



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

**MEDIEVALIST EPICS BY AN ENGLISH WOMAN POET:
MARGARET HOLFORD'S *WALLACE, OR, THE FIGHT OF
FALKIRK AND MARGARET OF ANJOU: A POEM***

Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2019

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KABUL VE ONAY

Okaycan Dürükoğlu tarafından hazırlanan "Medievalist Epics by an English Woman Poet: Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk and Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 17.05.2019 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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- o Tezimle ilgili gizlilik kararı verilmiştir. ⁽³⁾

17/05/2019


Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

^{1a} *Lisansüstü Tezlerin Elektronik Ortamda Toplanması, Düzenlenmesi ve Erişime Açılmasına İlişkin Yönerge**

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- (2) *Madde 6. 2. Yeni teknik, materyal ve metodların kullandığı, henüz makaleye dönüşmemiş veya patent gibi yöntemlerle korunmamış ve internetten paylaşılması durumunda 3. şahıslara veya kurumlara haksız kazanç imkanı oluşturabilecek bilgi ve bulguları içeren tezler hakkında tez danışmanının önerisi ve enstitü anabilim dalının uygun görüşü üzerine enstitü veya fakülte yönetim kurulunun gerekçeli kararı ile altı ayı aşmamak üzere tezin erişime açılması engellenebilir.*
- (3) *Madde 7. 1. Ulusal çıkarları veya güvenliği ilgilendiren, emniyet, istihbarat, savunma ve güvenlik, sağlık vb. konulara ilişkin lisansüstü tezlerle ilgili gizlilik kararı, tezin yapıldığı kurum tarafından verilir *. Kurum ve kuruluşlarla yapılan işbirliği protokolü çerçevesinde hazırlanan lisansüstü tezlerle ilişkin gizlilik kararı ise, ilgili kurum ve kuruluşun önerisi ile enstitü veya fakültenin uygun görüşü üzerine üniversite yönetim kurulu tarafından verilir. Gizlilik kararı verilen tezler Yükseköğretim Kuruluna bildirilir.
Madde 7.2. Gizlilik kararı verilen tezler gizlilik süresince enstitü veya fakülte tarafından gizlilik kuralları çerçevesinde muhafaza edilir, gizlilik kararının kaldırılması halinde Tez Otomasyon Sistemine yüklenir.*

* Tez danışmanının önerisi ve enstitü anabilim dalının uygun görüşü üzerine enstitü veya fakülte yönetim kurulu tarafından karar verilir.

ETİK BEYAN

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Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

To my mother and my late father

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ÖZET

DÜRÜKOĞLU, Okaycan. “*Bir İngiliz Kadın Şairden Ortaçağcı Destanlar: Margaret Holford’un Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk ve Margaret of Anjou: a Poem Eserleri*”, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2019.

Margaret Holford (1778-1852), İngiliz kadın şair, çevirmen ve aynı zamanda roman yazarıdır. Eserlerini çeşitli edebi türlerde üretmiştir, fakat çağdaşlarının aksine eserleri şiir antolojilerine dâhil edilmemiştir. Ancak, eleştirmenlerin dikkatini çeken *Wallace, or, The Fight of Falkirk* (Wallace ya da Falkirk Mücadelesi) (1809) ve *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* (Anjou’lu Margaret) (1816) adlı iki önemli manzum eser yayınlamıştır. Holford'un şiirlerini ürettiği dönemde, Ortaçağ tarihine ve kültürüne büyük ilgi vardı ve bu ilgi birçok yazarın eserlerini Ortaçağcı bir tavırla üretmelerine neden olmuştur. Margaret Holford bu yazarlardan biriydi ancak kadın yazarların çoğu, eserlerinde Ortaçağcılık akımını kullanmayı tercih etmediği için Holford kadın çağdaşlarından farklıydı. Bu noktada, kadın yazını açısından, Ortaçağ karakterlerini ve olaylarını kullanmasıyla, Ortaçağ canlanması hareketinin öncüsü olmuştur. Dahası, kadın şairlerin destan yazmaları konusunda birçok önyargı olmasına rağmen, Holford bu iki eserini destan geleneğine uyarak yazmıştır ve destan türüne ait birçok temel özelliği şiirlerinde kullanmıştır. Bu tez, Margaret Holford’un *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* ve *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* eserlerini destan geleneğinin özelliklerini kullanarak yazdığını gösterecektir. En önemlisi, Margaret Holford ve eserleri ile ilgili çok az sayıda çalışma bulunduğundan, bu tez Holford hakkında daha fazla çalışma yapılmasının önünü açacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Margaret Holford, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk*, *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem*, Ortaçağcılık, kahramanlık şiiri, İngiliz kadın şair, 19. yüzyıl İngiliz Şiiri

ABSTRACT

DÜRÜKOĞLU, Okaycan. “*Medievalist Epics by an English Woman Poet: Margaret Holford’s Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk and Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*”, Master’s Thesis, Ankara, 2019.

Margaret Holford (1778-1852) was an English woman poet, a translator and at the same time a novelist. She produced her works in a number of genres but she was not much anthologized like her contemporaries. However, she published two major works, *Wallace, or, The Fight of Falkirk* (1809) and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* (1816) which drew the attention of the critics. The time in which Holford published her poems, there was a great interest in medieval history and culture, and this interest led many writers to produce medievalist works. Margaret Holford was one of those writers but she differs from her women contemporaries since most of the women writers did not prefer to use Medievalism in their works. At this juncture, by using medieval characters and setting, she becomes a precursor of the movement of the Medieval Revival in terms of women’s writing. Furthermore, Holford writes her poems in a heroic mode by employing many essential characteristics of the epic genre in her poems although there were certain prejudices about women poets in terms of writing epics. This thesis will illustrate that Margaret Holford writes her poems *Wallace, or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* in the heroic mode by employing essential qualities of epics. Most importantly, since Margaret Holford has not been studied in depth and there are very few studies related to her, this thesis will pave the way for the further studies about her works.

Keywords

Margaret Holford, *Wallace, or, the Fight of Falkirk*, *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem*, Medievalism, epic, English woman poet, 19th century British poetry

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INTRODUCTION

“[...] pray tell me then,
Why Women should not write as well as Men.”
(Aphra Behn, Epilogue to *Sir Patient Fancy*, 43-44)

Being one of the members of a culture which tended to silence women, Margaret Holford¹ (later Hodson) was a woman poet of the Pre-Victorian period. Although she was a prolific author in the early nineteenth century, she could not find a prominent place in the English canon. As her friend, Joanna Baillie, puts forward in her letter to Holford, they were “as to this world, in the land of forgetfulness” (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2*, Letter 78). However, Margaret Holford’s literary career and place in her society cannot be compared to Baillie’s because Joanna Baillie, who was a Scottish dramatist and poet, was regarded as one of the most important literary figures of the late eighteenth century. On the other hand, although Margaret Holford was acknowledged as a woman poet in her society and her works went into several editions, she could not strengthen her place in the literary world and her works were not circulated as her contemporary female poets. It is more correct to suggest that Margaret Holford *was* in the land of forgetfulness.

There is almost no written document about Margaret Holford in regard to her life. The information about Holford’s life is mostly derived from the letters which were written by Joanna Baillie to Margaret Holford. As Judith Bailey Slagle underlines in her introduction written for Baillie’s letters to Margaret Holford, no exact date can be given when Baillie and Holford became friends. In her letter dated 4 February 1810 to Sir Walter Scott, Baillie writes that “she is reading *Wallace, or the Fight of Falkirk* but is not sure who the author is, though she guesses it is by a woman named Holford”

¹ Since Margaret Holford and her mother share the same name, they are confused with each other. Rarely, she was mentioned as Margaret Holford Hodson because she got married to Septimus Hodson in 1826. However, almost all of her works were published before her marriage. As a result, she used her maiden name (Holford) in her publications. For convenience sake and to prevent any misunderstandings related to Margaret Holford’s and her mother’s names, in this thesis, regardless of Holford’s date of marriage, the author’s name will be used as Margaret Holford. Also, her mother’s name will be mentioned as Margaret Holford, the Elder.

(Slagle, *Romantic* 10). Considering the fact that the first letter written to Holford by Baillie dated 29 March 1813, it can be assumed that they became friends between 1810 and 1813. During their friendship, Baillie wrote 102 letters to Holford which shed light on Margaret Holford's life story since those letters are the only sources which give a true account of the poet's profile. Besides, Holford did not record her own memories or biography, and her letters to Baillie also were lost. By reading Baillie's letters, certain aspects of Holford's life can be interpreted and shaped. In a general outlook, it is seen in these letters that Baillie and Holford wrote and commented on almost every subject ranging from their illnesses to their favorite books of the time. Apart from Baillie's letters, church records give a great deal of information about her biographical data. According to the church records, she was the daughter of Allin Holford and Margaret Wrench Holford. Margaret Holford was born in Cheshire, England in 1778. She was baptized on 1 June 1778 at the church of St. John the Baptist in Chester ("Diocese of Chester Bishop's Transcripts of Baptisms"). As reported by the document of her burial, Margaret Holford passed away on 20 September 1852 and she was buried at the church of St. Gregory the Great in Dawlish ("Devon Burials Transcription"). Additionally, in Baillie's letters, it is revealed that Holford had a sister who was Mrs. Joshua Walker who married a London banker (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2*, 540).

Baillie's letters shed light on certain aspects of Holford's education since there was no official record about her education. Especially, from the letters dated between the years 1821 and 1822, it can be remarked that Margaret Holford travelled to France and Italy. In one of the letters, Baillie writes to Holford saying "[h]ow happy you are in speaking French with sufficient readiness to converse with the country people you meet on the road or at the table d'hote or any where!" (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2* 566). This statement proves that Holford knew French and she could communicate with the French people during her journey in France. Also, it can be assumed that Holford knew Italian and Spanish since she published stories which she translated. In 1823, her *Italian Stories* and in 1832, her Spanish translation, *Lives of Vasco Nunez De Balboa and Francisco Pizarro* were published. Although there was no written record or information about her education, by looking at her ability in three different languages (French,

Spanish and Italian) aside from English, it can be put forward that she received a good education which included European languages.

When Joanna Baillie's letters are read, it can be seen that Holford wrote letters in which she shared her ideas about her marriage and husband. In their marriage document, it was recorded that Margaret Holford married Septimus Hodson as his third wife on 16 October 1826 at South Kirkby ("Wakefield District Marriages Transcription"). Septimus Hodson was a scandalous figure whose name was involved in the seduction of children at the Orphan Asylum where he worked as a chaplain. After these accusations, his name appeared in certain chronicles and gazettes. On 12 October 1797, *The Bath Chronicle* reported that "[a] Clergyman, Preacher to the Asylum, has lately seduced a young woman, retained as a singer in the Chapel of that Charity. By which act, the man has ruined himself and family" (*The Bath Chronicle*). However, Margaret Holford's reaction and ideas about her husband's involvement in these felonies were recorded neither by herself nor by other family members. Septimus Hodson was also a writer like his wife, Margaret Holford, and he published a book titled *An Address To The Different Classes Of Persons In Great Britain On The Present Scarcity And High Price Of Provisions* (1795) and numerous sermons including *Sermons on the Present State of Religion in This Country, and on Other Subjects* (1792), *A sermon, delivered in the parish church of Thrapston, in the county of Northampton : at the consecration of the colours of the Thrapston corps of volunteer cavarlry & infantry* (1800) and *A sermon delivered in the parish church of Wimbledon in the county of Surry* (1800). In 1833, Septimus Hodson died and in Baillie's letter dated 9 January 1834, Margaret Holford states her intention to publish her husband's sermons, and Baillie gives advice to her for the publication of Mr. Hodson's sermons (Baillie, *The Collected: vol 2*, Letter 60). Although Margaret Holford did not publish any work after 1830s, she aimed to edit her husband's sermons, and this shows that Holford tried not to lose connection with the literary world by keeping herself busy with the publishing of her husband's sermons.

Furthermore, it can be inferred from the letters of Baillie that Margaret Holford was constantly ill until she died in 1852. In a letter dated 15 March 1824, Baillie expresses her sadness related to Holford's illness that she was lying in bed day and night. Then, in

a letter dated 11 December 1830, Baillie reveals that Holford was diagnosed with rheumatic gout and finally, in 1837, deafness struck her. Almost in all of the letters, Baillie makes references to these illnesses. Holford's illnesses might be an answer for the question why she did not publish any other works after 1838. It is clear that she was struggling with her illnesses, that she had severe attacks and sometimes she was not able to walk without help (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2* 591). It can be suggested that her diseases hindered her ability to produce new literary works.

Aside from Joanna Baillie's letters and church records, Frederic Rowton's *The Female Poets of Great Britain, Chronologically Arranged* (1854) is another source which gives information about Margaret Holford. Rowton's introduction to Holford does not include her biography but he defines Holford as "[c]lear in thought and intelligible in style, she is one of the most agreeable Poets we possess" (307). It can be suggested that Rowton's work is the first anthology which puts Miss Holford in position of a poet.

Margaret Holford was such a prolific writer that she continuously published her works between the years 1808 and 1838. In 1808, she published her, *Elegiac Ode to the Memory of Liet.-Colonel Vassall*. Later, in 1809, her most accomplished work, *Wallace or the Fight of Falkirk: a Metrical Romance* was published and many literary gazettes and chronicles wrote reviews for it. In 1811, Holford put to press her first collection of poetry, *Poems*, and in 1816, her second most speculated work, *Margaret of Anjou; a Poem in Ten Cantos* was published. In 1819, her second poetry collection, *The Past, & c. [poems]* was printed. Although Holford was known as a poet, she also wrote a novel in three volumes, *Warbeck of Wolfstein*. Her novel was published in 1820 and in this work she criticized Lord Byron and his life. After 1820, her translations appeared in the literary world. In 1823, her *Italian Stories* and in 1832, her *Lives of Vasco Nunez De Balboa and Francisco Pizarro* were published. However, Margaret Holford differed from the contemporary women writers in terms of publishing her translations. Normally, as Judith Bailey Slagle points out, women writers preferred to translate the works which were originally written by male authors (*Romantic* xi) since women writers aimed to escape from severe criticism which might come from literary journals and reviews. Translating "a male text" can be regarded as a tool for women's protection

before they wrote their masterpieces or introduced themselves to the literary world. In other words, women writers generally decided to publish their translations early in their careers but Holford chose a different path in comparison to her contemporaries. She published her translations at the end of her literary career. Finally, in 1827, Holford published her prose work, *Death-bed Hymns* which was dedicated to her sister and it is revealed in Baillie's letters that Holford decided to publish a new edition of her hymns under the title of *Death-Bed Thoughts* in 1838 (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2*, letter 74).

Apart from the above mentioned works, there is a poem called *Calaf; a Persian Tale in two volumes*. In the catalogue records, it is claimed that this poem was also written by Margaret Holford. However, the poem was published anonymously in 1798 and there is no clue or reference to Holford in regard to the fact that she wrote the poem. Besides, in the main catalogue of the British Library, there are two different versions of this work. The first one is the 1798 edition and it is entitled *Calaf a Persian tale: In two volumes* (The British Library). Moreover, this edition was published anonymously. The second one is the 1800 edition and it is entitled *Calaf. A Persian tale. In two volumes. By M. Holford, author of Selima, Gresford Vale, &c* (The British Library). It is interesting to see that this edition was claimed to be written by Margaret Holford's mother but there is no evidence to support the idea that Holford's mother wrote it. The only reliable source is the preface of the poem which was written by a friend of the author. In the "Preface", it is said that "[t]he following pages are the production of a girl of seventeen; an age in which judgment, whatever promises it may make to futurity, is naturally in a state of imperfection" (*Calaf*, iv). If this sentence is taken into consideration in terms of the poet's profile, it does not suit Margaret Holford since it is claimed that the poet was seventeen years old when the poem was published. However, in 1798, Holford was twenty years old. There are two possibilities related to the work. First of these is that *Calaf* might have been written by Holford when she was seventeen years old, but it was published three years later. Secondly, the work did not belong to Holford but to another woman poet. As it can be observed, there is no reliable information about the author of this specific work. As a result, it would not be correct to claim that *Calaf* was written by Margaret Holford. Moreover, it can be derived from the letter of Joanna Baillie that Miss Holford wrote a tragedy which was not staged and was not printed ("Margaret

Holford, the Younger Entry”). In a letter dated 15 February 1823, Baillie wrote to Holford saying “[b]ut I am pleased to hear you made better use of your time there than merely writing letters, and give you joy of having finished copying of your Tragedy which I know to be a tedious business” (Baillie, *Further* 90). Also, Joanna Baillie wanted Holford to contribute to her poetry collection entitled *A Collection of Poems: Chiefly Manuscript, and from Living Authors* (1823) and Holford wrote a poem for the collection under the title of “Lines Suggested by a Portrait of the Unfortunate Queen of France Taken on the Last Examination Previous to the Execution” (248-250).

