significant. Longer running time provides opportunity for more detailed development, of both characters and events, something particularly oft-observed in comparing *Six Wives* to the (less successful) film it

⁵² Greig, "The Favourite," Bucholz, "Queen Anne," 109, 113.

⁵³ John Lawrence, "Don't Resemble Human Beings," *The Stage and Television Today*, 30 October 1969, 12.

⁵⁴ Hutton, "Why Don't the Stuarts Get Filmed?," 249.

inspired *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (1972), also starring Michell.⁵⁵ The comparison is useful as there were also production crew crossovers, including costume designer, Bloomfield. Historical material was approached markedly differently. The flipped title demonstrates the wives' (recast to emphasise Charlotte Rampling's avant-garde sexiness, Jane Asher's wholesome attractions, and Lynne Frederick's teenaged beauty) demotion from central protagonists, to walk-on "types," whilst drama focussed upon "of its time" wider socio-political concerns.⁵⁶ One contemporary praised the film's approach and "visually" appropriate casting, as "[well] attuned to the movie medium as opposed to the blank walls and drapes of the small-screen series."⁵⁷ But it lacked the compelling level of "intimacy" of *Six Wives*, a quality specifically related to the television serial format, common to all the dramas discussed here, and integral to both their dramatic appeal and interpretation of history.⁵⁸

This "intimacy" arose out of sustained, weekly character development, and the informality of a "private lives of public figures" concept blending personal names, emotions and sex-lives with political events, historical record with contemporary television's dramatic conventions and cultures. Casting contextuality (such as age or professional profile) layered characterisation. *First Churchills* was created by a contingent of *Foryte's* production team and, onscreen, it's popular stars, Tyzack and "Susan 'Fleur' Hampshire."⁵⁹ Daphne Slater, former heroine of late-1950s television period drama, was cast as *Elizabeth R's* time-ravaged, unloved Mary opposite rising star, Jackson, whose concurrent Oscar success boosted her performance's dramatic gravitas. Susannah York brought star-quality gravitas and maturity to Mrs Fitzherbert ("her first T[elevision] role ... [in] five years") opposite Peter Egan's "more airs and graces" as *Prince Regent*, judged as natural follow-on from his "limp-wristed ... brilliant Oscar Wilde" in *Lillie*.⁶⁰ Imported *Six Wives* cast in *Elizabeth R's* first episode enhanced familiarity,⁶¹ as did the reassuring presence of increasingly genre-established talent, such as Annette Crosbie, Robert Hardy, and Jane Lapotaire, in different roles across the case studies.

Basic sets furthered cosy rapport between historical characters and modern viewers. Though often motivated by budgetary restraints, interior scene-setting in private chambers conveyed royal domesticity and human accessibility, and effectively projected monarchy as an institution of ever-intertwined public affairs, and individual mortality. There were no graphically explicit sex scenes, but frequent situation of political debate and decision-making within bedrooms and the sexualised implications of beds as props and scenery kept the politics of royal sexuality in the dramatic foreground. Nudity is rare but the sense of insightful access to an alluring and engaging "secret history" is heightened by undone, under-, or night-

⁵⁵ Bordo, *Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 197; Parrill and Robison, *Tudors on Film and Television*, 101; James Chapman, *Past and Present: National Identity and the British Historical Film* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2005), 259–260.

⁵⁶ Chapman, *Past and Present*, 268; Parrill and Robison, *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, 101; Michael Billington, "Films," *The Birmingham Post*, 15 July 1972, 111.

⁵⁷ Peter McGarry, "Final Curtain for Henry?," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 22 August 1972, 3.

⁵⁸ Bordo, *Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 199.

⁵⁹ Fay Morrell, "Television Notes," *The Birmingham Post*, 29 September 1969, 5.

⁶⁰ Roy West, "Peter has to put on the pounds," *Weekend Echo*, 2-3 June 1979, 6; William Marshall, "Peter, Top of the Fops," *The Daily Mirror*, 18 September 1979, 3.

⁶¹ Robert Lacey, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king," *Radio Times*, 11 February 1971, 49.

garments.⁶² Most action in *Six Wives* is set within private royal apartments. As years of happy marriage with Catherine of Aragon pass in a sequence of moments and montages, the couple's marriage-bed is the literal space in, and around, which they sexually and politically mature together. Contemporary politics and ideals of Renaissance monarchy are discussed, and regal revels and sports planned, all whilst enjoying each other's companionship and (clothed)bodies in bed. In between these snapshots they dance happily around their bedchamber in their nightclothes. An active sex-life is implied, but actually consummated off-screen. Use of bedchamber settings in later episodes emphasised marital power dynamics and individual sexuality. Henry chases a night-dressed Anna around her bed as she repeatedly physically ducks consummation of their marriage, and Catherine Howard spends almost every scene in a bedchamber and, it has been noted, "appropriately...in nightclothes."⁶³ Sexual, romantic, diplomatic, and governmental business are all conducted in the same private chambers.