Margaret and her mother generally were confused since they share the same name and they were both authors. Margaret Holford’s mother, Margaret Wrench Holford had a significant place in her daughter’s life. Apparently, her daughter was influenced by her, and Margaret Holford also chose to be an author as her mother. In other words, Margaret Holford did not only take her name from her mother but she also inherited a literary legacy. Also, Margaret Holford wrote a preface for her poem, *Margaret of Anjou* and in this preface, she dedicated her long poem to her mother. Margaret Wrench Holford can also be assumed to be a prolific woman writer since she published three novels (*Fanny*, *Salima*, and *First Impressions, or The Portrait*), two plays (*Neither’s the Man* and *The Way to Win Her*) and a poetry collection entitled *Gresford Vale* (“Margaret Holford, the Elder Entry”). Just like her daughter, there is almost no document related to her life or any analysis of her works.

Harriet Kramer Linkin adds the names of Margaret Holford and her mother to her list of women writers and says that they “were known in their own time; it was a later time that erased their writings from [today’s] canon” (‘Women and Romanticism’, 51). It can be remarked that although Margaret Holford did not find a place in today’s canon, many of her works went into several editions and she was mentioned in numerous literary reviews and magazines of her time. Since Holford used two very important medieval figures as William Wallace and Margaret of Anjou in her two most accomplished works, *Wallace; or the Fight of Falkirk; a Metrical Romance* (1809) and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* (1816), these poems can be regarded as the prototypes of the movement of Medieval Revival in literature, which started to flourish during the first part of the

nineteenth century. When she published her *Wallace* in 1809, Medievalism was not recognized and used by female authors in their works since women poets were still under the influence of English Romanticism which led them to write poems about love and nature (Curran, "Romantic Poetry", 189-190). However, Holford's two long poems bear the characteristics and spirit of Medievalism in terms of their style, subject matter and protagonists. Medievalism simply refers to a concept which regards Middle Ages as a golden age for the English people. In Alice Chandler's words, "[t]he Middle Ages were idealized as a period of faith, order, joy, munificence, and creativity" (1). However, day by day people became distanced from the idealized world of the Middle Ages with the Industrial Revolution. At this point, Medievalism provides an escape from the negative aspects of the world for the people. The representation of medieval figures, ideals and life can be observed in the works of artists, writers and architects. Margaret Holford also contributed to the revival of Medievalism by using two medieval figures in her poems, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*. When the interest in Medievalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is taken into consideration, Sir Walter Scott's contribution to this movement cannot be overlooked. Scott's works heavily influenced the whole Victorian Age and also Margaret Holford. It is generally accepted by the literary reviews of Holford's time that she wrote her work, *Wallace* "in an imitation of Mr. Scott's poetry [*Marmion*]" ("*Wallace*", *The Literary Panorama*, 413) but no document exists in regard to the fact that Holford confirmed the influence of Scott on her. The only reliable information on this subject is derived from Joanna Baillie's letter written to Sir Walter Scott on 4 February 1810. Baillie writes as follows:

Have you yet seen a Poem called Wallace or the Fight of Falkirk? It is written in imitation of you, and seem'd to my Sister & I as we read it the other day a work of great merit. It is written, as I am told, by a Lady [...] she abounds in striking thoughts & spirited lines of your irregular measure [...] Did you receive verses some years ago from a Lady of the name of Holford? This, I believe, is the writer of Falkirk Fight; and I am told she was very much hurt that you never took any notice of these verses. If this be so, it is a hole in your manners that will not easily be bouch'd up, and I see she does not mention you in the Preface nor make any allusion to you in the course of the Poem. (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol I*, 252-253)

It is revealed that Baillie and Holford have not met yet and it is clearly stated by Baillie that she has read Holford's poem and she is conveying her impressions on *The Fight of*

Falkirk to Scott. It can also be seen in this letter that Holford sent a copy of her poem to Scott so as to receive his opinion about her work. Apparently, Scott did not write an answer to Holford, and his attitude is criticized by Joanna Baillie. As stated above, any statement by Holford regarding who influenced her first long poem does not exist. Since Joanna Baillie and Holford had common friends, Baillie reported that Holford was upset concerning the attitude of Sir Walter Scott. As a reply to Baillie's letter, Sir Walter Scott sent a letter to Baillie in 1810 in regard to Holford's poem: "Her Wallace is really very fine – It will not please Scotch folks because Wallace is one of those characters that get beyond the reach of poetry, which when applied to them is apt to fail in a certain degree for the reasons which Johnson applies to sacred poems" (qtd. in Eriksonas 123). Although Scott appreciated Holford's *Wallace*, he did not believe that poetry was an adequate medium to treat the subject of William Wallace. In other words, it can be suggested that since William Wallace had an important place in Scottish history because of his fight against the English authorities, Sir Walter Scott argued that this hero's legendary story should not be written as a poem. According to him, Holford's poem was doomed to fail since she dealt with her subject in the poetic convention because he believed that poetry was not a sufficient way of telling the story of William Wallace who was a Scottish warrior and a freedom fighter.

As it can be seen, Margaret Holford succeeded in attracting the attention of the great poets of her time such as Sir Walter Scott and Joanna Baillie. Besides, in one of the letters of Baillie, it is mentioned that Margaret Holford and Robert Southey, who was appointed as the Poet Laureate in 1813, became friends and Southey stayed in the house of Holford for a brief period. In her letter dated 29 August 1818 to Anne Elliott, Baillie says "I have received a letter to day [sic] a letter from Mrs Hudson. Miss Holford full of delight from a weeks abode of the Poet Laureate under her roof, a person possessing all the charming qualities that man or poet can possess" (Baillie, *The Collected: vol 1* 469). It can be concluded that Margaret Holford seemed to be in contact with the respectable literary figures of her age. What is more, Judith Baily Slagle regards both Joanna Baillie and Margaret Holford as the "first-generation Romantics in the company of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Walter Scott, and Robert Southey" (*Romantic* 2) and Daisy Hay asserts in her book *Young Romantics: The Tangled Lives of English*

Poetry's Greatest Generation that there is a collaborative creative practice among these writers (142). Ironically, Margaret Holford is the least known literary figure among the first-generation Romantics which Slagle lists. On the one hand, Holford published continuously in the early nineteenth century. On the other hand, she did not lose her connection with the literary circles of her society. However, judging by Holford's friends and literary circle, it is interesting to see that she stayed in the shadows and she could not reach a wider reading public.

Margaret Holford was a woman poet who lived in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and in this time period, English society was ruled by patriarchal system which oppressed women in every aspect of daily life. Margaret Holford was just one of the women writers who were oppressed by the patriarchy. For example, the nineteenth century society was prone to draw a line between the sexes, and women were always pushed to the margins. They were not allowed to express their own emotions and ideas. More than that, women were seen as inferior beings when they were compared to males. Gilbert and Gubar underline that "women in patriarchal societies have historically been reduced to mere properties, to characters and images imprisoned in male texts because generated solely [...] by male expectations and designs" (12). It can be inferred that women were seen as objects or property and this objectification was the result of a male fantasy. In such an iniquitous atmosphere, it was not possible for women to continue their life as men did. There were two possibilities for women. First, they could choose to become passive and obedient figures or they could show resistance to male hegemony through literature or any other medium. Margaret Holford chose literature to underline that she would never become an example of a silent woman.

In this thesis, Margaret Holford's two long narrative poems, *Wallace; or the Fight of Falkirk; a Metrical Romance* (1809) and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* (1816) are chosen to be studied. Although Holford published two other collections of poetry *Poems* (1811) and *The Past* (1819), the poems in these collections deal with different themes and there is no coherence among them. In other words, in these poetry collections, Holford wrote short poems which differed from each other in terms of their themes and styles. As a result, these collections are excluded from the current study. Her *Wallace* and *Margaret*

of Anjou differ from Holford's other publications in that these long narrative poems bear the characteristics of epic and romance. As a woman writer, Margaret Holford chose to write in a heroic mode although there were many prejudices regarding women poets who tried their hand in heroic poetry. As Jeremy Downes asserts, "epic [and heroic poetry] tend to be the domain of male artists and audiences" (13). Apart from epic qualities of her poems, Holford added a historical perspective to her poems by using significant historical figures as protagonists such as William Wallace and Margaret of Anjou. Besides, these long narrative poems were generally praised by the literary critics of the nineteenth century in certain magazines.

In the first chapter of the thesis, the traditional representation of women and women poets both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries will be discussed since it can be assumed that Holford started to write her works in the late eighteenth century and continued to write and publish in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, her works, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem* hold a significant place in English literature in that they can be regarded as the early examples of the movement of the Medieval Revival in Romantic movement since she used two medieval figures as protagonists and medieval setting in her poems. As a result, the concept of Medievalism and its effect upon English society and literature will be introduced.

In the second chapter, her *Wallace; or the Fight of Falkirk; a Metrical Romance* and in the third chapter, her *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* will be analyzed in detail. While analyzing these poems, certain aspects will be taken into consideration such as her choice of protagonist, style, the effect of Medievalism and her message to her society. Also, these two works will be analysed so as to discuss whether they bear the general characteristics of epic and romance. Studying Margaret Holford and her poetry as an English woman poet is quite significant in that Holford and her works have never become the sole subject of any study. She has become the subject of studies in which she is compared to other woman poets such as Joanna Baillie, Matilda Betham and Eliza Francis. Besides, these comparative studies are very few in number. Judith Bailey Slagle studies Margaret Holford and Joanna Baillie by comparing their poems. Adeline

Johns-Putra discusses Holford's *Margaret of Anjou* along with other woman poets who wrote epic narratives in the early nineteenth century such as Hannah Cowley, Eleanor Anne Porden, and Eliza S. Francis. Elisa Beshero-Bondar analyses her *Anjou* as an example of a gothic epic. It can be put forward that it is important to study Margaret Holford since she has not received the attention she deserved. Although Holford stays in the shadows, she contributed to women's writing in particular and nineteenth century poetry in general on account of her writing style, themes and protagonists.

CHAPTER I

WOMEN AND LITERATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES

“There are men who affect, to think lightly of
the literary productions of women:
and yet no works of the present day
are so universally read as theirs”

(Mary Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England*, 95)

In this chapter, the canonization process of woman’s writings in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries will be studied since Margaret Holford is not included in the canon of her time and also in today’s canon. There have been several factors for the exclusion of her works from the canon. So as to understand her exclusion, it is important to focus on the reasons which push Margaret Holford to the margins. Moreover, the condition of women and position of women poets in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries will be put forward because Margaret Holford cannot be completely placed either in the eighteenth or the nineteenth centuries. In other words, Margaret Holford is a poet who straddles both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is clear that Margaret Holford began to write in the late eighteenth century and she published all of her works in the early nineteenth century. From this vintage point, since Holford published her last work, *Lives of Vasco Nunez De Balboa and Francisco Pizarro* in 1832, she could not be included in the canon of the Victorian Period. It is more correct to suggest that Holford was a Romantic poet of the early nineteenth century and while analyzing her two most accomplished poems, *Wallace or the Fight of Falkirk: a Metrical Romance* and *Margaret of Anjou; a Poem in Ten Cantos*, the situation of women and women’s writings both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries should be taken into consideration in order to reach a better understanding of Margaret Holford’s poetic identity. Besides, by analyzing and studying Holford’s contemporaries, it can be observed that Holford chose a different path when she is compared to them. Her subject matter in *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* differs from other women poets’ subject matters in their writings since Holford deals with controversial historical figures and events without hiding her name or aims. She does

not write on domestic issues, maternal love or supernatural elements. In her prefaces of the above mentioned poems, Holford declares her intentions and she looks forward to receiving criticism from the critics. Furthermore, in this chapter, the background information about the movement of Medievalism will be provided since Margaret Holford is influenced by the medieval revival which takes place in the Romantic period.

Creating a canon of female writings has always been problematical and it has been at the centre of questions and discussions for centuries. Canons are created and shaped in regard to certain criteria. Particularly, when female writing and their canonization are taken into account, it is quite difficult to reach a conclusion about what affected and triggered the creation of a female canon. Generally, women writers' inclusion in the canon depended on the ideologies and personal choices of the editors. It can also be suggested that canons of female writing were affected by social, cultural and economic factors and not every woman writer could find a place in the canon. To put it another way, there were many obstacles for women writers which prevented their inclusion into the anthologies and these obstacles stemmed from social, cultural and economic factors. According to Dale Spender, there is "the *continued* practice of the exclusion of women and the refusal of too many agencies [...] to make the process of canon construction and value judgments (including those related to class and ethnicity)" (original emphasis, 31). Especially, social and cultural factors can be regarded as basic determinants. In terms of women's poetry, these social and cultural factors played crucial roles in defining the female canon. Margaret Ezell argues that the eccentric hack writers were excluded from the anthologies and certain criteria were taken into account while preparing women's verse anthologies such as being an "aristocratic or upper middle class [woman and being] adamantly genteel" (120). As Ezell puts it, a woman writer's social class was one of the factors which determined her inclusion in the anthologies. First of all, she should come from an aristocratic family or at least, she was expected to belong to the upper middle class. This suggests that woman writers in the working class did not have any opportunity to find a place in the anthologies. Moreover, hack writers were also excluded from the canon. It can be seen that hack writers' works were looked down upon by the editors and they were treated as second class writers.

There are four important poetry anthologies of female poets published in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The first women's verse anthology was published by Colman and Thornton under the title of *Poems by Eminent Ladies* in 1755. In 1825, Alexander Dyce published his *Specimens of British Poetesses*. George Washington Bethune's *The British Female Poets* appeared in 1848 and finally, Frederic Rowton's *The Female Poets of Great Britain, Chronologically Arranged* was published in 1857 (Ezell 117-118). All of these anthologies of women's verse are essential and significant in terms of the creation of the female poetic canon. Rowton's anthology differs from the others in that it was the most reprinted anthology in his time and it is the only women's verse anthology which includes Margaret Holford and her poems. In Rowton's own words, his collection "is almost the first book expressly devoted to the poetical productions of the British Female mind" (xi). Furthermore, his introductory chapter in this collection is crucial in understanding to what extent women suffered from severe prejudices and accusations of intellectual inferiority. In other words, Rowton gives a summary of the perspectives towards women poets. As a result, studying his introduction might shed light on the general understanding of women's condition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As mentioned above, Rowton included Holford as well and he praised and admired her poems. He even stated in the introduction that "[w]e certainly have no female Shakspeare [sic]. We have Poetesses who resemble him: Joanna Baillie is often like him; so is Miss Holford" (xiii). He resembles Baillie and Holford to a well-regarded dramatist and poet of English literature. In the introductory chapter, Rowton shares his opinions and observations about women's poetry and he compares and contrasts male and female poets in terms of their intelligence and their contribution to the canon in general. It can be seen that Rowton celebrates women's intelligence and although women writers' works have always been looked down upon by male writers and critics, he believes that women poets did not have any deficiencies when they were compared to males. As a matter of fact, he thought that women could surpass men in certain areas.

In his introduction, Rowton argues that women also could succeed in writing in a poetic convention as men could. However, he is aware of the fact that women poets are always seen as inferior to male poets. According to him, their system of education limited the

minds of females and he holds responsible the system of education for chaining the intellects of females. He expresses his rejection of the idea of women's intellectual inferiority as follows:

The doctrine of woman's intellectual inferiority is one which I cannot think upon without an impatience bordering on indignation [...] Woman intellectually inferior to man! Woman, who is man's helpmeet; woman, who has the care of the infant mind, and can impress it as she will; woman, who from the cradle to the grave has power to command, to enslave, to direct, man's intellect at her pleasure! Is it credible that a belief so absurd should have gained footing in the world at all? (xiv)

It can be suggested that Rowton is totally against the idea that women are naturally inferior to men. He argues that the lack of literary works written by women in the canon is the result of multiple prejudices about women's intellectuality and discouragement in their poetical attempts. Rowton claims that if women were given equal chances as men, they could direct and control men's intellect. It can be asserted that Rowton's ideas and observations about women poets and their works shed light on the difficulties that women writers faced during their lives.

Though Margaret Holford was included in Rowton's anthology and her works went into several editions, she was also the one who was not so popular in her time. It can be pointed out that editors of her time approached Holford's poems with several prejudices. First, Holford's subject matter was quite unconventional when compared to her contemporary women writers. In her *Wallace and Margaret of Anjou*, Holford uses two debatable historical figures as protagonists, William Wallace and Margaret of Anjou and in these poems, she does not put her characters in the domestic sphere. However, in Holford's time, women generally wrote about home, womanhood, love affairs, motherhood and domesticity as it can be observed in the poetry of Felicia Hemans (1793-1835) who was one of the most circulated women poets of her time and during her life time, she produced nineteen volumes of poetry (Jump 141). Felicia Hemans, who was an English poet, was a significant literary figure in the early nineteenth century and she was read by the reading public excessively. Frederic Rowton praises her in his anthology as follows:

I think there can be no doubt that Mrs. Hemans takes decidedly one of the most prominent places among our Female Poets. She seems to me to represent and unite as purely and completely as any other writer in our literature the peculiar and specific qualities of the female mind. (386)

However, why was Felicia Hemans more popular and she was read more than Margaret Holford and many other women poets? The answer is that Hemans complies with the ideology of the patriarchy on account of her themes and subject matters. She wrote about home and women. According to the nineteenth century society, women could only write about domestic subjects which was related to the private sphere. As Virginia Blains puts forward, “Felicia Hemans’s poetry [...] laid such an emphasis on what she called ‘the domestic affections’, particularly maternal love” (180). In Harriet Devine Jump’s words, “Hemans was viewed in her day as the supreme poet of the domestic sphere” (141). It can be suggested that Hemans avoided writing on topics related to the “public sphere” especially such as war and combat, and these topics were regarded as a male area. Women poets were forced to accept the idea that they could reach happiness if they believed in the superiority of love and domestic affections. In Anne K. Mellor’s words, this kind of attitude towards women was the result of the ideology of “the hegemonic doctrine of the separate spheres” (82) which was imposed on women. In other words, women poets were encouraged to write on domesticity and the private sphere because it was accepted that women belonged to the private sphere which was their house. As Rowton claims, women’s intellect was always restricted by the patriarchal English society, and they were controlled by their husbands both economically and legally. From their birth to their death, women’s roles were decided by this separate sphere ideology:

For now a Woman ... is from her Cradle kept at home, and as incapable of nobler Employment suffered only to knit, spin, or the like. And when she arrives at riper Years, is delivered to the Tyranny of a Jealous-pated Husband, or cloistered up in a Nunnery; all publick offices are denied them; implead to their own Names they must not, no Jurisdiction they can exercise, nor make any contract that is valid, without their Husband’s licence; with other hard Impositions. (*The Wonders of the Female World* 203)

However, Margaret Holford does not contribute to this ideology of separate spheres since she writes about the “the public sphere” unlike other women poets. She choose

two very important warrior figures who take active roles in many wars. As a result, Holford distinguishes herself among the women poets of her time by stepping out of a territory of the “private sphere”.

In order to understand the acceptance of women writers into the literary canon, Jane Austen can also be given as an example. Austen never exceeds the limits created by male authorities. Her style “was a self-effacing, restricted – and therefore unthreatening – kind of genius. Like a woman who attracted a proposal of marriage through modesty refraining from seeking one, Jane Austen was admitted into the canon” (Wilkes 40-41). It can be deduced from the quotation that Austen did not have high ambitions. She confined herself and her novels to the private sphere and that is why she found a place in the canon of her time. Examples of Hemans and Austen openly suggest that women writers who *dared* (my emphasis) to write about the subjects which were related to the public sphere could not find permanent places in the canon as Margaret Holford.

It can be concluded that it was very challenging for women writers in the nineteenth century to find a place in the canon. First of all, in order to be recognized, they should belong to at least the upper middle class and most importantly, they were expected to represent domesticity in their works. To put it another way, they should contribute to the ideology of separate spheres. At this juncture, Margaret Holford was not a typical example of the women poets of her time. She did not write on domesticity or she did not support domestic ideals for women in her *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou*. On the contrary, she chose her subject matters which are related to the public sphere. For example, her protagonist, Margaret of Anjou is a warrior queen who tries to defeat her enemies on the battlefield so as to secure her son’s legal rights in regard to the English throne. As a result, she put herself at the centre of severe criticism. Expectedly, Holford was not included in the canon although her poems were appreciated by certain literary journals and reviews in her own time.

1.1. WOMEN IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

So as to understand the attitude towards women in the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century should also be analyzed since both centuries complement each other in regard to the condition of women in a male dominated English society. Women in the eighteenth century were expected to bear certain characteristics. However, there were not any named terms which defined women such as “the angel in the house” which was used for chaste and obedient women in the Victorian period. Patriarchy was the supreme ideology of the eighteenth century Britain and women were overwhelmed by patriarchal restrictions. They were expected to be ideal wives and mothers who devoted their lives to their families. Women were expected to be controlled by their husbands or fathers, and their participation in public life was mostly prevented by patriarchal propaganda. Blackstone famously wrote that “the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being, or legal existence of a woman is suspended during marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband, under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything” (430). Women were bound to their husbands on everything and anything. By analyzing the books that were written for women during this period, certain evolution can be observed in the account of the perspectives towards women. Especially, for women of the middle class, there were numerous conduct books written and published. According to Kathryn Sutherland, “[I]n such books a set of “rules for sexual exchange”, derived from a “grammar” of female subjectivity, are invoked in order to establish the desired domestic relations and practices of an apparently non-political, private sphere” (26). These books were designed to establish and maintain the order in middle class houses. To put it another way, these books were used as guidelines to determine the duties of both sexes in the private sphere but the focus was generally on women. Apparently, the target of conduct books was the middle class women who were expected to obey and practice suggested rules and advice in these books. In the conduct books, authors promoted the silent and submissive representation of women and they tried to build a domestic ideal for eighteenth century society. Nancy Armstrong explains the function of the conduct books and duties of a married woman as follows:

[T]hese books developed categories that defined the ideal woman in her married state [...] Except for unqualified obedience to her husband, the virtues of the ideal wife appeared to be active. A list of her duties could have included household management, regulation of servants, supervision of children, planning of entertainment, and concern for the sick. It quickly becomes apparent, however, that the main duty of the new housewife was to supervise the servants who were the ones to take care of these matters. (67)

It can be seen that a typical middle class woman was expected to sustain the order and domestic peace at her home. She had a great deal of domestic duties which continuously kept her busy in her daily life. It can be put forward that the eighteenth century woman belonged to the private sphere. Suggestions and advice in these conduct books show that there was no place for women in the public sphere which was outside their houses.

One of the most prominent conduct books published in the eighteenth century was Hester Mulso Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (1773). Chapone's book was reissued approximately sixteen times in the late eighteenth century which shows how the society treated the subject of an ideal woman seriously (Sutherland 28). Chapone begins her sixth letter as follows: "The principal virtues or vices of a woman must be of a private and domestic kind" (II, 5). Chapone underlines the fact that a woman was responsible for her husband, children and servants. The well-being of her household depended on her temper. More than that, Chapone also gave importance to the education of the middle class woman and the study of the Bible, household management, botany, geology, astronomy and chronology were included in her education. She argued that the study of British history was essential for young ladies in shaping their intellect and she expressed her ideas about it as follows: "I know nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgment" (II, 125). However, it is apparent that this education did not provide access to the public sphere for women. By shaping the "critical faculties in women, [Chapone aims to equip women] to reach independent judgements in private life" (Sutherland 29).

The idea that women belonged to the domestic and private sphere was promoted not just by the conduct books but also by many essayists. Joseph Addison touched upon this issue in *The Spectator* which was published in 1711: "[Women should] distinguish

themselves as tender mothers and faithful wives, rather than as furious partizans. Female virtues are of a domestic turn. The family is the proper province for private women to shine in” (98). He clearly asserts that woman’s first duty was to be a perfect mother and wife who should isolate herself from the public sphere. According to him, the family was the place in which she could perform her tasks properly. The highest virtue of a woman was to become a submissive wife who pleased her husband and she was not allowed to take active part in the public sphere.

1.2. POETRY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND WOMEN POETS

Poetry, which has always been regarded as the most elevated genre of literature, holds a significant place in the eighteenth century Britain. In the first half of the century, people read poetry in order to acquaint themselves with social life. In other words, they saw poetry as a way of being informed about the news of society and people were encouraged to memorize poems since it was believed that poetry was full of a never ending treasury of notions and feelings. More than that, people started to judge literary characters according to their poetic taste (Backscheider 3, 9). Poetry was an inseparable part of people’s lives and it became a vehicle to prove the intellectual ability of an individual.

In the late eighteenth century, Romanticism dominated British poetry and British Romanticism was associated with six canonical male poets: William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats (Linkin, ‘The Current Canon’, 548). British Romanticism was a male oriented movement and “the male Romantics exclude women from their critical and poetic manifestos” (Spencer 116). It can be suggested that the patriarchal restrictions in women’s social life can also be observed in literary life. It was generally accepted by male authorities that women should not write any work of literature since they stepped into the public sphere when they tried their chances in writing. If they insisted on

writing, they should attach themselves to sentimental modes (Spencer 95). Women were forced to live in their private spheres and the moment they desired to produce literary works, they left their cages which were locked by males. As a result, eighteenth century society regarded women who could write as a threat to domesticity. Another justification of male critics about women's exclusion from the literary world was women's lack of formal education. Since women could not receive any formal education, critics assumed that their ability was not sufficient to write on intellectual subjects such as philosophy, history, politics, economics and science (Behrendt 18). Jane Williams deals with the dynamics between men and women poets in the British Romantic movement in her book, *Literary Women of England* and she says:

In poetry may be perceived the peculiar character of the author, the principles by which he is actuated, the habits of his daily life, the knowledge which he possesses the thoughts which direct, and the feelings which agitate him; the social spirit of the age, and its influence upon his ideas, and upon their mode of expression [...] The women of every age take its spirit from the men, and their share in the national poetry is like their part in a concert, to which men's voice give fullness and power, and of which men are the musical composers and directors. (141-142)

Williams argues that literature was directed by male writers and women might find suitable places and positions for themselves and their art as long as men allowed it. Furthermore, women were under attack by many significant male literary figures of the eighteenth century. For example, Alexander Pope, in his well-known collection of *Moral Essays*, writes in the argument of the poem that "the particular Characters of women are not so strongly marked as those of men, seldom so fixed, and still more inconsistent with themselves" (*The Complete* 322). Apart from his argument, he begins his poem by declaring that "[n]othing so true as what you once let fall,/ 'Most women have no Characters at all'" (322). Although Pope ends his poem with the praise of the female sex, he indicates that he believes in the idea that the characters of women are not as well-established as men.

However, this perception started to weaken in the late eighteenth century. One of the critical reviews of the time remarked on Elizabeth Carter's poetry collection as follows: "The men retreat, and the women advance. The men prate and dress; the women read and write: it is no wonder, therefore, that they should get the upper hand of us" (qtd. in

Jones, 'Introduction', 1). As the writer of *The Critical Review* underlines, women poets started to gain prominent positions in the late eighteenth century and their numbers were increasing in literary circles. There were certain women poets whose works "have been recognized as fundamental to a complete understanding of British Romanticism" (Crisafulli, Pietropoli 3) such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825), Felicia Hemans (1793-1835), Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838), Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1865), Hannah More (1745-1833), Mary Robinson (1758-1800), Anna Seward (1742-1809), Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) and Ann Yearsley (1756-1806). These names are just a small portion of women poets of the late eighteenth century. According to J. R. de J. Jackson's 1993 survey of women poets, there were more than four hundred women poets who were actively writing poetry in this period. Although women were allowed to write poems, they were expected to attach themselves to the lyric and the sentimental modes. They were under strict censorship in regard to the genres in which they tried their hand. The great majority of them wrote in Augustan forms such as odes, epistles, pastoral elegies, dialogues, lyrics and classical imitations (Backscheider 82). In addition, women poets used animals, elves and fairies in their poetry since they tried to avoid harsh criticism from male authorities. By employing those figures in their poems, they created a world which was free of *man*-made rules and cultural restrictions (My emphasis). Especially, fairies are at the center of many poems in that as Doody puts it "[f]airies do not have to be moral —a great convenience, and an enviable one to women, who are always being told they must be moral, chaste and very careful, and should always put other people first" (27). It can be asserted that most of the women poets of the eighteenth century were anxious about severe criticism which might come from literary journals and gazettes. As a result, they did not make huge claims in their art and they produced literary works which did not threaten male territory.

1.3. WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

When women writers decided to publish what they wrote and to continue their life as writers, there were multiple barriers. Especially, the early nineteenth century was quite

significant for women poets since “the 1820s and 1830s were crucial in shaping the network of permissions and constraints in which the woman poet wrote” (Pykett 169). Although women poets tried to change the perceptions regarding their sex in the first decades of the nineteenth century, certain roles and expectations were burdened on them so as to exclude them from the public sphere and writing. Instead of writing an epic poem or a novel, women were expected to stay in their houses and became submissive and silent angel figures. If they wanted to prove their competency in the literary world, they had to show resistance to the male authorities for their rights. In the nineteenth century, the concept of “the angel in the house” was introduced to define an ideal Victorian lady. This term was coined after Coventry Patmore’s poem, “The Angel in the House” (1854). Inspired by his own wife, Patmore expresses his own perception of an ideal wife in the poem. Although the term started to be used in the middle of the nineteenth century, the same notion about women existed even in the eighteenth century. Patmore was not the only one who promoted the voiceless representation of women. His contemporaries also contributed to and supported this ideology. As an example, Alfred Lord Tennyson praised Patmore’s poem as follows: “The women ought to subscribe for a statue for you” (99).

Patmore’s ideal woman in his poem belonged to the society which accepted the fact that women belonged to the domestic or private sphere and men belonged to the public or the worldly sphere. So, as Hartnell states, Patmore’s ideal society divided the worlds of two sexes into two very different and unequal portions (457). According to Coventry Patmore, a Victorian woman should accept her inferiority when they were compared to men and Patmore clearly expressed his ideas about women in his later work *Religio Poetae* under the section of ‘The Weaker Vessel’:

To maintain that man and woman are equals in intelligent action is just as absurd as it would be to maintain that the hand that throws a ball and the wall that casts it back are equal [...] The true happiness and dignity of woman are to be sought, not in her exaltation to the level of man, but in a full appreciation of her inferiority and in the voluntary honour which every manly nature instinctively pays to the weaker vessel. (155-156)

As expressed in these lines, Patmore was definitely against the idea that men and women were equals. He defended that if a woman accepted her inferiority, then, she could reach true happiness and dignity. His ideas shed light on the general views on women during the Victorian period.

As Angela Leighton puts it, “[a nineteenth century woman] is the chief upholder and representer of morality, and also its most satisfying symbol. Thus, angel or demon, virgin or whore, Mary or Magdalen, woman is the stage on which the age enacts its own enduring morality play” (110-111). A typical nineteenth century angel figure should be close to God and she should keep her family on the path of Christianity. Moreover, she should provide a peaceful home environment for her children’s and husband’s well-being and she was expected to be innocent, domestic, asexual and even helpless when she went outside. According to the majority of the society, “the angel in the house” concept stood for the golden age of the family (Peterson 677-678). It can be put forward that it might be a golden age for men but definitely not for women. Women were living as prisoners and their prisons were their homes. They did not have any authority outside the private sphere. It can be pointed out that although a woman’s authority in the public was denied, she had certain authority in her own house. Nevertheless, it cannot be fully claimed that she had the full control of her family in the private sphere. An angel was responsible for her household, servants and family but in the end, she was bound to her husband’s will and desires. This suggests that women of the nineteenth century were not able to attain full authority or power either in the public or private sphere. They were always forced to depend on male power.