The female sovereignty of both Anne in *First Churchills*, and Elizabeth in *Elizabeth R*, is also explored through domestic setting and timely work-life balance comment. Anne conducts politics in both council- and bed-chambers, which appear to straddle connecting doors through which a favourite (male politician or female household) may escort or guide the queen, whilst serious politicians complain of inappropriate "petticoat-rule." Elizabeth also conducts much business in her private bedchamber, sometimes in a state of undress. Here she gossips with her ladies, and flirts with advisers and ambassadors. On the bed, in her nightgown, she also undergoes a public, political and painful gynaecological examination, a scene that disturbingly echoes the Thomas Seymour flashbacks, and emphasises the personal risks and vulnerabilities of sexualising political royal bodies. But Elizabeth's own fluid movements, and provision of relatively indiscriminate access for her courtiers, between interconnected state, council, and private and bedchamber demonstrate her openness to all her "people," and her total inhabitation of the institution of monarchy. Her regnal competence is emphasised by her regular presence at a boardroom-style council table, or diligence at a writing desk, again in contrast to her sister who predominantly appears in bed and bedclothes following her political neutering through marriage. Following her humiliating examination in aid of the Alençon negotiations, Elizabeth regains the political and sexual initiative, visiting (fully-clothed) an undressed "Francis" in his (guest) bedchamber and feeding him in bed.

Different levels of set-dressing contribute to individual dramas' political periodisation, attuned to historicism of domestic interiors. Andrew Higson has argued that the content of films dramatizing British monarchy divide into three distinct periods, moving from "heavily mythologised ... warrior [medieval] kings," through renaissance "elaborate," then post-civil war challenged "absolutism," towards increasingly modern, "ordinary" and identifiable constitutional royals.⁶⁴ The same seems true of 1970s television. To express *The Devil's Crown's* vast geographical and ambitious historical scope within budget, sets are, Evans notes, "highly stylized ... [towards popular] medievalism," theatrical fantasy rather than "naturalism."⁶⁵ This is effective in conveying both complex historical events and human drama. Almost barbaric royal

⁶² Anna Whitelock, *Elizabeth's Bedfellows: An Intimate History of the Queen's Court* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 353–357.

⁶³ Parrill and Robison, *The Tudors on Film and Television*, 233.

⁶⁴ Higson, "From Political Power," 342–343, 357.

⁶⁵ Evans, *Inventing Eleanor*, 118–119.

sexuality is conveyed through the solid and clothed recognisable furniture within exotic, nomadic semi-external settings without bedrooms. Henry and Eleanor's marital bed travels between their disparate lands and is vulnerable to visual and military intrusion. John and Isabella's bed is well used, in keeping with their "chronicle[d]... vigorous sex life and extravagant living," and, throughout John's reign, imbued with a modern marital-domestic ambience, Isabella acting as sounding-board for his executive stress, a handy conduit for relaying/explaining historical detail. However, again, whilst the bed and its usage are intimately familiar, it is set within and against moving backdrop of imposing sombre grey-stone castles and internally-externally fluid, stylized ramparts. The central *mise-en-scène* of *Shadow of the Tower* is obviously epitomised in the eponymous fortress's daunting "medieval" cold stone chambers and sinister history, clearly embracing an interpretation of the fifteenth century as more culturally rudimentary than the increasingly familiar/"civilised" interior layouts and designs of the wood-panelled rooms of the late-Tudors and Stuart settings and the increasingly cluttered ornamental furnishings heading through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards the interwar technology and Art-Deco glamour of *Edward and Mrs Simpson*. As domestic ambience intensifies, so too do connotations of proper delineation between royal private and public roles, as executive power diffuses from personal royal whim to constitutional monarchy. The shapeless relative informality of the medieval costume and the loose, comfortable, and prominent nightwear of both medieval and early modern settings compare to the corsets and aids to the Prince Regent's elaborate toilet, and the starchy formality of dress expected in public life (even in a private chamber) in the Victorian/Edwardian era, which David's modernising urge later rebels against. The later constitutional monarchs increasingly receive visitors in other rooms, with George IV, Victoria, and Edward VII all conducting public audiences in sitting rooms and dining rooms rather than their bedrooms. The informality of David's Fort Belvedere residence, by contrast, becomes a study in irresponsibility. Governmental red boxes are left open around the private areas of the residence where party guests come and go, secretaries complaining about their return replete with watermarks from cocktail glasses, and David's lackadaisical dealings with the affairs of state from his private space becomes a byword for his dereliction of the duty of monarchy.

Though tame by modern standards, there were contemporary comparisons of this intimate style of "history" to salacious "soap opera" formats.⁶⁶ This was especially controversial when *Edward and Mrs Simpson* was broadcast to the much-noted distress of the still-living Duchess of Windsor.⁶⁷ Many noted however that the private life of a monarch (even living or in living memory) was of public import and historical significance. "In Britain even kings have rules that they must abide" was the strident response of director Waris Hussain, who sought to expose the monarch's dereliction of duty and simultaneously defend the position of his elected minister Stanley Baldwin.⁶⁸ Promotion of meritocratic government by talented and/or elected officials adds a distinctly contemporary feel to the historicization of monarchy in these dramas. Anne's monarchy in *First Churchills* is portrayed relatively sympathetically, but is rendered rather archaic by its malleability to personal feelings and

⁶⁶ See, for example: Michael Leapman, "Henry VIII a bit too bold for US Puritans," *The Times*, 12 August 1971, 5; and Ken Burgess, "Courtly Capers in a Swirl," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 3 June 1974, 3.