1.4. POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND WOMEN POETS

Similar to the eighteenth century poetry, the same situation regarding women’s participation in the literary world existed in the nineteenth century as well. Male poets

consisted the great part of the canon of the nineteenth century poetry and woman poets continued to be disregarded by male authors and critics. Since poetry was regarded as a serious literary genre that needed to be knowledgeable about the classical period and its writers, women were not expected to write poems because of their insufficiency of education in this field (Bozer 21). Dorothy Mermin asserts that “[t]raditional conceptions of the poet's role-as priest, for instance-were inherently masculine. Publication seemed like unwomanly self-display, or even sexual self-exposure, and could be justified more easily if one wrote novels to make money rather than poems just for glory” (65). Also, as Ledbetter puts it, the nineteenth century women writers and their literature were “ignored and derided as inferior, silly, shameful, sentimental, second class, pedestrian, unsophisticated, lacking critical standards or genius, false, insincere, didactic, domestic, feminine, too light, too heavy, too tame, too formulaic” (9). They were not given equal chances unlike men. Women could not satisfy expectations of men and the literary journals since there were so many barriers that had to be overcome by women poets. Women writers were under the attacks of many male critics and writers. For example, Robert Southey gave advice to Charlotte Brontë in his infamous letter to her and he said: “Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it even as an accomplishment and a recreation” (“Letter from Robert Southey to Charlotte Brontë”). It can be suggested that women writers were to be silenced by severe criticisms and harsh attacks.

Anna Letitia Barbauld, who was an English poet, author of children’s books, essayist and editor, can be given as one of the examples of silenced women authors in the early nineteenth century. When she published her poem, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812), many reviews attacked her severely and they criticized her authorship. In her poem, Barbauld dealt with the subject of Britain’s military affairs and its enrollment in a series of wars regarding the policy of the expansion of the Empire and commerce (Rendall 265). In other words, she openly criticized and commented on Britain’s colonial aims. Her poem and attitude were quite threatening for male publishers and critics in that she exceeded the limits of a *female* author (my emphasis). It was believed that a woman was not capable of writing on subjects of politics and Barbauld

not only dared to write such a poem but also published it. One of the most infamous criticisms came from John Wilson Croker for Barbauld's poem in *The Quarterly Review* (1812). Croker begins his criticism as follows: "Our old acquaintance Mrs. Barbauld turned satirist! The last thing we should have expected, and, now that we have seen her satire, the last thing that we could have desired" (309) and in the middle of his criticism, he continues to humiliate her by his depreciatory comments:

We had hoped, indeed, that the empire might have been saved without the intervention of a lady-author: we even flattered ourselves that the interests of Europe and of humanity would in some degree have swayed our public councils, without the descent of (deus ex machina) Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld in a quarto, upon the theatre where the great European tragedy is now performing. Not such, however, is her opinion; an irresistible impulse of public duty—a confident sense of commanding talents— have induced her to dash down her shagreen spectacles and her knitting needles, and to sally forth [...] in the magnanimous resolution of saving a sinking state [...] we must take the liberty of warning her to desist from satire [...] and writing any more party pamphlets in verse. (309, 313)

Barbauld received similar reactions from other periodicals and she published no works after these harsh attacks. According to Lucy Aikin who was the niece of Barbauld, she was unnerved with "the scorns of the unmanly, the malignant, and the base" (lii). It can be argued that Croker's attack not only targeted Barbauld but also the whole women community. It was put forward that women should not dare to try their hand in any satirical implications in their poems and other medium. Under the name of "a warning", the male authorities threatened women authors not to write on the topics in which they thought themselves as superior.

Similarly, Felicia Hemans is another successful poet whose works were selling better than some of the era's canonical male poets such as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley (Jump 141). However, Hemans was openly humiliated and criticized by Lord Byron. He and Hemans had a mutual publisher and in one of the letters written by Byron to his publisher, Byron calls Hemans as "Mrs. Hewoman" and he continues by saying that "I do not despise Mrs. Hemans—but if [she] knit blue stockings instead of wearing them it would be better" (Byron, *Life* 455). As these instances illustrate, male writers and critics continuously attacked the works of women, and treated them as second class writers. They even insulted women by making fun of their names. As

Joanna Wilkes puts it, “reviews represent a minor instance of a practice endemic to nineteenth-century literary criticism—the ascription of particular characteristics to writing on the basis of its author’s sex [and this] practice was more common in discussions of women’s publications” (35).

There were certain reasons behind these attacks on women. First of all, as Wolfson states, the booksellers, reviews and publishers were male territories in which women did not always find suitable places for themselves (392). After a woman writer produced a literary work, at first she had to go to the publishers who were mostly males. When a male publisher decided to publish her work, she had to go to the booksellers so as to promote her work and this meant that she again had to convince booksellers who were generally males. After her work began to be sold, she knew that her work was going to be criticized by the reviews whose critics mostly consisted of males. As a result, a woman writer had to go through a very painful process so as to secure herself as a writer. Unfortunately, not every woman writer succeeded in overcoming these obstructions. Secondly, the fear of intellectual women was another reason for male criticism of female writers. For hundreds of years, women’s intellectual capacity had always been underestimated by men and it was not common to come across women’s texts including the subjects attributed to men’s abilities. When they happened to see such texts, men believed that it was not natural for a woman who exceeded the limits of their pre-destined intellectual ability by the opposite sex. As a result, intellectual women were regarded as not natural and as monstrous. Patriarchy created a perception that if a woman did not behave like an angel, then she probably was a monster. This fear of women reached such a point that there were some records in medical annals related to this subject. In one of his autopsies on a Radcliff graduate, a Harvard doctor reported that a dead woman’s uterus corrugated to the size of a pea (Gilbert, Gubar 28). It can be suggested that nineteenth century patriarchal society saw a thinking woman as a mistake of nature and according to them, women lost their femininity when they crossed the lines decided by males.

Every woman writer was aware of the fact that they should break away from this monstrous depiction and perception of themselves so as to express their feelings and

ideas freely in poetry. Yet, in order to achieve their aim, they knew that they also had to change the angelic representation of women in society. As Virginia Woolf famously asserts in her essay, “Professions for Women”, “it was an experience that was bound to befall all women writers at that time. Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer” (203-204). This angelic portrayal of females hindered the great majority of the women in that they had to shape themselves in accordance with the expectations of society. A woman who devoted her life and herself completely to her family regardless of thinking about herself could not become a writer. They needed a personal time which was free from the household duties. It can be suggested that each woman writer faced certain obstacles. On the one hand, they had to learn how to survive in a male dominated literary circle. They tried to dispose of the burdens regarding their sex. It can be argued that they had to be courageous in a male dominated world. Not every woman author succeeded in surviving in this hostile atmosphere. As a result, the number of woman writers in the early nineteenth century is limited when compared to male writers.

1.5. ENGLISH/BRITISH MEDIEVALISM

In Margaret Holford’s poetry, Medievalism plays a significant part since she uses two medieval historical figures in her two major works, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem*. In order to comment on Holford’s medievalist aspect of poetry, the concept of Medievalism and its history should be explained. Medievalism was one of the literary movements in English literature which reached its peak in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century in connection with certain key factors. Especially, as Clare Broome Saunders states, “[t]he antiquarian scholarly researches on key texts and translations from the Middle Ages, notably by Hurd, Ritson, Warton, Ellis, and Percy, encouraged interest in the period and inspired writers throughout the first half of the nineteenth century” (2). Although the traces of Medievalism can be seen more clearly in literature, the concept’s roots were based on social, cultural and economic elements. Since there were a great deal of essential

aspects in the development of the concept of Medievalism, it is difficult to define it in a concise manner. Leslie Workman asserts that Medievalism is “the study of the Middle Ages, the application of medieval models to contemporary needs, and the inspiration of the Middle Ages in all forms of art and thought” (1). As Workman puts forward, the effects of Medievalism can be observed in every aspect of a modern world; the life style, dominant thoughts, world view and concepts of the Middle Ages can be an inspiration for contemporary needs. Then, if modern societies and people apply those medieval ideals to their own time, they contributed to the concept of Medievalism.

Louise D’Arcens suggests that it is quite difficult to define Medievalism because the concept covers a wide “range of cultural practices, discourses, and material artefacts with a daunting breadth of scope, temporally, geographically, and culturally” (2). However, D’Arcens divides the concept of Medievalism into two different branches: the medievalism of the “found” Middle Ages and the medievalism of the “made” Middle Ages. The “found” type refers to the direct relation or contact with the Middle Ages through “material remains of the medieval past surviving into the post-medieval era” (2). On the other hand, the “made” type is more related to the texts, performances and art that are produced or written in the post-medieval era according to the artists’ or writers’ own interpretation of the Middle Ages. It can be argued that “found” medievalism is objective since it depends on historical remains and documents which can be classified with direct clues and reflections of the Middle Ages. Conversely, “made” medievalism is subjective since personal interpretation of the Middle Ages and medieval ideals come into prominence.

In the history of English-British Medievalism, there were social and cultural factors which accelerated the concept’s development. Especially, in the eighteenth century, the British society witnessed great changes which affected the whole course of the era. Most importantly, the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and the disappearance of the yeoman class were the essential events which created a sense of longing for the past. The yeomen were regarded as the most important community of the British society since they were the producers of the livelihood of the nation. Paul Mantoux

explains the function of the yeomen as follows: “A yeoman was essentially a freeholder who owned the field on which he lived and cultivated it himself. But the name also applied to copyholders, whose family had tilled the same bit of land for several generations” (137). It can be inferred that they individually cultivated their own land without any support of large scale businesses. However, with the Industrial Revolution, their importance lost its impact since mechanization took control of almost every aspect of the nation and all the small scale businesses were fated to end as it can be seen in the class of yeomen because most of these common people had limited land and work force, and they were having difficulty in making ends meet. (Mantoux 140-142).

Since the Industrial revolution supported big scale production and organizations, the yeomen could not survive in the marketplace. Instead of the yeomen, a new class emerged in society: the factory workers. They were working under harsh conditions and in filthy places. The lives of these workers became mechanized because they worked for long hours without any breaks and their sole concern was to earn money to survive. It can be suggested that the positive image of the yeomen left its place to the negative portrayal of the factory workers and this shift in societal groups led people to look for better examples for themselves. They searched for better conditions and lives but the answer did not exist in the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century. As a result, they found solace in the Middle Ages. People in the eighteenth century started to compare and contrast the condition of their own society and the lives of individuals in the Middle Ages. People lost connection with themselves but in the Middle Ages, people were familial and it was a tight-knit society which was dependent on personal relationship. Hence, as Chandler argues, “[m]edievalism was a response to the ever growing problems arising from the Industrial Revolution” (4).

Not only in the eighteenth century but also in the nineteenth century, the British society suffered from the sudden changes which took place after the Industrial Revolution. There was anxiety over everything in the century. Many people had to live in very unhygienic places; the rate of unemployment was increasing day by day. Moreover, the rate of crime was rising continuously and the understanding of morality

was losing its importance in society. There were not many options for the unmarried women of the middle class. They could either choose to be an angel in the house or they could abandon the path of virtue. It was estimated that there were almost fifty thousand prostitutes only in London (Chapman 51). It can be remarked that the idealized concept of the feudal family, knighthood and the chaste womanhood in the Middle Ages became a hope for the Victorians. They were in search of better conditions so as to protect themselves from the negative aspects of daily life in the nineteenth century. All of these fears and hopes were also reflected in the literature of the period. Writers used the Middle Ages as an expression of their anxieties regarding their age and they used Medievalism as a form of escapism. In other words, in their works, writers created their own utopias in which they could ignore the realities of their time.

Alice Chandler, in her book *A Dream of Order*, discusses what triggered the emergence of Medievalism in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. First of all, the literary texts which belonged to the Anglo-Saxon language started to be studied at Oxford and Cambridge, and these lectures accelerated the publication of Old English texts (14). It can be propounded that the public now had access to these publications and for the first time they met with old texts. Secondly, in 1707, The London Society of Antiquaries started to focus on “the physical and documentary evidence for the past [which] were called antiquaries” (Nurse, ‘The Society of Antiquaries’). Apart from the London Society, other foundations related to the antiquaries appeared and all of them supported medieval research.

Another important factor which enhanced the development of Medievalism was the Graveyard poets and their poetry. The term “Graveyard poetry” refers to “a rather loose conglomeration of British poetry from the early to mid-eighteenth century that meditated upon the transience of life, the imminence of death, and (on most occasions) the consolation accorded by a Christian afterlife” (Parisot 1). Not just in the Graveyard Poets’ poems but also in most of the eighteenth century authors’ works, there was a sense of revival of the past which was regarded as fragile, and its monuments were accepted as the symbols of mortality. However, these reflections were more dominant

in the Graveyard Poets since they were obsessed with the past and death, and this obsession induced them to focus on the Middle Ages in which people gave importance to the idea of mortality. There were certain phrases used by these poets such as ‘low-browed misty walls’, ‘gloomy aisles’ and ‘the cloister’s silent gloom’ and such expressions were used in their poems so as to signify that a grave is the only end after the path of glory (Chandler 18-19).

Apart from the Graveyard poets, Sir Walter Scott is also one of the most significant contributors to the medieval revival with his metrical romances published between 1805 and 1813 (Gamer, *Romanticism*, 163). In his historical novels and poems, Scott used medieval settings and its traditions. It can be argued that Scott’s works are also important in that they provided a wide range of information for the study of the medieval period. By looking at his notes which he added to his works, it can be suggested that he read a great deal of sources so as to bring together this information (Chandler 27). For example, in his *Marmion* (1808), there are pages of information about medieval life and customs ranging from the process of becoming a knight to the structure of a medieval castle. Scott’s childhood was the major reason why he attached himself to medieval life. His early years were close to the feudal society in regard to the medieval customs of service and tenure. In 1773, since he was a child with health problems, his parents sent him to Sandyknowe Farm which belonged to the grandparents of Sir Walter Scott. His aunt Janet was always by his side and she always told stories and read ballads to him. Also, she told the stories of his great-great-great grandfather William who was a knight in the reign of James I (“Sandyknowe and Early Childhood”). It can be suggested that Scott was isolated from city life and he spent most of his childhood in the rural areas of Scotland. Furthermore, he was fascinated with his aunt’s stories related to his family origins. All of these factors might have influenced Scott’s interest in medieval life, traditions, and customs. However, Scott saw that these traditions started to disappear in his society. As a result, he gave life to his own version of a medieval ideal by combining his personal experiences and his readings about the Middle Ages. Elizabeth Fay comments on Scott’s medievalist attitude as follows: “Scott was a self-medievalized writer, absorbing into his personality aspects of the ideal medieval persona [...]it is his earlier poetry- despite its

typically sixteenth-century setting- that established Scott's connection to the Middle Ages for his contemporaries" (72). As Chapman states, in his works, Scott created such a lively image of those times that none of his predecessors have achieved to give the same effect since he made references to his own times by combining his messages with medieval traditions and customs (34). In other words, Scott lamented the loss of values of the former ages because he saw that his society witnessed a painful process of transformation. John Stuart Mill explains this transition in his essay "The Spirit of the Age":

The first of the leading peculiarities of the present age, is that it is an age of transition. Mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones. When we say outgrown, we intend to prejudge nothing. A man may not be either better or happier at six-and-twenty, than he was at six years of age; but the same jacket which fitted him then, will not fit him now. (53)

Mill's comments shed light on Scott's attitude towards his age. As Mill underlines, the old traditions and institutions, which Scott tried to bring back to his age, lost their importance and place in society. By giving the jacket example, Mill showed that it was not certain whether a person was happier or not in the old times but his perception of the world changed because the world around him was not the same as when he was six years old. The old values started to be erased by the changes that took place during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. By showing how the old values began to weaken in his world, Scott aimed to show, as Chandler says, "the decay of the medieval ideal and [it] would be a potentially corrosive force in any age" (35).

Not many women writers used Medievalism in their works. Chris Jones remarks that "[u]ndoubtedly medievalist poetry has largely been a male preserve" (22) and he continues by saying "medievalism slowly ebbs out of the mainstream of British poetry after Tennyson, Morris, Rossetti and other nineteenth-century medievalisers such as Swinburne, and even Matheww Arnold" (23). Interestingly enough, the concept of the Middle Ages was also used by women poets of the time. Just as it can be observed in the English Romantic tradition, there was also a male dominance in the production of the medievalist texts. It can be suggested that it resulted from the fact that women did not publish medieval texts as often as men. However, for women writers, Medievalism

provided a necessary cover for their criticism of the age. As women were not expected to comment on political issues and to criticize society and the state, by using the medieval setting and traditions as a cover, they could freely express their own thoughts and emotions without any patriarchal restrictions.