⁶⁷ Tom Newey, "Putting Picture Right," *The Birmingham Post*, 27 November 1978, 1.

⁶⁸ Moya Jones, "Edward and Mrs Simpson," *Liverpool Echo*, 25 October 1978, 8.

especially her eventual dismissal of the protagonists whose talents are still more obvious to a post-Second World War audience viewing them as part of Sir Winston's "remarkable" ancestral dynasty.⁶⁹ The late Prime Minister's afterlife as part of this promotion was still more pronounced in *Jennie*, made to commemorate his birth's centenary. His parents' clash with Edward VII (then Prince of Wales) is presented as honourable opposition to royal hypocrisy and moral degeneration, an incident revisited in *Edward the Seventh* as one of the rare more unsavoury reflections on Bertie's character in the latter.

A near ancestor of Elizabeth II, Bertie's womanising was a significant flaw to overcome in "humanising" the monarchy. Whilst good drama, his *droit du seigneur* in leering after pretty young women in *Jennie*, allowing his friends and servants to pick, acquire, and manage sexual companions for him in *Lillie*, and particularly the fictional *Duchess of Duke Street*, and his allowing pretty women to draw him into overstepping the boundaries of royal prerogative in a constitutional setting undermines monarchical appeal in all of these dramas. Yet apart from his relationship with "Daisy" in *The Edwardians*, rendered harmlessly farcical by the episode's music-hall tone, none of these sexual encounters are explicitly depicted on screen. Through this behaviour as youthful rebellion against his conservative parents and frustratingly ill-defined role as heir to the throne, this private (largely off-screen) life allows Bertie to develop, for the most part a harmonious and healthy partnership with Alix to the credit of his political persona. Bertie and the monarchy are further sanitised by his inherently worthy Britishness. In *Lillie*, whilst foreigners Prince Rudolf and King Leopold are rapacious, Bertie is gentlemanly in seduction whilst his younger brother "Leo" remains a polite, charming, but hands-off admirer. In both *The Edwardians* and *Fall of Eagles* Bertie's sex-life is derided but he nevertheless proves a respectable and capable politician on both national and international levels. He appears more mature, both sexually and intellectually, than his impulsive and unpersonable nephews "Willy" and "Nicky." Bertie's dramatic affability repeatedly acts in favourable comparison to the totalitarian overtones of his German and Russian relatives, something McArthur highlights in his analysis of *Edward the Seventh* citing Bertie's Russian in-laws' consequent fear of their own subjects.⁷⁰ In both this and *Fall of Eagles* this difference is highlighted in Vicky's experience at the Prussian Court. In *Fall of Eagles*, Vicky's wedding night is soundtracked by the tramp of boots on the parade ground outside emphasising the alien militarism of her new home as, downstairs, the Kaiser and his drunken brothers joke about how Fritz will have to "teach her a thing or two...in the bedroom," before cutting almost immediately to the traumatic birth of "Willy," reinforcing the otherness of autocratic Prussian monarchy.

This article has provided a synthesised exposition of the content and reception of many hours of live-action television from 1970s dramas covering a chronologically broad variety of history. In moving away from factual authenticity versus artistic licence and entertainment debates, a "public history" analysis has been attempted that filters out not factual inaccuracies but broader, culturally ingrained *ideas* of the past. Demonstrating that foregrounding sex and sexuality in historical television (and corresponding controversy) was as much a feature of the "good history" '70s dramas as more modern offerings, it has argued that

⁶⁹ Anne Chisolm, "The Churchills: fighters, lovers, and a campaign for church reform," *Radio Times*, 25 September 1969, 2.

⁷⁰ McArthur, *Television and History*, 121–123.

sex and sexuality act as essential tools of communication and interpretation, between past and present, between producers, actors and audiences, between the contemporary production-period and the present-day scholar. Their private lives of public figures approach was also consciously associated (in both presentation and reception) with the contemporary institution, *Edward the Seventh*, for example, was rescreened, with an accompanying special souvenir programme, for the Silver Jubilee, whilst one critic specifically speculated on lessons such shows could provide for then bachelor-playboy Prince Charles.⁷¹ Previous scholarship has focussed on the representations of particular royal individuals, families, or periods. The comparative approach here has highlighted common, distinct, and relative themes of royalty and monarchical government, illuminating cultural assumptions and understandings and interpretations of the nature of monarchy, particularly as it has evolved in Britain. In an era of volatile respect for the monarchy, but also one of jubilee and of increasing public accessibility, the dramas all utilised royal sexuality to emphasise the modern, pro-democratic, accessibility, and accountability of the British monarchy as an integral national institution.

⁷¹ Soames, "Predators," 3.

Appendix: Glossary of Referenced Historical Characters

Abigail Masham: c.1670-1734, an impoverished cousin of Sarah Churchill who used her influence to gain a place at the court of Queen Anne, with whom she became a great favourite, and chief confidante, ultimately replacing Churchill. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**Jill Balcon**), *The Favourite* (**Emma Stone**).

Albert, Prince Consort, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha: 1819-1861, husband and consort of Queen Victoria whom he married in 1840. Father of her nine children, including "Bertie" who became King Edward VII. Featured in: *Fall of Eagles* (**Frank Thornton**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Robert Hardy**).

Alençon (Duke of) / "Francis": 1555-1584, youngest son of Henri II of France and Catherine de' Medici, younger brother of Francis II, Charles IX, and Henri III. In the late 1570s and early 1580s he was a suitor of Elizabeth I of England. Featured in: *Elizabeth R* (**Michael Williams**).

"Alix"/Alexandra of Denmark: 1844-1925, eldest daughter of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg who became King Christian IX of Denmark in 1863. Married "Bertie," Prince of Wales, in 1863 and became his Queen Consort when he succeeded as King Edward VII in 1901. Featured in: *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (**Joanna David**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Deborah Grant, Helen Ryan**), *Lillie* (**Ann Firbank**).

"Anna"/Anne of Cleves: 1515-1557, the sister of William, Duke of Cleves, both Anne and her sister, Amalia were considered as potential brides for the recently widowed Henry VIII. Reports of Anne and her striking portrait by Holbein led to her selection and in January 1540 she became Queen of England as Henry's fourth wife. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Elvi Hale**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Jenny Bos**).

Anne: 1665-1714, born the daughter of James, Duke of York (later King James II) and his first wife, Anne Hyde. In 1683 she married Prince George of Denmark (at which point she became known as "The Princess of Denmark" until her accession). She supported the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 that deposed her father in favour of her elder sister, Mary and brother-in-law William of Orange, and Anne herself became heir to the throne. Following the death of William III in 1702, Anne became Queen, reigning until her death in 1714 as the last Stuart monarch. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**Lesley Roach, Margaret Tyzack**), *The Favourite* (**Olivia Colman**).

Anne Boleyn: c.1500-1536, born the daughter of Thomas Boleyn and Elizabeth Howard. She became Queen of England as Henry VIII's second wife in 1533. Mother of Elizabeth I of England. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Dorothy Tutin**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Charlotte Rampling**).

Arthur, Prince of Wales: 1486-1502, the eldest son and heir of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. In 1501, he married the Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon. Arthur died less than six

months later aged fifteen, after which Catherine claimed that the marriage had never been consummated. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Martin Ratcliffe**), *The Shadow of the Tower* (**Jason Kemp**)

Berengaria of Navarre: c.1165-1230, daughter of King Sancho VI of Navarre. King Richard I and his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine were keen to make an alliance with Sancho to help secure their interests in the south of France. Richard and Berengaria were married in Cyprus in 1191. The union was childless. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Zoë Wanamaker**).

"Bertie"/Edward VII: 1841-1910, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII (r. 1901-1910), known in the family as "Bertie". Eldest son and heir of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. In 1863 he married Alexandra of Denmark by whom he had six children. He also had multiple mistresses throughout his adult life. He finally became king upon the death of his mother in 1901. Featured in: *Upstairs, Downstairs* (**Lockwood West**), *The Edwardians* (**Thorley Walters**), *Fall of Eagles* (**Derek Francis**), *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (**Thorley Walters**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Simon Gipps-Kent, Charles Sturridge, Timothy West**), *The Duchess of Duke Street* (**Roger Hammond**), *Lillie* (**Denis Lill**).

Caroline of Brunswick: 1768-1821, daughter of Duke Karl II of Brunswick and Princess Augusta, a the sister of the British King George III. Her uncle selected her from the very small pool of suitable German protestant princesses available to be the bride of his son and heir, also called George (at that time Prince of Wales, later Prince Regent, and finally George IV). They were married in 1795 but separated the following year after the birth of their daughter, Charlotte, leading to years of public acrimony and scandal between them. Featured in: *Prince Regent* (**Dinah Stabb**).

Catherine Howard: c.1523-1542, daughter of Lord Edmund Howard, brought to the court of Henry VIII in attendance upon his then wife, Anne of Cleves. After the Cleves divorce, Catherine became the King's fifth wife in July 1540. In 1541, Catherine was arrested for adultery with Thomas Culpeper (facilitated by Lady Rochford). Her sexual history prior to her marriage was also investigated. Her marriage was annulled and she was executed in February 1541. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Angela Pleasence**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Lynne Frederick**).

Catherine of Aragon: 1485-1536, youngest daughter of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile. Aunt of Emperor Charles V. In 1501 she married Arthur, Prince of Wales. Following Arthur's death in 1502, a papal dispensation was obtained to enable her to marry Arthur's younger brother Henry VIII; they married in 1509, and she became his queen. Mother of Mary I of England. Divorced in 1533, she was officially re-designated "Princess Dowager," a title she refused to accept, always styling herself as Queen and attesting to be Henry's wife right up until her death in January 1536. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Annette Crosbie**), *The Shadow of the Tower* (**Adrienne Byrne**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Frances Cuka**).

Catherine Parr: 1512-1548. Already twice-widowed, Catherine Parr became the sixth and final

wife of Henry VIII in July 1543. Henry's death in January 1547 widowed her for the third time. A few months later she married Thomas Seymour. She also obtained the guardianship of her step-daughter, Elizabeth, who came to live with her and her new husband. She died in childbirth in September 1548. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Rosalie Crutchley**), *Elizabeth R* (**Rosalie Crutchley**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Barbara Leigh-Hunt**).