As Judith Johnston stated, “[w]omen’s writings have rarely been associated with Victorian medievalism” (7). However, Margaret Holford can be regarded as one of the forerunners of the movement in the women’s canon and there were other poets who also employed the elements of the Middle Ages such as Amelia Opie. In order to understand the function of Medievalism in Opie’s works, she can be compared to Anna Letitia Barbauld. These two names are quite significant in understanding how Medievalism helped in escaping from the harsh criticisms of the critics. Barbauld was criticized very harshly by the literary journals of her time since she wrote a poem called *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812) in which she discusses the colonial expansion of the British Empire. She did not use Medievalism to secure her position as a poet. On the other hand, Amelia Opie, who was an English poet, also published a poem called “The Warrior’s Return” “in which she criticized the wars with France, especially the bloodiness of the Peninsular Wars and the political vanity that had caused Britain to enter many unnecessary wars, a message very similar to the one for which Barbauld was critically crucified” (Saunders 31). Opie and Barbauld almost touched upon the same issue but Opie did not become a scapegoat of the critics as Barbauld. The difference of Opie resulted from the way she treated her topic. It can be assumed that Opie was quite aware of the fact that she would be criticized because of the subject matter of her poem. Although her work clearly included the contemporary references, she used the medieval setting as a shield to protect herself from possible criticisms. Consequently, Medievalism functioned as an escape for women poets from the social restrictions and criticisms of their age. Though it was not used as commonly as males, medieval settings, ideals and characters became sufficient agents for women to express their actual thoughts and feelings about their age.

1.6.MARGARET HOLFORD AND HER POETIC IDENTITY

When the condition and attitude of women poets in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries are taken into consideration, Margaret Holford clearly differs from her contemporaries. Most of the women poets of the eighteenth century used animals and fairies in their works as a shield in order to avoid “man-made regulations and cultural pressures” (Doody 26). However, it can be indicated that Margaret Holford did not share the same ambitions with other women poets. Holford did not behave timidly in regard to choosing her subject matter and personas. Although she was aware of the fact that she was going to be criticized by male critics in terms of her choice of the topics of her works, Holford apparently took firm action while writing her two most accomplished long poems.

Holford’s use of Medievalism is distinctive when she is compared to her contemporaries. On the surface, it can be put forth that she used medieval setting and characters as an escape or a precaution for herself as it can be seen in Opie’s example. Nevertheless, she chooses two very interesting figures as protagonists, that is, William Wallace and Margaret of Anjou. These two names hold controversial places in British history. As Keen emphasizes, though William Wallace was a famous Scottish leader who was associated with freedom, in the English records, Wallace is regarded as a guerilla leader or a public robber who threatened the English crown in the late 1200s (66). By choosing such a debatable figure of the Middle Ages, Holford risked her position as a woman poet since in her work, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk*, she praised William Wallace for his bravery and she depicted him as a true leader. In other words, as an English born lady, Holford wrote a poem in which she bestowed favors on a Scottish hero who caused great trouble for the English authorities.

Secondly, in her second epic work *Margaret of Anjou*, Holford again made an interesting choice. She made Margaret of Anjou the central character of the poem. Anjou, who was the wife of Henry VI, was regarded as one of the most bloodthirsty queens of Britain. She was a key figure and active participant in the War of the Roses, and Anjou was not loved and recognized by the public (Maurer 1). Holford used a

loathed queen figure for her poem and she described Anjou as a self-sacrificing mother figure. As it can be seen, Holford used two figures that are historically and politically unpopular in English history. On the one hand, Margaret Holford might have intended to shield herself from the severe attacks of male critics by using these names who lived in the Middle Ages. For example, if she had chosen contemporary names as protagonists, she would have been directly criticizing her own time but by using those medieval figures, she created a safe ground for herself to say whatever she desired without any restrictions or fears. On the other hand, it is also ironic that she most probably knew that her works would arouse interest because of her choice of protagonists since Margaret of Anjou and William Wallace were controversial and antipathetic figures in British history. As a result, it can be proposed that she did not use Medievalism only as an escape but also as a declaration of self-reliance. In comparison to the other women poets of the time, Holford might be regarded as a brave woman poet.

So as to understand Holford's bravery better, she should be compared to other women poets or writers of the time. One of the most striking examples is Joanna Baillie who was a close friend of Margaret Holford. Holford published a novel entitled *Warbeck of Wolfstein* (1820) in three volumes and "her novel was a reaction to Lord Byron's scandalous treatment of his then-estranged wife, Annabella Milbanke" (Slagle, 'Text and Context', 425). This novel might be regarded as a milestone in Holford's career in that she made a claim in the literary world as a novelist. After she published her two accomplished poems *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou*, and two other poetry collections, she preferred to write a novel in which Holford criticized one of the most acclaimed male writers of her time: Lord Byron. Furthermore, since it was a common practice for women writers to dedicate their works to other women writers, Holford wanted to dedicate her novel to Joanna Baillie. As a woman poet, Holford wrote a novel dedicated to another woman writer and the novel was an attack on a male poet of her time. Holford put herself at the center of the discussion openly. However, Joanna Baillie revealed in her letters that she was not comfortable with the dedication and before the publication of Holford's novel, she sent a letter to Holford in which she described her hesitance about the dedication:

In the first place the Author of this publication for the present to be entirely concealed and if possible to be mistaken for a man, but if it is dedicated to me it will be immediately suspected that it comes from a petticoated Author and critics will judge of it accordingly. The 'Edin' review too, a power not to be lightly esteemed, will either neglect or run down any thing that has got my name connected with it; and lastly all the world will beset me to know who the Author is; I shall be put to my wit's end to keep your counsel, besides not being at liberty from motives of delicacy to speak so frequently or so handsomely of the work as I might otherwise do. If in some future edition you should put your name to the work, I shall be most proud to have it known to the world that I am so happy as to possess your esteem & regard which I value so highly, but in the mean time I cannot suffer you from the kindness & affection & generosity of your nature to do yourself so much harm. (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2* 556)

Baillie did not want to be mentioned in Holford's novel's dedication. Baillie's words shed light on the condition and attitude towards women writers in Holford's time and she explicitly states that the critics would immediately attack women's works without hesitation. Baillie advised Holford to publish her novel anonymously and not to dedicate her work to "a petticoated Author" as herself. It is clear that Baillie feared both for her reputation and her friend's. Contrary to Baillie's advice, Margaret Holford published her novel with a dedication to Baillie:

My Dear Madam,

No spell could more forcibly awaken my mind to a sense of inferiority, or a feeling of diffidence in its own powers, than casting my eye, at the moment of appearance before the public, on the great name which so kindly lends its sanction to my performance. Whatever failure it may be my lot to encounter, a pledge so openly bestowed, of your friendship and consideration, is a proud distinction! That no time, or vicissitude, may deprive me of an honour so fondly valued, is, my dear Madam, the earnest hope of her who is always, with the most profound admiration. (Holford, *Warbeck*, iii-iv)

It is interesting to see that Holford did not take the advice of Baillie seriously, and she decided to dedicate her novel to Baillie regardless of "whatever failure it may be her lot to encounter" (Holford, *Warbeck*, iii-iv). It is not known why Holford refused to publish the work anonymously, but it can be argued that she did not fear the criticism and attacks of male critics. It can be suggested that Holford risked her own literary identity by publishing the novel with her name and dedicated it to a woman writer.

Three years later, Baillie again gave advice to Holford. It came to the surface thanks to Baillie's letter that Holford wrote a tragedy which was not published or acted on stage. In the letter, Baillie writes that "if you mean to offer it to the Stage or if you mean to publish it, remember my old advice to you, let the Author's name be kept a profound secret" (Baillie, *Further*, 90-91). It can be pointed out that Margaret Holford offers a very different outlook or image of a woman poet when she is compared to her contemporaries. Although she tried to distance herself from the patriarchal hegemony of the literary circles by using medieval settings and characters, her subject matter and plots did not secure her position in the male oriented literature.

Moreover, Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou* bear the characteristics of epic. Apart from her medieval subject matter and settings, Margaret Holford's poems are also important in terms of their epic qualities since in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, women did not prefer to write in the heroic mode (Friedman 203). It was believed that epic was a male territory in which certain male poets proved their expertise. Generally, women were excluded from epic writing since epic was regarded as a masculine way of telling a national story. As a result, as Adeline Johns-Putra underlines, women not only suffered from the anxiety of authorship but also anxiety of genre (*Heroes*, 30). However, women writers did try their hand in epic narratives and themes in the Romantic period and Joel Haefner comments that "when women poets during the Romantic period did embark on epic themes—and many of them did, including Hemans, Margaret Holford, Joanna Baillie—their focus was the effect of epochal events on those at home, especially women" (50). Although women wrote less in higher genres such as poetry than males, Holford was not one of them and her two major poems *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem* which are to be studied in the following chapters, include the basic qualities of the epic genre.

CHAPTER II
MARGARET HOLFORD'S WALLACE; OR, THE FIGHT OF
FALKIRK

How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
 Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
 All over his dear Country; left the deeds
 Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
 To people the steep rocks and river banks,
 Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
 Of independence and stern liberty.
 (William Wordsworth, *Composed at Corra*
Linn in Sight of Wallace's Tower, 1-8)

This chapter argues that Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* is one of the examples of epics which were published in the early nineteenth century. Although Holford entitles her poem "a metrical romance", her poem does not meet the basic characteristics of romances. As Cuddon puts it, "romances were works of fiction, or non-historical. In the 13th c. a romance was almost any sort of adventure story, be it of chivalry or of love" (758). In romances, personal adventures of a knight are told and the events in romances take place in unreal settings or exotic lands. From this vintage point, when Holford's *Wallace* is taken into consideration, her poem cannot be classified as an example of a romance since Holford does not write the personal adventures of a knight but she is telling the story of William Wallace who represents his nation and Scotland. It can be suggested that Holford sheds light on the heroic actions of the Scottish hero. Moreover, Hermann Fischer states that "when a historical personality is made the hero of a romance, the emphasis is not on his historical mission, of which only the legendary aspects remain, but on his individual problems (in particular those relating to love and adventure)" (28). However, in Holford's poem, it is apparent that the focus is not on the "individual problems" but on the national problems since William Wallace in the poem tries to save his nation from the English rule. Besides, although there are certain characteristics of romances in Holford's poem such as supernatural agency and the disguise element, these are not the distinctive qualities of it because they can also be used in epics. As a result, in this chapter, the

main focus will be on the characteristics of the epic genre in Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk*.

Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk; A Metrical Romance* was published in 1809 in London and its second edition appeared in 1810 in London. Before the publication of her poem, Holford's mother sent a letter to the publishing house so as to suggest that her daughter's name should not appear on the title page or in an advertisement. Interestingly, the publishing house printed Margaret Holford's name in an advertisement of *Wallace* regardless of her mother's request. Upon this, Holford personally wrote a letter to Cadell and Davies and she stated her disappointment after seeing her name in the advertisement. Finally, after the continual requests of Margaret Holford and her mother, the first edition of the poem was published anonymously (Levy and Irwin 119). However, in the second edition, she added her name to the title page. There are several differences between the first and the second editions. First of all, in the first edition in which she did not put her name, there was a preface written by Margaret Holford, but in the second edition, she excluded this preface. Secondly, she changed her publisher for the second edition. The 1809 edition was published by Cadell and Davies. On the other hand, the 1810 edition was published by Longman and there is no evidence for what led Holford to change her publisher. It can be claimed that Margaret Holford deliberately preferred the publishing house of Cadell and Davies for her first major work since:

[t]he firm is especially noteworthy for its publication of several influential female authors of the period [the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries], including Frances Burney, Hannah Cowley, Felicia Hemans, Hannah More, Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliffe, and Helen Maria Williams. (Levy and Irwin 99)

It can be suggested that Cadell and Davies supported female authorship and printing. As a result, women writers probably knew that they would not face any obstacles regarding the publication of their works and this led them to choose this firm as their first choice in publishing their works like Margaret Holford.

In her poem, Holford recounts the last days of William Wallace who was a Scottish warrior, later attributed the title of “the Guardian of Scotland.” William Wallace is known as the fighter of freedom for the Scottish nation. He is regarded as one of the most significant historical figures of the Middle Ages both for the Scottish and English nations. *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* was written in canto format and it consists of five cantos. Briefly, Canto I can be seen as an introduction to the characters and the events of the poem. Holford introduces her characters and she tries to set the tone of the poem. In Canto II, Holford narrates the preparations for the Fight of Falkirk and Canto III sheds light on the English ruler Edward III and his knights. In other words, in this canto, Holford shows the perspective of the English authorities. In Canto IV, the author narrates the time just before the battle and then the battle scene between the Scottish and English sides. In her last canto, Holford gives the accounts of the last days of Wallace who flees from the English authorities. Moreover, it is revealed in the last canto that Wallace’s page, David, is actually his wife, Agnes, who disguised herself in the company of Wallace and his troops. It can be asserted that Holford’s poem is vast in scope. Although Holford does not give any specific information about the setting, it is understood that most of the action takes place in the wilderness of Scotland. She shows the military camps of both sides, and apparently, their camps are not very close to each other. As a result, it can be concluded that the whole action in Holford’s poem takes place in unspecified forests and wildernesses of Scotland.

For Holford, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* held a significant place in her career as it was her first acclaimed work among her other publications. The work received criticism from *The Literary Panorama* (1810), *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (1810) and *The Quarterly Review* (1818). These magazines and reviews were quite noteworthy for any writer since through their analysis and criticism, the writers’ works were promoted and the writers reached a wider reading public. Moreover, Holford’s *Wallace* was republished in America and one of the American reviews commented on the republication of Holford’s poem as follows: “It is the production of a lady—‘Miss Holford’ and exhibits very uncommon powers, both of fancy and versification. We are happy to find that it has been republished in this country, and can, with great

confidence, recommend it to our reader” (*The American Review* 175). It can be claimed that her poem acquired overseas fame after it was published.

Although the work succeeded in attracting the attention of the American reading public, the British society did not pay the same attention to her work as the American readers did. Holford’s poem went through two editions in England, but it did not create a wide ranging interest in her society. It can be asserted that there are certain reasons behind this situation and the fundamental reason might be the choice of the figure of William Wallace. The nineteenth century English society did not have sufficient knowledge about the historical background of Wallace, because there was limited access to the medieval texts when Holford published her poem. Even today, the sources which give information about William Wallace are very limited and when the resources of the nineteenth century in terms of the public access to the historical documents are taken into account, it was not possible for the great majority of the public to read about him. Although there were a growing number of re-publications of medieval texts in the nineteenth century, all the readers did not have the opportunity to access these sources (Chandler 14).

Because of the scarcity of sources about William Wallace, the English society did not know who Wallace was in reality, and what Wallace signified for both nations. In the eyes of the English public, William Wallace was Scottish, and a leader of a revolt against the English crown. It can be suggested that when they saw a literary work related to Wallace, they bought it so as to learn about his life and his achievements. At this juncture, Holford’s *Wallace* did not live up to the expectations of the public in that they did not find any background information about William Wallace since, in her work, Holford starts to tell Wallace’s story without giving any information about his early life or adulthood. In other words, Holford only sheds light on the final days of his life before the Fight of Falkirk. The readers could not understand how Wallace came to such a prominent place in his society and why the title, “the Guardian of Scotland” was attributed to him. *The Literary Panorama* complained about the same aspect of Holford’s *Wallace* as follows:

Why should we expect to find this hero at the head of a long list of Scottish nobles, each of which has a character for intrepidity and patriotism, not unworthy that of his commander in chief? What has he done, that should induce these heads of clans to yield obedience to their inferior?--- especially, when we know, that they not rarely refused submission of the king himself [...] The writer has assumed too much in supposing her readers to be adequately familiar with the story. ('Wallace: or the Fight of Falkirk' 415)

The review underlines why the leaders of other clans are in command of Wallace although he is inferior to them. In other words, Margaret Holford demanded much effort from her readers, and that they should have the knowledge about Wallace's life before they read the poem.