Charles II: 1630-1685. Eldest surviving son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France (daughter of King Henri IV). Recognised by royalists as king from the execution of his father in 1649 at the end of the civil wars, but lived as a post-war fugitive in England, and in exile on the continent until the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Married Catherine of Braganza in 1662 but had no legitimate children and so his heir was his younger brother James, Duke of York. He did however have many mistresses and illegitimate children. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**James Villiers**).

Thomas Cranmer: 1489-1556, a (secretly married) clerical reformer created Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry VIII. He was the first ecclesiastical head of the new Church of England, and he annulled the King's marriage to Catherine of Aragon (and then subsequent wives also) and crowned Anne Boleyn (in whose family he had been previously patronised). Burned for heresy by Mary I in 1556. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Bernard Hepton**), *Elizabeth R* (**Bernard Hepton**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Bernard Hepton**).

Thomas Cromwell: c.1485-1540. Protégé and then successor of Wolsey as chief minister of Henry VIII. Oversaw the dissolution of the monasteries. Fell from royal favour after arranging the disastrous Cleves marriage and was executed in 1540. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Wolfe Morris**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Donald Pleasence**).

"Daisy" Brooke/Warwick: 1861-1938, born Frances "Daisy" Maynard. In 1881 she married Francis Greville, Lord Brooke (later 5th Earl of Warwick). Her multiple lovers included the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Featured in: *The Edwardians* (**Virginia McKenna**), *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (**Penelope Lee**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Carolyn Seymour**), *Lillie* (**Joanna Lloyd**).

"David"/Edward VIII: 1894-1972, born Prince Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, the eldest son of the Duke and Duchess of York (who later became King George V and Queen Mary), always known in the family as "David." He had several liaisons with various married women during his bachelorhood. He became King Edward VIII upon the death of his father in January 1936 but abdicated in favour of his younger brother in December 1936 so that he could marry Wallis Simpson. His brother (now George VI) created him Duke of Windsor. He married Wallis in a private ceremony in France in June 1937 and the couple lived abroad for the remainder of their lives. Featured in: *Edward the Seventh* (**Roy Jacobs**), *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Edward Fox**).

"Eddy": 1864-1892, Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, known in the family as "Eddy," eldest son of Edward VII and Alexandra of Denmark. In December 1891 he was engaged to Princess "May" of Teck but died weeks later from pneumonia in January 1892. Featured in:

Edward the Seventh (**Samuel West, Charles Dance**).

Edward VI: 1537-1553, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour. Became King at the age of 9 when his father died in January 1547. He died in June 1553, aged 15. Featured in: *Elizabeth R* (**Jason Kemp**).

Eleanor of Aquitaine: c.1122-1204, great heiress and Duchess of Aquitaine in her own right. In July 1137 she married Louis VII of France. The couple were divorced on the grounds of consanguinity in 1152. Within months, Eleanor remarried the young Henry, Count of Anjou, who assumed political control of her lands, and later himself inherited the crown of England as King Henry II. The couple had eight children including later kings Richard I and John. This marriage also deteriorated. The couple became estranged and Eleanor plotted and rebelled with her sons against their father who had her imprisoned. She was released by her son Richard following Henry's death and played an active role in his reign. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Jane Lapotaire**), *The Lion in Winter* (**Katharine Hepburn**).

Elizabeth I: 1533-1603, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Queen of England (1558-1603). She never married and became known as "the Virgin Queen." Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Jody Schaller**), *Elizabeth R* (**Glenda Jackson**).

Elizabeth of York: 1466-1503, eldest child of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. Her marriage with the new king, Henry VII in January 1486, dynastically united the York and Lancaster lines, symbolically ending the Wars of the Roses. Elizabeth died in childbirth in the Tower of London in February 1503. Featured in: *The Shadow of the Tower* (**Norma West**).

Freda Dudley Ward: 1894-1983, born Winifred May Birkin, married MP William Dudley Ward in 1913. Long-term favourite and mistress of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) throughout the 1920s even alongside other mistresses, but he cut ties with her after he fell in love with Wallis Simpson. Featured in: *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Kika Markham**).

"Fritz": 1831-1888, Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia (and later, after unification, of the German Empire), ascended as Emperor Frederick III in March 1888, but was already suffering from terminal cancer and died later that year after a reign of just 99 days. He married, in 1858, Victoria ("Vicky"), Princess Royal of Great Britain. The marriage was a personal success, but his perceived pro-English and liberal reformist views alienated him from his father, the Emperor, Chancellor Bismarck, and his son, "Willy." Featured in: *Fall of Eagles* (**Dennis Lill**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Michael Byrne**).

George IV: 1762-1830, eldest son of George III and Queen Charlotte. Prince Regent during his father's final mental illness, 1811-1820, before succeeding him as king, reigning from 1820-1830. In 1785 he secretly married a catholic widow, Maria Fitzherbert. Because it contravened the Royal Marriages Act of 1772 the union was legally void. In 1795, in exchange for help with his mounting debts, he agreed to marry his father's choice of bride, Caroline of Brunswick, but the two separated shortly after the birth of their only child, Princess Charlotte in 1796. Their relationship was acrimonious, and the Prince made several attempts to divorce his wife and to

deny her a role in the upbringing of their daughter. As well as his two wives, George had many mistresses ranging from actresses to great court ladies. Featured in: *Prince Regent* (**Peter Egan**).