Choosing William Wallace as a protagonist as an English born poet was notably unexpected and controversial. When the attitude towards women writers is taken into consideration, Holford was aware of the fact that she was putting herself in a difficult situation since William Wallace was a debatable figure of the Middle Ages, and his life can be interpreted according to the two points of view: the English and the Scottish. According to the English authorities, Wallace was an outlaw who caused great trouble for the authority of the English crown. Moreover, Wallace was labeled as a public robber in the records of English chronicles. He was even compared to Robin Hood, and an English commentator called Wallace "the Scottish Robin Hood" in his chronicle (Grant n.p.). On the other hand, Wallace was a symbol of a true leader and a fighter of freedom who tried to save Scotland from the tyranny of England in the eyes of the Scottish people. As a result, Holford's treatment of her subject was so important that she had to portray Wallace either from an English perspective or a Scottish perspective. However, she did not fully reflect either the English or Scottish perspectives. She openly declares in her preface to *Wallace* that she will not insult the Scottish nation nor will she portray them as inferior to the English. So as to show the Scottish nation's ambition and military intelligence, Holford makes references to Scottish history in regard to their victories in the preface and says: "It is not 'by boeing' that the Caledonians have obtained their very high character for military glory; it was not 'by boeing' that Abercrombie won the battle of Alexandria" (viii). On the one hand, Holford did not fully adapt one approach to her poem. It can be put forward that she portrays Wallace as a true leader and the savior of the Scottish nation. On the

other hand, she also praises the English crown and authorities. It can be claimed that Holford tries to show both the perspectives of English and Scottish sides, but it is clear that her pro-English attitude takes precedence over her pro-Scottish attitude. As Slagle points out, the exclusion of William Wallace's punishment by the English authorities proves that she chooses to tell Wallace's story from the English perspective so as to protect herself from the harsh attacks which might come from the journals and reviews ('Margaret Holford' 122).

Holford's pro-English attitude can be clearly seen in the opening poem of *Wallace* and she dedicates her poem to one of her female friends, Miss Gertrude Louisa Allen. Her dedication poem consists of six nine-line stanzas and the sixth stanza explicitly contains nationalistic feelings:

Yes! For mine eyes first open'd on the day
 In England! Gem and glory of the west;
 Where the light minstrel pours the unbidden lay,
 Untremulous, untrampled, unoppress'd,
 Pours from a free, a proud, a happy breast!
 Home of the exile! Mother of the brave!
 England! Among the nations singly bless'd!
 O'er the wide world whose arms are stretch'd to save,
 Whose silver throne stands fix'd, amid the eternal wave! (iv)

In the first two lines of the stanza, Holford refers to the fact that she was born in England and she describes her country as the "Gem and glory of the west." In the seventh line, she implies that England is the only nation which is blessed by God and in the last two lines, Holford suggests that England's power covers the whole world and its authority cannot be destroyed by anyone or anything. Her description and symbolisation of England can be regarded as nationalistic, and these nationalistic reflections can be found in the whole poem. In the final stanza of the opening poem, Holford expands her nationalistic metaphors by referring to George III who was the king of Britain in her time. In this stanza, Holford praises her king and she calls him their father, friend, sovereign and king: "Hail George the Good! Our sovereign, and our friend!/ Hail Christian king! Thy people's father, hail!" (v). She also expresses that when the king sends his soldiers to battle and they fight for the king, God also helps those soldiers:

“and when they fight for thee, ’tis heaven directs the blow!” (v). Holford clearly puts forward that God is on the side of their Christian king and with the support of God, they could not be defeated by anybody.

Margaret Holford’s choice of her protagonist raises the question why she preferred to use such a controversial Scottish figure for her work although she knew that she could encounter certain difficulties. As mentioned earlier, Medievalism played an important role in the early nineteenth century. The English society witnessed great changes as a result of the Industrial Revolution which affected the country both positively and negatively. Its negative aspects created dissatisfaction among the society, and people were looking for better conditions. Life and culture of the Middle Ages became a means of hope for the society. As a result, there was a growing interest in medieval life, characters and settings which paved the way for the representations of the Middle Ages in the nineteenth century literary works. More importantly, there was a growing sympathy for and interest in the figure of William Wallace in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. Nancy Moore Goslee explains the reason for the growing interest in William Wallace as follows: “During the post-Waterloo years, however, as in the early 1790s, Wallace’s struggle for Scottish freedom can [...] represent a revolutionary struggle for individual civil liberties” (36). Besides the effect of Medievalism in terms of using Wallace in literary works, there is another reason behind the cult of William Wallace which is the idea of Unionist-nationalism. When the Act of the Union of the English and Scottish parliaments was passed in 1707, the first step was taken in the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. As Morton puts forward, “the articles of the Union guaranteed the maintenance of the Scottish legal system, the autonomy of the Scottish church and the Scottish system of education” and “[b]y securing the ‘sacred three’ the Union possessed a strength born out of flexibility and recognition of the history of the Scottish nation” (7). The union aimed to unite these two nations historically and culturally, and until the nineteenth century, authorities from both sides tried to ease negative representations and hostilities between Scotland and England. Especially, the Napoleonic Wars at the end of the eighteenth century strengthened the bonds between Scotland and England since these two nations fought against the same enemy: France (Morton 8). Political

developments with Scotland can also be observed in the cultural developments, and many English historians, novelists and poets began to take interest in the history and literature of Scotland. This is the time when the interest in the Wallace figure started to flourish in English literature. William Wallace began to be used as a symbol of freedom not just for the Scottish nation but also for the English, and as Colin Kidd asserts, “the story of Wallace [...] had become intertwined with the history of English liberty” (‘The English Cult’). It can be indicated that William Wallace was mutually chosen as a figure of freedom for both nations and Wallace became a medium to connect these two nations’ histories. Although William Wallace is accepted as a mutual figure of freedom, it is ironic to see that Holford is criticized because of her choice of the protagonist.

Another reason for Holford’s choice of William Wallace as a protagonist can be the ideal which Wallace fights for: freedom of his country. As stated earlier, women both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries did not have much freedom either in private or in public spheres. Women’s freedom had been restricted and they were restrained by the ideologies of society. It can be put forward that the Wallace figure became a means for woman writers to declare their discontent about the restrictions imposed on them and to show resistance against male hegemony. They might have easily associated themselves with a hero who fought for freedom. It can be asserted that Wallace’s desire for freedom is the desire of women who fight for their restricted freedom (Slagle, *Romantic* 19).

Although William Wallace is one of the most important and famous heroes of Scotland, not much is known about his background. Most of the information about his life is derived from Blind Harry’s epic poem, *The Wallace*. The exact date of the composition of the work is not known but it is accepted that it was written in the fifteenth century (McKim viii-ix). Almost all the historical documents and books refer to Blind Harry’s poem for William Wallace’s life since there are no other reliable sources related to the Scottish hero. Moreover, many historians used Blind Harry’s poem as a source which shed light on Wallace’s life and to specify and highlight the events in his life since Blind Harry claimed in his poem that his work depended on John Blair’s prose

manuscript in Latin and this document was submitted to the approval of Pope Boniface (Mackay 14). If Blind Harry was truthful about his source, his poem might be regarded as a reliable source for the life of Wallace because John Blair was a school friend of Wallace and later his chaplain. As a result, Blair's document holds a significant place in the history of Wallace. However, Blair's work has never been found and this raises questions about Blind Harry and to what extent he adhered to Blair's manuscript (Mackay 14-15).

Historians are aware of the fact that there are chronological mistakes in Blind Harry's *The Wallace*, and Alan Young and Michael J. Stead comment on this issue as follows: "Historians have shown that Blind Harry's *The Wallace* is a complex blend of some fact with much fiction, distortions of other chronicles and incorrect chronology. There are a number of major historical inaccuracies embedded in the poem" (10). Furthermore, in Blind Harry's poem, it is observed that there is a pro-Scottish attitude and the poet "describe[s] with relish a series of Wallace's violent anti-English acts of vengeance" (Young and Stead 10). It can be suggested that Wallace was portrayed as a bloodthirsty person fighting against the English by Blind Harry. As Anne McKim asserts, "Blind Harry's frequently emotive language seems designed not only to express Wallace's rage but also to incite hatred of the English in his readers" (xvii). In spite of its pro-Scottish attitude, its chronological mistakes and questions about the reliability of Blind Harry's poem about Wallace, Blind Harry's work is still regarded as the essential literary work in Scottish literature which gives a detailed account of William Wallace.

Not only the poem but also the poet's reliability is open to discussion since there is limited information about Blind Harry's life. According to William Henry Schofield, "Blind Harry was only the author's pseudonym" (12) and the poet was not blind and there were certain fallacies in regard to his life (12). Although this work is quite beneficial in helping people to understand Wallace's deeds and achievements, it was not appealing to the English public of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it was written in Middle Scottish (McKim xviii) which made it difficult to read by English-born citizens. For this reason, two revised edition of Blind Harry's poem appeared in the late eighteenth century. First, in 1790, *The Metrical History of William Wallace*,

Carefully Transcribed from the MS. Copy of That Work, in the Advocate's Library was published and in 1799, William Hamilton's *The History of the Life and Adventures, and Heroic Actions, of the Reowned Sir William Wallace, General and Governor of Scotland* was published as a translated version of Blind Harry's poem (Simpson 707). These two works helped readers to understand and learn about Wallace's life story. After the publication of these two translations, Wallace started to find its place more commonly in the literary works since the English public started to recognize him. In 1791, Henry Siddons wrote a novel entitled *William Wallace: or, the Highland Hero, A Tale, Founded on Historical Facts*. In 1799, Robert Buchanan who was a Scottish dramatist published a play called *Wallace: a Tragedy* (Simpson 707).

The figure of Wallace appears in many works in the early nineteenth century as well. In 1802, John Finlay published his poem *Wallace; or, the Vale of Ellerslie* (Goslee 41). As it can be observed from the works published until 1802, there was a male dominance in the works which told the story of William Wallace. However, in 1809, Margaret Holford published her *Wallace; or, the Fight of Falkirk*. As Erik Simpson puts forward, "the Wallace myth took a new turn, becoming the means by which Margaret Holford became the first woman to declare herself the 'minstrel' of a full-length romance in Scott's mode" (708). Holford's poem holds a significant place in the canon and her work can be regarded as the first long narrative poem written by an English woman poet about a Scottish hero, William Wallace. As it can be observed in Erik Simpson's compilation of the literary works written about William Wallace, until Holford's publication, only males produced literary works about Wallace, and Holford changed the direction of the Wallace trend. After Holford's poem, woman writers, including poets and novelists, began to produce works related to the Scottish hero. In 1810, Jane Porter published her novel, *The Scottish Chiefs* and in 1821, Joanna Baillie published her *Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters* in which she also narrated the legend of William Wallace. Since Baillie and Holford were close friends, Baillie most probably feared that she would be accused of borrowing from Holford's poem but in her preface and in her notes for the work, she made references to Holford's poetic genius and talent who dealt with her subject in her own way. In her preface, Baillie says "Wallace, or the Field of Falkirk, written in nervous and harmonious verse, by a

genius particularly successful in describing the warlike manners and deeds of ancient times [...] is a poem that does honour to its author and to the subject she has chosen” (*Metrical*, xix). However, Baillie’s treatment of the subject differed from Holford in that Baillie preferred to tell Wallace’s story from the Scottish viewpoint and it is apparent that there is a pro-Scottish attitude in her Wallace legend.

In all the above mentioned literary works which deal with the figure of William Wallace, there are multiple approaches to and interpretations of his life. However, it is necessary to take a closer look at his life so as to understand to what extent and what parts of Wallace’s life are narrated by Margaret Holford. Before Wallace proved himself as the guardian of Scotland, the atmosphere in Scotland was unstable in the late thirteenth century. A never-ending struggle between England and Scotland on account of the independence of Scotland started when King Alexander III died accidentally while he was riding (Murison 11). At the time of his death, Scotland was enjoying its most prosperous time and it was a fast developing country, but Alexander III’s death in 1285 thwarted the development of the country because his death created a chaos in the royal family as everyone knew that there was not any possible candidate for the throne in the family as Alexander’s family was struggling with unexpected deaths (Murison 12). His first queen, his two sons and his daughter died without leaving any heirs to the throne. As a result, Alexander wanted to prevent any kind of English claim over Scotland, and he immediately summoned a council in which he proposed to his nobles that the heiress of Scotland should be Margaret who was the Princess of Norway. Later, he also married again but his wife did not bear any children. The future of Scotland depended on Margaret but the unexpected death of Princess Margaret left Scotland with a never-ending struggle for the throne (Murison 18).

At this point, as Murison puts forward, England’s intervention was inevitable, and Edward I was aware of the fact that there was unrest in Scotland (20). When all the possible candidates for the throne lost their lives, many competitors for the Scottish throne appeared. However, Edward I tried to take advantage of this situation and he wanted to prove that he had a rightful claim for the Scottish throne. Edward I was quite

careful while handling this issue, he used all the legal ways to secure himself as a true successor. He sent his men to all the religious houses looking for evidence which would prove his claim to the throne. Although he found the document which he needed, there were twelve competitors for the throne. Eight of them accepted his superiority but the rest did not (21-25). Moreover, there was Baliol who was the closest candidate for the throne, and with the common decision of Edward I's council, Baliol was chosen as the new ruler of Scotland. After a brief period, Edward again claimed that he had a document which showed that he was the only rightful heir to Scotland and he declared himself as Lord Superior (29).

While Edward I was trying to secure his position in Scotland, William Wallace was also struggling with the English oppression. Throughout his life, Wallace was labeled with many names such as "outlaw," "freedom fighter," "the Guardian of Scotland" and lastly "fugitive." All of these labels resulted from his engagement with the English forces. The first encounter of Wallace with the English forces took place while he was fishing. Five Englishmen demanded what Wallace had caught from the river. There was a dispute between him and the Englishmen. Wallace killed all of them and he left the village, and he looked for shelter in the forests (Mackay 50-52). According to Wallace, he had justifiable reasons for his hatred of the English. His father was murdered by an English knight, his mother was also exiled and the oppression of his countrymen by England triggered his nationalism. While planning to avenge his father's death, he encountered the English forces a second time and Wallace was again victorious. Although the English side was superior in number, Wallace and his men succeeded in overcoming them (Mackay 53-55). After these two successful confrontations with the English, William Wallace was outlawed in his own country by the English council.

However, his outlawry was valid until his victory over the English at the Battle of Stirling. As Mackay summarizes, Edward I now was aware of the threat of Wallace over the English authority and he sent an army to suppress Wallace and his men. Stirling is strategically a very important place in the kingdom. The bridge at Stirling can be regarded as a gateway to the Highlands (139). The victory gained in this

specific area would be a great benefit for both sides. As a result, the English army and Wallace's party were fully aware of the importance of Stirling. However, it is clear that the English had more advantages than the opposite party in terms of military power. Besides, the English army of that time was known by its discipline and they had not been defeated for a long time. On the other hand, Wallace's army consisted of light cavalry and untrained soldiers and it might be assumed that there was no chance of winning against such a powerful English army. However, Wallace's tactic against the English made victory against them possible. The bridge changed the fate of the Scottish forces. At first, the English side offered peace to the Scottish army and they wanted them to surrender. However, Wallace and his men did not accept, and the English army started to cross the bridge. Wallace and his men did not attack immediately until most of the English soldiers crossed the bridge and then, Wallace gave a signal to attack them. After this point, Wallace's men inflicted heavy casualties on the English. Most of the soldiers were killed by the Scottish side and Wallace gained victory over the English army (Mackay 141,149).

The victory at Stirling Bridge (1297) was a turning point for Wallace in that he was declared "the Guardian of Scotland." Also, as Murison states, this victory "was all-important to the Scots, in demonstrating that even the mighty armies of England might be disastrously overthrown, and that Scotland might, after all, succeed in throwing off the intolerable yoke of foreign domination. It was a star of hope" (90). Although the Scottish forces gained victory under the command of William Wallace, this victory raises doubts in the minds of historians about the credibility of what really happened at Stirling. Normally, various bits of information were collected from different chronicles or sources so as to analyze and comment on medieval battles. However, the battle of Stirling Bridge was only recorded by an English chronicler, Walter of Guisborough. As a result, this situation raises the question of reliability of Walter of Guisborough's account (Prestwich n.p.).

Wallace's "Guardian" title was taken away from him when he was defeated by the English army at the Fight of Falkirk. In 1298, Edward I again sent his army to Scotland so as to end the rebellion triggered by William Wallace. This time, the English army

was much better prepared since they did not want to lose the battle against Wallace and his army. Both sides confronted each other at Falkirk in the summer of 1298 and the Scottish side led by Wallace was outnumbered greatly by the English forces. The Scots could not resist such a powerful army and they were defeated. Most of them lost their lives but William Wallace managed to escape from the battlefield and then, he was a fugitive who ran away from the English authorities. Until 1305, Wallace lived in the forest in order to escape from the English soldiers. Yet, he was betrayed by his own countrymen. He was finally captured by the English forces and was handed over to Edward I. Wallace was accused of treason and he was sentenced to death. First, he was hanged and drowned, and finally, he was quartered on 23 August 1305 and four parts of his body were displayed in Stirling, Perth, Newcastle and Berwick so as to show the power and control of Edward I over Britain (“William Wallace and Scottish Resistance”).

Margaret Holford focuses on Wallace’s defeat at the Fight of Falkirk. Although she aims to glorify the Scottish hero, her choice of the events in his life is controversial in that she could have chosen his victory over the English forces at the Battle of Stirling if she truly desired to praise his heroism. But, she prefers to use his defeat at the Battle of Falkirk in her long narrative poem. In order to analyze her stance in regard to English-Scottish relations more clearly and to understand her choice of William Wallace as her protagonist, her preface which appeared in the 1809 edition of *Wallace* should be taken into account.

Margaret Holford began her preface by declaring that she would never ask for mercy of the public for her work. She was conscious that her poem might receive harsh criticism and censure from the public and she openly claims that “supplication only adds mortification to the punishment, which it seldom, if ever, averts” (vii). She asserts that if she begs for mercy, it only adds humiliation to her punishment and she writes that at the end of her journey, there were two possibilities for her: great happiness or shame. Holford also touches upon her choice of the protagonist and subject matter in the preface as follows:

[i]t is of little consequence to the reader whether or not the author of Wallace loves England and England's constitution and king; but it is of much consequence to the author's private feelings to declare, that no deficiency in *native* attachment directed to the choice of a subject. (viii) (emphasis original)

Holford knew that her Englishness was going to be criticized and questioned by the public after the publication of her poem, and apparently, she desired to clarify her aim and feelings about the subject. At the end of her preface, Holford openly discusses her main aim in writing *Wallace*. It can be suggested that Holford also shows a Unionist-Nationalist attitude towards Scotland and its people. She calls the Scottish people “our countrymen” and “fellow subjects,” and she continues by saying that “it is time to throw aside Macklin's malignant caricature [of the Scottish people]” (viii). She refers to Charles Macklin (1690-1797) who was an Irish dramatist and actor, who was notorious for his portrayal of the Scottish people in his play, *The Man of the World* (1793). His play was declined to be performed on stage since Lord Chamberlain believed that his satire of the Scottish was too cruel and extravagant but Macklin refused to change his plot or characters. His main aim was to show that the Scottish people were dangerous and selfish (McGirr 165). It can be interpreted that Holford also knew about Macklin's representation of the Scottish and she proposed that they should abandon this negative portrayal of the Scots, and the English society should see the Scottish as their brothers and sisters. She ends her preface as follows: “Cold, taciturn, and deliberate as the Scot may seem, put a pen or a sword into his hand, and he shall strike fire with it” (viii).

It can be remarked that Holford tried to soften and to erase the negative representation of the Scottish nation. This approach can also be observed in the poem. Holford's mild attitude towards Scotland and its people can be better understood by focusing on Canto III of the poem since it can be accepted as the most nationalistic canto of Holford's poem. In Canto III, she describes the camp and lords of the English side. Holford introduces each English knight by using positive adjectives which praise their characters. For example, she uses the adjectives ‘brave,’ ‘loyal,’ ‘hardy,’ and ‘gallant’ for earl Guy, William de Ross, Sir Ralph and Lord Berkeley. Moreover, she suggests that her muse will continue to comment on the bravery of the English lords even if they die: “Yet the Muse still lives—she lives to tell/ How bold their deeds—their

hearts how brave,/ To lift the fame-bestowing spell,/ Which bids their names arise, and quit the o'erwhelming grave!" (III. XVII. 27-30). Interestingly, Holford also uses the adjective "gallant" for William Wallace: "the gallant leader of the foe" (III. XXX. 8). It can be argued that even though she focuses on the English soldiers and king in this canto, Holford does not promote just one side. Both the Scottish and English fighters are celebrated equally in that Holford uses the adjective "gallant" for both an English lord and William Wallace. She equates a royal English lord with Wallace who is a foe of the English. Holford shows that Wallace is as brave as the other English lords. It can be put forward that Holford assumes the role of a mediator between England and Scotland by appreciating the efforts of both sides.

Holford also comments on the genre of her work in her preface and she states that "Wallace is a metrical romance, founded, indeed, on history" (vii). She suggests that her poem was based on history and at the end of her poem, she refers to her sources which she used during the writing process. These sources are Blind Harry's *The Wallace*, Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, Nesbitt's *Scottish Heritage*, William Dugdale's *The Baronage of England* and Holinshed's *Scottish Chronicles* (233-248). Although Holford mentions Blind Harry's poem in her sources, she chooses a very different path in describing Wallace and his background when her version is compared to Blind Harry's version. Although Wallace is generally described as a public robber and a fugitive in the English sources, in the fifteenth century poem, Wallace was depicted as a noble person whose ancestors are "traced back through the Crawford line on his mother's side, and on his father's side to the first 'gud Wallace', whom Blind Harry [...] identifies as the companion of Walter, the first Scottish Stewart" (McKim xiii). Blind Harry presents a new interpretation of Wallace's life by depicting him as a noble person. On the other hand, Holford does not give any information about the background of her hero nor does she make any references to his lineage.

Margaret Holford asserts that her *Wallace* is a metrical romance. As stated earlier, Holford was influenced by Sir Walter Scott while writing her poem and she even sent a copy of it to Scott so as to receive his opinion, but Scott did not reveal his thoughts about Holford's poem until Joanna Baillie urged him to comment on it (Baillie, *The*

Collected: Vol I, 252-253). Like Margaret Holford, many male and female writers were influenced by Scott's poems since his metrical romances sold excessively between 1805 and 1813. For example, Scott's *Marmion* (1808) sold more than 36,000 copies until 1825. (Gamer, *Romanticism* 163,191). In Michael C. Gamer's words, Sir Walter Scott is a poet who is regarded "[a]s the primary reviver and marketer of the metrical romance at the beginning of the nineteenth century" ("Marketing a Masculine", 523). As a result, many poets of the early nineteenth century took Scott as a model for their poems. In other words, they imitated his metrical romances. Furthermore, his imitators became targets of severe criticism and Lord Byron, who was one of the most influential Romantic poets, commented on Margaret Holford and other women poets who imitated Scott as follows: "Scott found peculiar favour & imitation among the fair sex. There was Miss Holford, and Miss Mitford, and Miss Francis; but with great respect be it spoken, none of his imitators did much honour to the original" (*The Poetical* 811). It is also revealed in one of Baillie's letters to Holford's sister, Mrs. Walker, that Byron's comment about her disturbed Holford very much (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol 2* 721).

As argued above, Holford was influenced by Scott's metrical romances. Especially, Scott's *Marmion* and Holford's *Wallace* have some parallelism in terms of their protagonist and format. In *Marmion*, Scott glorifies an English hero, Lord Marmion. On the other hand, Holford glorifies a Scottish hero, William Wallace. Additionally, both Scott and Holford used the canto format with irregular verse, and gothic and supernatural scenes in their poems. However, Scott's use of the gothic in his metrical romances differed from Margaret Holford since she did not employ the gothic and supernatural elements excessively in her poem, *Wallace*. For example, there is only one supernatural and gothic scene in her *Wallace* (Canto II).

In the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the gothic and the sentimental romance were associated with "feminized depreciations of the English novel" (Gamer, "Marketing a Masculine", 526) since there were a large number of women poets who used the gothic themes and settings in their poems. The perception of only women writers could employ gothic themes and characters was prevalent and Scott tried to

alter this perception. Michael Gamer comments on Sir Walter Scott's use of the gothic in his poems as follows:

Scott seeks to make the gothic more masculine by investing it with military patriotism. By locating the gothic in a historically "authentic" chivalric past and supplementing that past with diligent historical footnotes, he further seeks to avoid contemporary criticisms of the gothic as feminized and therefore inauthentic and unnatural. ("Marketing a Masculine", 531)

Sir Walter Scott unites the gothic with the historical past and "military patriotism" so as to weaken the perception of the gothic as feminized. Apparently, even though Margaret Holford was influenced by Scott's gothic tendency, they did not share the same ambition. It can be asserted that Holford only uses the gothic setting, themes and characters in order to enrich her plot in *Wallace*. To put it another way, Holford regards the gothic and supernatural as ornamental in her Wallace-oriented poem, not as a fundamental aspect of it. On the other hand, Walter Scott uses the gothic as an inseparable part of his poetry.

As stated earlier, Margaret Holford wrote *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* in a heroic mode and her poem bears the characteristics of the epic genre. Especially, many epic qualities can be found in her poem but to what extent she employs the traditional epic elements is open to discussion. For centuries, different rules and requirements in regard to writing an epic poem were suggested by critics, scholars and writers. One of the earliest theories on the epic genre was offered by Aristotle. His *Poetics* is regarded as the first work which theorizes on the different types of poetry such as epic and tragedy. After Aristotle, a great deal of writers followed his rules and suggestions. However, his rules went through several changes since each writer brought a new dimension to the genre. Thanks to the contributions of each writer, many definitions were made for epic poems. For example, As Cuddon puts it, "an epic is a long narrative poem, on a grand scale, about the deeds of warriors and heroes. [...] Epics are often of national significance in the sense that they embody the history and aspirations of a nation in a lofty or grandiose manner" (264). In epics, the main focus is on the heroic deeds of a national hero. There are certain epic qualities which are used by the poets and F. L. Lucas summarizes them as follows:

Unity of action, rapidity, the art of beginning in the middle; the use of the supernatural, of prophecy, of the underworld; the ornamental simile, the recurrent epithet; and above all, a nobility truthful, unstrained, incomparable except at moments in the sagas of the north. (qtd. in Merchant vii)

Although many definitions were offered by the scholars, each definition lost its validity in every century since similar to many other genres, epic is also open to change and in Paul Merchant's words, "the epic is a still developing and expanding form" (viii). Apart from different approaches to the definitions of epic, theorists, scholars and writers found themselves at the center of another quarrel of whether they should follow the ancients or the moderns as their models while writing an epic. Supporters of the ancients suggested that the classics were the true sources of emulation for an epic writer. On the other hand, supporters of the moderns believed that although the classics were aesthetically compelling, they were also irrelevant and barbaric (Putra, *The History* 85-86). Also, in England, in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, epic theory started to be shaped by English authors such as Dryden and Pope, and these authors can be regarded as important scholars and intellectuals in theorizing on the epic genre and these authors also shared their ideas on the discussion of ancients versus moderns. For example, Alexander Pope comments on the importance of the ancients as follows:

All that is left to us is to recommend our productions by the imitation of the Ancients: and it will be found true, that in every Age, the highest character for sense and learning has been obtain'd by those who have been most indebted to them. For to say truth, whatever is good sense must have been common sense at all times; and what we call learning, is but the knowledge of our predecessors. (*The Works*, xv)

Similar to Pope, many English writers and theorists brought forward new suggestions for writing epics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, as Stuart Curran puts forward, although there were established rules and approaches to the poetic genres such as epic and romance, the poetic genres were individually created by authors with regard to the time in which the authors lived (*Poetic Form* 8). There were accepted rules for epic and romance, and almost each poet tried to adopt those rules while writing one of these genres. As Curran highlights, it can be concluded that established rules were used by poets so as to create a framework or a skeleton for the specific

work. While completing their poems, they might deviate from those rules and they can add their own perspectives and interpretation. Alexander Pope can be given as an apparent example for this situation. As stated above, he was the one who defended the ancients and their rules in epic writing. However, he was also the one who violated the rules of the ancients while writing his mock-epic poems by combining different genres (Duff 123).

Epic has always been regarded as the territory of male artists. In other words, as Jeremy Downes states, “epic is men’s way of making up for the fact that they are not women” (13). As a result, women were excluded from the epic genre since it was believed that they were not capable of producing a true epic because of their lack of formal education. Although an epic poem was mostly attributed to male writers, they were also aware of the difficulty of the epic genre. For example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge argues that writing a true epic poem was not an easy task for him and it would take at least twenty years to complete it:

I should not think of devoting less than 20 years to an epic poem, Ten to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable mathematician. I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine—then the mind of man—then the minds of men—in all Travels, Voyages and Histories. So I would spend ten years—the next five to the composition of the poem—and the five last to the correction of it. So I would write haply not unhearing of that divine and rightly-whispering Voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestined Garlands, starry and unwithering. (320-321)

In the quotation above, Coleridge puts forward that writing an epic poem not only requires talent but also a great devotion, and an epic writer must study a great deal of sources so as to succeed in writing a true epic. Furthermore, the critics also knew that writing an epic was a toilsome duty for many writers and they openly claimed that women writers were not endowed with this talent. This strict division of female and male writers in terms of writing an epic was the result of the patriarchy. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it was assumed that women belonged to the private sphere and women were human beings who were driven by their emotions. On the other hand, men belonged to the public sphere and they were conscious beings who

were driven by their actions. As Susan Stanford Friedman claims, “[e]pic norms- public, objective, universal, heroic- coincide with western norms for the masculine. [...] [T]he epic hero is traditionally male, his heroic qualities are masculine, and the ordeal he faces is a masculine agon” (205) and she further states that “the epic has been the last bastion among poetic genres for women to approach” (205). Furthermore, W. Macneile Dixon puts forward that “the chief business of an epic is war” (99). The problem for women poets is that war, battle and fighting are all related to the public sphere in which women were not allowed to take active roles. So, the epic genre was regarded as off-limits for women writers. Besides, since women were not allowed to receive formal education, it was believed that they could not be successful in writing epic. Before 1850, “[g]irls, even aristocratic ones, were particularly likely to receive little or no schooling, and women’s literacy rates were consequently lower than men’s” (Steinbach 173). In terms of the higher education of women, the English women did not have the opportunity to be accepted to the universities until “the University of London was granted a charter by Queen Victoria, allowing it to introduce the ‘Special Examination for Women’ in 1867 (“The Day That Changed Women's Education”). Susie Steinbach expresses that the “[a]cceptance of the idea of women students, by the general public as well as by universities, was a slow process, because most saw the higher education of women as a direct challenge to the status quo” (187). It can be claimed that their educational background played a significant role while the critics were making excuses in regard to women’s inability in writing epic. Paradoxically, women writers wrote epic poems in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries more than ever. Adeline Johns-Putra aims to show in her study that “the actual number of epics written by Romantic women poets is between twenty to thirty poems” (*Heroes* 15). It can be put forward that women writers began to show and prove themselves in the epic genre.

Margaret Holford’s *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* is one of the examples of epics written by women poets in her time. Her poem includes many essential components of epic poems such as *in medias res*, invocation to muses, catalogue of warriors, supernatural elements and the device of disguise, and she successfully employs them in her poem. Besides, her protagonist meets the basic characteristics of an epic hero.

Additionally, her poem is based on real historical figures and events. Epic poetry “with its reference to real historical events (even though these are padded out with mythology or legendary material) and closeness to reality in its portrayal of the simple details of outward life [...] is realistic as far as the subject matter is concerned” (Fischer 28). Holford also chooses a subject which depends on certain facts and records in both Scottish and English histories. Also, her characters such as William Wallace and King Edward are real historical figures who can be regarded as very significant figures of the Middle Ages.

By looking at Holford’s treatment of her protagonist, it can be assumed that she aims to characterize Wallace as an epic hero. In classical epics, “the heroes are high-ranking personalities — kings, dukes and aristocratic commanders of armies; and these are often even shown to be descended from gods or goddesses” (Fischer 21). However, this depiction of an epic hero started to disappear. While epic’s definition changed through centuries, many of its characteristics or essentials such as the epic hero changed correspondingly. As Herman Fischer argues, the notion that “the hero of an epic would [...] have to be a model character in the world ‘opened up’ in the work” (22) began to be accepted. For example, “If this is a republic, he will not have to be a monarch, nor even a nobleman. If it is barbaric, the manners of the court will not be required” (Fischer 22). So, classical representation of an epic hero leaves its place to a man who has not come from a noble family. At this juncture, it can be claimed that she reflects this change which took place in the epic genre. Holford’s Wallace can be accepted as the new version of the epic hero. Although her Wallace does not belong to a noble family, the poet depicts Wallace as a noble person by saying that “Wallace! Thy bold unruffled brow/ Speaks the calm of a noble mind” (I XXI. 1-2). The background of Wallace’s family is not presented by the poet but Holford openly writes that Wallace’s way of approaching the subjects resembles a noble person’s approach and this proves that Wallace does not have noble blood but he is of noble character. In other words, Holford shows that her protagonist is not noble in blood but noble in deed.