George of Denmark: 1653-1708, younger son of Frederick III of Denmark, married Anne of York, later Queen Anne of Great Britain, in 1683. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**Roger Mutton**).

"Georgie"/George V: 1865-1936, second son of Edward VII and Alexandra of Denmark. Married Mary of Teck ("May") in 1893 by whom he had six children including kings Edward VIII and George VI. Became King George V in 1910. Featured in: *Edward the Seventh* (**Joseph West, Michael Osborne**), *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Marius Goring**).

Godolphin: 1645-1712, Sidney Godolphin, First Earl of Godolphin. Long-term close personal friend and political ally of John and Sarah Churchill. Entered politics as MP for Helston in the 1660s and occupied various offices in the governments and households of all the later Stuart monarchs, eventually becoming First Lord of the Treasury. When the Marlboroughs fell from favour, Queen Anne ultimately dismissed Godolphin too. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**John Standing**), *The Favourite* (**James Smith**).

Henry II: 1133-1189, son of Matilda of England and Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou. Claimant to the English throne and Duchy of Normandy as grandson of King Henry I and great-grandson of William the Conqueror. King of England (1154-1189). Married Eleanor of Aquitaine (formerly wife of the King of France) in 1152. By Eleanor he had eight children including kings Richard I and John, and with whom he had tempestuous relationships. He also had multiple mistresses and illegitimate children. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Brian Cox**), *The Lion in Winter* (**Peter O'Toole**).

Henry VII: 1457-1509, Henry Tudor, the final Lancastrian claimant for the English throne in the War of the Roses. King of England (1485-1509). He became the first Tudor monarch when he defeated the Yorkist Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. Married Elizabeth of York in January 1486. Henry and Elizabeth had several children including Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Henry VIII ("Harry"). Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (John Woodnutt), *The Shadow of the Tower* (**James Maxwell**).

Henry VIII: 1491-1547, second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Henry became heir to the English throne when his elder brother, Arthur died in 1502. King of England (1509-1542). Married (with a papal dispensation) Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon. His struggle to produce an heir famously led him into seeking a divorce from Catherine, and he later remarried five times. He was survived by three children who all became monarchs of England, Mary I (by Catherine of Aragon), Elizabeth I (by Anne Boleyn), and his immediate successor, Edward VI (by Jane Seymour). Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Keith Michell**), *The Shadow of the Tower* (**Andrew Burleigh**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives*, (**Keith Michell**).

Holbein: c.1497-1543, Hans Holbein the Younger. German painter patronised by Henry VIII of England. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**James Mellor**).

Isabella of Angoulême: c.1186-1246, daughter and heiress of Aymer Taillefer, Count of Angoulême. The second wife of King John of England whom she married shortly after his accession and by whom she had several children including his successor, Henry III of England. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Lynsey Baxter**).

James II/ Duke of York: 1633-1701, second son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France. King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1685-1688). Younger (Catholic) brother and heir of Charles II. Married Anne Hyde in 1660 by whom he had two surviving daughters who became queens Mary II and Anne. Once widowed, he married Mary of Modena in 1671. He became King in 1685, but in 1688 James was deposed and exiled in favour of his protestant daughters and son-in-law/nephew, William of Orange. James never accepted the loss of his throne but lived in exile in France for the rest of his life. Henceforth Catholics (and those married to Catholics) were debarred from the succession. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**John Westbrook**).

Jane Seymour: c.1508-1537, became the third wife and queen of Henry VIII in 1536 but died in 1537 in childbirth. Mother of King Edward VI. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, (**Anne Stallybrass**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives*, (**Jane Asher**).

Jennie Churchill: 1854-1921, American-born wife of Lord Randolph Churchill, and mother of World War II Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill. Amongst the numerous men rumoured to have been one of her lovers was the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Thames Television dramatized her adult life in 1974, to coincide with the centenary of Winston's birth. Featured in: *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (**Lee Remick**).

John: 1166-1216, youngest son of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine. King of England (1199-1216). Married Isabella of Gloucester in 1189 but annulled the marriage after his accession in 1199. Married Isabella of Angoulême in 1200 by whom he had several children including his successor Henry III. Signed the Magna Carta in 1215. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**John Duttine**), *The Lion in Winter* (**Nigel Terry**).

John Churchill: 1650-1722, First Duke of **Marlborough** and ancestor of twentieth-century British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Married Sarah Jennings in the late 1670s. He was a prominent diplomat and renowned military leader. He was also a close friend and ally of Sidney Godolphin. He, and especially his wife, were favourites with Queen Anne both before and during her reign. He ultimately became one of the wealthiest men in the country and the first owner of Blenheim Palace (named after a military victory). He and his wife fell out with the Queen towards the end of her reign, lost their public offices and, in 1712, went into voluntary exile abroad, but returned to England and royal favour following the Hanoverian succession in 1714. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**John Neville**), *The Favourite* (**Mark Gatiss**).

"Leo": 1853-1884, Prince Leopold, eighth child and youngest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Younger brother of Edward VII ("Bertie"). Featured in: *Edward the Seventh*

(Joshua Bassett, Ian Sutch, Anthony Hambleton), *Lillie* (David Dixon).

Leopold/King Leopold: 1790-1865, the youngest son of Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, in 1816 he married Princess Charlotte of Wales and looked set to become consort of Great Britain until he lost Charlotte and their baby in childbirth in 1817. In 1831 he was chosen to be King of Belgium. He was the maternal and paternal uncle of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert respectively. Featured in: *Edward the Seventh* (John Boswall), *Lillie* (Derek Smith), *Prince Regent* (Rupert Frazer).

Lillie Langtry: 1853-1929, born Emilie Le Breton she grew up on Jersey and moved to London following her marriage to Edward Langtry in 1874. A celebrated beauty, she was a mistress of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) in the late 1870s. Featured in: *Edward the Seventh* (Francesca Annis), *Lillie* (Francesca Annis).

Lloyd George: 1863-1945, David Lloyd George, Liberal Party politician who held a series of senior cabinet posts in the governments of Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Herbert Asquith before becoming Prime Minister himself during the First World War. Featured in: *The Edwardians* (Anthony Hopkins), *Edward the Seventh* (Geoffrey Beavers).

Louis VII: 1120-1180, King of France and first husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine who was his first wife. His daughters by his second marriage were brought up in the family of Eleanor and her second husband, Henry II of England as the child brides of their eldest sons. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (Charles Kay).

Mary I: 1516-1558, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Queen of England (1553-1558). Married Philip II of Spain in 1554. Attempted to restore the Catholic Church in England. The marriage was childless and Mary was succeeded by her protestant half-sister, Elizabeth I. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (Verina Greenlaw, Alison Frazer), *Elizabeth R* (Daphne Slater).

Mary II: 1662-1694, eldest daughter of James II (the Duke of York) and Anne Hyde. Niece of Charles II who ensured she was raised Protestant as likely heir to the throne after her father. Became Princess of Orange when she married her first cousin, William, but had no children. In 1688, James II was deposed and exiled, and William and Mary were invited to become co-Monarchs. She died from smallpox in 1694. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (Verina Greenlaw, Lisa Daniely).

Mary of Modena: 1658-1718, daughter of Alfonso IV, Duke of Modena, became the second wife of James, Duke of York, in 1673. Her husband ascended as James II in 1685 but was deposed in 1688 and the couple spent the rest of their lives in exile. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (Sheila Gish).

Mary, Queen of Scots: 1542-1587, great-granddaughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. Queen of Scotland (1542-1567). Married King Francis II of France (1558), Henry, Lord Darnley (1565), James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell (1567). Mother of James VI of Scotland and

I of England. Abdicated 1567 before fleeing to England where she was imprisoned by Elizabeth I for twenty years before her execution in 1587. Featured in: *Elizabeth R* (**Vivian Pickles**).

"May"/ Queen Mary: 1867-1953, daughter of Francis, Duke of Teck, she was first engaged to "Eddy," the eldest son of the Prince of Wales but following his death she married his younger brother George, eventually becoming queen consort when he became George V. She was the mother of kings Edward VIII and George VI. Featured in: *Edward the Seventh* (**Judy Loe**), *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Peggy Ashcroft**), *Lillie* (**Jill Simcox**).

Mrs. Fitzherbert: 1756-1837, born Maria Smythe, she was a widow twice-over when she met the Prince of Wales (later George IV) in the 1780s. The pair were married in secret in 1785, but because they did not have the king's permission and because Maria was Catholic the marriage was legally void. Featured in: *Prince Regent* (**Susannah York**).

"Nicky": 1868-1918, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. Nephew-in-law twice over of Edward VII ("Bertie")—Nicholas's mother was the sister of Queen Alexandra, and his wife was the daughter of Bertie's sister, Alice. Featured in: *Fall of Eagles* (**John Sanderson, Charles Kay**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Dickon Paine, Michael Billington**).

Norfolk: 1473-1554, Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk. Prominent politician during the reign of Henry VIII and uncle of two of his queens, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Featured in: *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**Patrick Troughton**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives*, (**Michael Gough**).

Philip II of Spain: 1527-1598, son and heir of Emperor Charles V. Married as his second wife, Mary I of England in 1554 but the couple were rarely together and the union was childless. Featured in: *Elizabeth R* (**Peter Jeffrey**).

Princess Charlotte: 1796-1817, daughter and only child of the Prince Regent (later George IV) and Caroline of Brunswick. Married Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld in 1816 but died the following year in childbirth. The baby was stillborn. Featured in: *Prince Regent* (**Patsy Kensit, Cherie Lunghi**).

Prince Rudolf: 1858-1889, Crown Prince of Austria, son of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elizabeth. Featured in: *Lillie* (**Patrick Ryecart**).

Randolph ("Randy") Churchill: 1849-1895, Politician and younger son of the 7th Duke of Marlborough. Married American Jennie Jerome in 1874 and the couple had two sons, the eldest of whom was the World War II Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill. Featured in: *Jennie: Lady Randolph Churchill* (**Ronald Pickup**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Derek Fowlds**).

Richard I: 1157-1199, second son of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine. King of England, 1189-1199. Engaged from childhood to Alys, daughter of the King of France but never married her. Married Berengaria of Navarre in 1191 but had no children and so was

succeeded by his youngest brother, John. He had an acrimonious relationship with his father and brothers, but a strong and co-operative one with his mother. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Adrian Clark, Lawrence Clark, Paul Rose, Michael Byrne**), *The Lion in Winter* (**Anthony Hopkins**).

Robert "Robin" Dudley: 1532-1588, fifth son of John Dudley Duke of Northumberland. Married Amy Robsart in 1550. A favourite of Elizabeth I, he was created Earl of **Leicester** in 1564, and remained a bachelor for almost twenty years following Amy's death in 1560, finally marrying Lettice Knollys in the late 1570s. Featured in: *Elizabeth R.* (**Robert Hardy**).

Saphadin: 1145-1218, younger brother of Saladin. A Muslim leader who fought the Western Crusaders. Featured in: *The Devil's Crown* (**Wensley Pithey**).⁷²

Sarah Churchill: 1660-1744. In 1773 Sarah Jennings joined the court of Mary of Modena (then Duchess of York, and within a few years had become close-friend and confidante of Mary's stepdaughter, Princess Anne. Married John Churchill, 1st Duke of **Marlborough**. When Anne became queen on William's death in 1702, the Churchills were high in favour. Sarah's frequent absences from the court to tend to her family and estates, and her often tactless and abrasive manner damaged her relationship with the Queen and eventually found Sarah supplanted by Abigail Masham. She was dismissed from royal favour and office, as were her husband, and her friend and ally Godolphin. The Churchills went into voluntary exile abroad in 1712 but returned home to royal favour following Anne's death in 1714. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**Susan Hampshire**), *The Favourite* (**Rachel Weisz**).

Thelma Furness: 1904-1970, born Thelma Morgan, daughter of an American diplomat. In 1926 she married her second husband, Marmaduke Furness, 1st Viscount Furness. In the early 1930s she was the mistress of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) and introduced him to Wallis Simpson who ultimately replaced and surpassed her in the Prince's affections. Featured in: *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Cherie Lunghi**).

Thomas Seymour: c.1508-1549, brother of Jane Seymour (third wife of Henry VIII), and through her uncle of Edward VI. He was also the fourth husband of Henry's sixth wife (and widow) Catherine Parr. Featured in *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (**John Ronane**), *Elizabeth R.* (**John Ronane**), *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (**Peter Clay**).

"Vicky": 1840-1901, Victoria, Princess Royal, eldest child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Married "Fritz," Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia in 1858 and became Empress of Germany in 1888. Mother of Kaiser Wilhelm II ("Willy"). Featured in: *Fall of Eagles* (**Gemma Jones**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Felicity Kendal**).

⁷² For discussion of the idea of marrying Richard I's sister, Joanna, to Saphadin in historical chronicles see: Gabrielle Storey, "Berengaria of Navarre and Joanna of Sicily as Crusading Queens: Manipulation, Reputation and Agency," in *Forgotten Queens in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Political Agency, Myth-Making and Patronage*, ed. Valerie Schutte and Estelle Paranque (London: Routledge, 2018),

Victoria: 1819-1901, Queen of Great Britain 1837-1901. Granddaughter of George III, she inherited the throne following the deaths of her two childless paternal uncles, George IV and William IV. She married her maternal first cousin, Albert, in 1840 and the couple had nine children including "Bertie" (the future King Edward VII) and "Vicky," Empress of Germany. Following Albert's death from typhoid in 1861 she mourned him passionately for the rest of her life and significantly reduced her public role and appearances. Featured in: *The Edwardians* (**Mollie Maureen**), *Fall of Eagles* (**Perlita Neilson, Mavis Edwards**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Annette Crosbie**), *Lillie* (**Sheila Reid**).

Wallis Simpson (Mrs Simpson): 1896-1986, born Bessie Wallis Warfield and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. She married Earl Winfield Spencer Junior in 1916 but divorced in 1927. When her friendship began with Edward VIII (then the Prince of Wales) in 1931 she was married, living with, and often accompanied by, her second husband, Ernest Simpson. Following Edward's accession in January 1936, the Simpsons began divorce proceedings. Edward wished to marry her but faced opposition as head of the Church of England over marriage to a divorced woman with two living ex-husbands. He abdicated in favour of his brother in December 1936 so that he could marry her the following year. The couple lived abroad for the rest of their lives. Featured in: *Edward and Mrs Simpson* (**Cynthia Harris**).

William of Orange/ William III: 1650-1702, son of William II Prince of Orange and Mary, Princess Royal of England. Dutch, Protestant nephew of Charles II and James II. Married James's eldest daughter and heir, Mary in 1677. The marriage produced no children. After the "Glorious Revolution" he reigned as co-Monarch with his wife until her death from smallpox in 1694. He remained a widow, reigning alone until his own death in 1702. He was succeeded by his sister-in-law/cousin, Anne. Featured in: *The First Churchills* (**Alan Rowe**).

"Willy": 1859-1941, born eldest son of Crown Prince and Princess Frederick of Prussia ("Vicky" and "Fritz"), his maternal grandmother was Queen Victoria and he was nephew of Edward VII. He became Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Featured in: *Fall of Eagles* (**Adam Cunliffe, Barry Foster**), *Edward the Seventh* (**Nicholas Lane, Christopher Neame**).