It is also known that an epic hero is superior to the others. In other words, he is not an ordinary man, he performs extraordinary deeds, and he has extraordinary courage and strength. It is generally accepted that an epic hero's physical strength resembles no one and sometimes an epic hero is shown as a superhuman but he is also aware of the fact that he is a human being. Frederick Turner comments on this aspect of an epic hero as follows: "He is on the very edge of the human world, human but beyond human, above and beyond the call of duty" (69). It can be asserted that although an epic hero is depicted or shown as superhuman in terms of physical strength, he is conscious of the limits of his body. Margaret Holford also chooses to show her protagonist as almost superhuman:

The left arm from each manly breast
 With hairy targe the dart repress;
 The right but struck the hapless foe,
 Nor needed descend with second blow;
 For wherever the brave Macpherson led,
 The raven still hover'd o'er his head,
 And whenever his clan in battle stood,
 The dark bird look'd for a feast of blood. (I. VIII. 9-16)

The poet writes that when Wallace attacks his enemy, he can kill anyone with only one blow and even ravens know that there will be a feast of blood after Wallace confronts his foes.

Consistency of character is another important characteristic of the epic hero. As Aristotle puts it, even if the poet aims to show the hero's inconsistency, "still he must be consistently inconsistent" (28). An epic hero should be determined in his actions from the beginning to the ending, and he should never deviate from his cause. At this point, it can be argued that Margaret Holford aims to depict Wallace as a calm person and she suggests that nothing and no one can change or affect his calmness and consistency:

Mid the bursting flame, or the midnight flood,
 'Mid horror's wildest scene,
 When the brooks of thy country are swollen with blood,
 Unshaken, thy soul still holds her mood,
 And thy brow is still serene!" (I. XXI. 6-10)

The poet clearly underlines the fact that even in the most difficult and troublesome situations, William Wallace never loses his temper and courage. Apparently, he is willing to continue his fight no matter what he experiences in his life. In the above mentioned lines, his devotion to his cause and determination are emphasized by the poet. As Holford underlines in many passages of the poem, he is the one who will save Scotland from the tyranny of the English. In Canto II, even the visions of the sorcerer do not frighten Wallace and he is ready for his fate: “Oh! Fate! He cried, ‘prepare thy worst,/ Thy malice I defy!/ For of Scottish men, the best and first,/ Shall Wallace live or die!’” (II. XXXIII. 19-22). In Canto IV, Wallace also does not lose his determination nor does he retreat although the Scottish side loses the chance of victory since their number decreases against the foe: “While his feet were wash’d in kindred blood!/ But now they are vanish’d, one by one;/ He calls his friends, his friends are gone,/ And in the field of death Wallace seems left alone!” (IV. LVIII. 19-22). Since Wallace cannot find his friends on the battlefield, he realizes that all his comrades have been slain by the English forces. Although Wallace knows that he is losing his fight against the foe, he is still proud and stern, and he stands cold and grim. It can be argued that Holford still depicts her protagonist as a strong leader who does not lose his courage although he is defeated on the battlefield: “Wallace wept not, his burning brow/ Was all too proud and stern to know/ The soft relief of nature’s flow!/ No, Wallace wept not--- cold and grim” (IV. LXXV. 6-9). He knows that the fate of his country and people depend on him and his determination in this battle fosters the heroic idealism of the poem since he would rather die than give up his cause.

Additionally, in the poem, it is highlighted that Wallace’s coming is prophesized in the tales of wonder, death, and fear:

Such Wallace was, ---and many a year
 Ere he had spirit, form, or limb,
 They say, that voice of gifted seer,
 ‘Mid tales of wonder, death, and fear,
 Had prophesied of him! (I. XXII. 1-5)

The prophecy of Wallace's coming is a significant contribution to Holford's poem since it is a well-established epic device. In epics, prophecy "may be given by a god or by one who is divinely endowed with an understanding of signs and portents, with a knowledge of fate and the future" (Moore 100). In the above mentioned lines, it is told that Wallace's prophecy is heralded by the gifted seer. It can be suggested that Holford's courageous Wallace, who is prophesized by stories, has come to break the chains of bondage of the Scottish nation. Wallace's actions and deeds are inspiring for his group, society and nation. He is fighting heroically for his cause since the fate of his nation rests on his shoulders. All of these depictions of Wallace in Canto I serve to create an epic hero.

Furthermore, the death of an epic hero is also another significant aspect of epic narratives. It is generally observed in epic narratives that an epic hero always faces death and he is aware of the fact that death is an inevitable part of his destiny. The way an epic hero dies also gives messages to its reader. In classical epics, there is "the heroic good death" (Miller 121) and he welcomes death without any fear. However, in the poem, it is seen that Holford also subverts this "heroic good death" and Wallace in the poem dies because of treachery. According to Dean Miller, the death of the hero because of treachery "violates the code of heroic solidarity or attacks some associated bond (like family or marriage)" (125-126). Heroic solidarity is also another essential characteristic of epic poems and "it is often seen in military heroes who jeopardize (and sometimes knowingly sacrifice) their lives to protect their comrades, and in a larger sense, their countrypeople's [sic] way of life" (Kraft-Todd and Rand, n.p.). In Holford's poem, Menteith's treachery to his friend Wallace apparently violates the code of heroic solidarity. It can be put forward that the sense of solidarity and friendship which are supported in the first four cantos, are subverted in the last canto with the treacherous plot of Menteith.

In traditional epics, the choric element is another essential component of the story. In Tillyard's words, an epic poem should be choric, that is to say, "the epic writer must express the feelings of a large group of people living in or near his own time" (12). Margaret Holford constantly makes references to the cry of the Scottish people in the

first canto and Wallace appears at the head of his people since Scotland and her people need help:

Who has not heard old Scotland's wrongs
 Appeal to the vengeful sky,
 When the cry of a nation's thousand tongues
 Was ruin, and skaith, and misery?
 When Sorrow sate in the wasted glen,
 And lifted her voice, and wept in vain,
 O'er the grizly heaps of slaughter'd men,
 Which scatter'd their native plain. (I. V. 1-8)

In another stanza, the poet again refers to the cry of Scotland and its people in order to highlight the sufferings of the country:

A king in chains--- a trampled land,
 Our chiefs, a pale, desponding band;
 A people, wrong'd, despoil'd, bereft,
 Nor courage, zeal, nor honour left!
 Who heard the nation's dying cry?" (I. XXXI. 1-5).

It can be understood from the quotations that the whole country is crying for help. Holford tries to show that the Scottish nation summons for a hero who will save them from misery and a bad faith. These references to the Scottish people and their struggles illustrate the choric elements of the poem. Moreover, it can also be put forward that the magnitude of the hero's action is highlighted by Holford since the future destiny of Scotland depends on the actions and decisions of William Wallace. To put it another way, Holford makes use of a heroic subject matter in the poem. Hermann Fischer asserts that "as the hero's standing the test of trials he engaged in in the interest of something over and above his individual concerns, then [heroic subject matter] may be said to be an essential characteristic of the epic genre, one of its inherent components throughout the ages" (16). After the references to the Scottish nation, Wallace is introduced by the poet in Canto I, and it is suggested that he is going to save his nation. The poem states that the whole universe heard the cry of the Scottish nation and "[t]hen Wallace, like a storm-cloud rose,/ And roll'd back ruin on her foes,/ And the soul of the spoiler fear'd!" (I. VII. 8-10). Holford describes Wallace by using a simile and resembling him to a storm-cloud. The next stanza introduces Wallace as someone

who has a bold heart and he has come from an iron race. It can be suggested that Holford tries to depict a leader who is a powerful and authoritative figure. After the introduction of the protagonist and the Scottish leaders, Sir Adam Currie brings the news of the approaching English forces through the end of the canto. The next day is assumed to be a day of blood, and all the Scottish leaders and Wallace are crying for victory.

Apart from its heroic subject matter and epic hero, Holford's poem, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* includes other characteristics of the genre of epic. As the first cue for Holford's heroic mode, in the beginning of Canto I, she invokes:

Dark Spirit of the Northern lay,
Hear from thy misty mountain, bleak and cold!
Pour on my sight long ages pass'd away!
Shew me the deeds of old!
With thy unutterable spell
Bid this adventurous breast to swell! (I. II. 1-6)

Invocation of the muses is regarded as one of the epic devices and it generally appears at the beginning of a poem (Cuddon 427). Holford also makes references to her muse at the beginning and end of each canto (I. II. 1-6, I. XLIII. 8-11, IV. LXXXII. 1-9, V. I. 1-3).

Holford also employs *in medias res* which is a literary convention of the epic genre. Margaret Holford begins to tell her story just before the battle of Falkirk. However, before this battle, a great deal of confrontations, conflicts and fights have occurred between Wallace and the English. It is not told to the readers how Wallace and his men succeeded in coming to such a powerful position before Falkirk. As discussed earlier, the exclusion of the punishment of Wallace by the English authorities signals Holford's pro-English attitude. However, it can also be argued that apart from pro-English tendency, Holford might have deliberately excluded what happen after the defeat of Wallace since in classical epics, the concentration is on the heroic deeds of the hero. In other words, the death of a hero is self-evident since it is known that the hero generally dies in the end. As a result, it is not necessary to include the death scene in the poem.

Although Margaret Holford chooses to recount Wallace's defeat, her main aim is to pay tribute to Wallace's bravery and consistency in his cause and it is not necessary to include his punishment to the plot.

Other well-known formal epic devices are also employed by Holford. In Canto I, Holford lists all the Scottish leaders who are going to assist William Wallace in the battle of Falkirk and her way of listing these clans resembles the catalogues of warriors, ships and armies and in traditional epics; epic poets generally include the names of warriors and armies in their narratives (Cuddon 114). These Scottish leaders come together and Canto I sheds light on the night before the battle of Falkirk. Holford refers to the clans of Macdowall, Duncan and Scrymgeour. However, she does not give any background information about the importance of these clans in Scottish history. *The Literary Panorama* of 1810 also commented on the same aspect of Holford's poem: "The subject is not one that we should have recommended to her as an English-born poet, unless perfect familiarity with the places and objects to be described and alluded to, had qualified her for the task" (420). The review underlines that there is too much information about the Scottish places and historical figures of Scottish history in the plot and this sometimes breaks the flow of the action in the poem. On the one hand, Holford is not writing history and her aim is to create a successful epic. It can be suggested that her way of listing these clans is sufficient for her purpose. On the other hand, as the review suggests, the information about the Scottish clans and people may be taken as a shortcoming but it is a common device to glorify the heroes and immortalize them in classical epics. As a result, it can be asserted that Holford aims to commemorate and immortalize those clans since they help Wallace in his fight.

Holford's conscious attention to language and style is also noteworthy because she is employing the high style and various stylistic devices of epic. It can be indicated that Holford uses an elevated language and there are epic similes, metaphors and kennings in her poem. Holford mostly uses kennings and similes. Kenning is one of the figures of speech and it is generally used in skaldic verse and "it is a device for introducing descriptive colour or for suggesting associations without distracting attention from the essential statement" (Cuddon 443). For example, in Canto I, there are several examples

of kennings such as “the iron shower” (I. XVI. 2) which means “the rain of spears and arrows in battle” (West 83) and “a day of blood” (I. XXXIX. 4) which means the day of war. At the time, she was criticized by the critics of *The Quarterly Review* because of her highly stylized language:

The rude warriors of Scotland, in the thirteenth century, talk of following their general ‘even to the misty borders of eternity; of ‘enamoured fates’; and of ‘the souls that darkened their vital beam.’ To put such language into the mouth of such characters seems little less incongruous than to superinduce some portions of a birth-day dress on one of the savage figures of Salvator Ross. (67)

Although this criticism is provocative and insulting for the Scottish, the reviewer tries to underline that not all the characters have to use such an embellished language in epic poems. In other words, the critic suggests that it is not realistic to use such language for all the characters. However, it can be argued that the critic’s comment is not valid for the purpose of epic. Holford is writing to glorify the deeds and character of William Wallace who is responsible for the future of his country and people. Since there is a lofty manner in the poem, it is very suitable to employ such language, and it is a common practice of epic poets to use high style. It can be concluded that Holford is more familiar with the epic genre than the critic.

In epic poems, another well-established device is the supernatural agency. Epic poets generally add gods and goddesses to their plots, and Holford also employs the supernatural elements in the poem. However, she combines supernatural and gothic elements in Canto II which can be regarded as the most gothic canto of the whole poem. When Sir Walter Scott’s influence on Holford is taken into consideration, the gothic scenes in her poem share the same aspects of Scott’s poetry since Scott also uses gothic images and scenes in his poems (Gamer, *Romanticism* 177). Before the introduction of the gothic scene, in Canto II, Graeme tells what he sees in his vision related to Wallace:

Oh, Wallace! What a scene was there!
Memory e’en now recoils with fear;
Half drown’d in seas of Scottish blood,
And struggling mid the horrid flood
Our mangled thousands lay. (II. VI. 3-7)

Holford prepares her readers for the gothic scene by setting the tone through Wallace: “Unreal forms abused my mind,/ Unreal voices fill’d the wind,/ Each howling blast that swept the sea/ Brought some mysterious tale to me” (II. XXIX. 1-4). Then, a ghost appears on the side of Wallace and he is talking to it. After the ghost scene, Wallace and the wizard Warlock have a conversation, and Wallace wishes to learn whether he is going to win or lose the battle. To put it another way, he wants to learn his destiny. Another prophecy comes from Warlock that Wallace’s end is near and his bones shall never find peace:

Thy bones shall have
A wandering and unquiet grave;
No stone shall mark thy place of rest,
No sod shall cover thy mouldering breast;
In dust thy corse shall never lie. (II. XXXI. 1-5)

It is clear that Margaret Holford refers to the punishment which was given to Wallace by the English authorities. It can be suggested that this stanza by the wizard is the only reference to the punishment of Wallace since Margaret Holford excludes Wallace’s trial from her poem and she inexplicitly adds Wallace’s punishment to her poem. These foreshadowing of the future failure at the battle and reference to Wallace’s end can be regarded as essential components of the creation of the heroic ideal in this heroic poem since he fights although there is no hope.

In Canto IV, it is observed that Holford makes use of another epic convention in her heroic poem: the single combat. In epic poems, the narrator generally makes use of single combats as a narrative technic since “they [aim to] satisfy their listeners by depicting heroic knights winning the day through hand-to-hand combat” (Rogers 26). In this canto, an inevitable war is about to start between Wallace and the English. The two armies confront each other on the battlefield and the English army begins to attack without hesitation. However, the Scots do not attack first: “Yet Wallace bids his steeled band/ All mute and still as the sea-rock stand,/ Tho’ bold the ocean wave rages against the strand” (IV. VII. 10-12). Again, Holford describes Wallace as an agile, strong and keen leader in the middle of the battle. Then, the poet tells how the two forces fight each other, and many single combat instances take place between the English lords and the

Scottish fighters such as Clifford and Graeme (IV. XXXI. 1-11), and Warwick and Crauford (IV. XLVII. 1-16). As Clifford Rogers underlines, these fights which occur between the two sides increase the credibility and reality of medieval warfare and the realistic details attract the attention of the readers (26). Once again, Holford shows that she is acquainted with the knowledge of epic tradition by using certain epic devices successfully.

It is important to analyze the last canto in detail since Margaret Holford uses another epic device which is the disguise of a character in this canto. In Canto V, Holford reveals the function of Agnes who disguises her real identity as the page of Wallace. After the war, Wallace and his page David (Agnes) escape from the English forces. Wallace now is a fugitive. Wallace and David arrive at the place of Menteith who will betray Wallace at the end of the poem. Wallace is resting and feasting without any doubt of Menteith's friendship. On the other hand, his disguised wife Agnes is comfortable neither physically nor mentally. She believes that something evil is going to happen to them. While Wallace is sleeping, Agnes realizes that the enemy is approaching to their chamber, and finally, Agnes reveals her real identity to her husband:

“Wallace, awake!—Oh! Sleep not now!
Wallace, awake, awake!
Thy Agnes calls!—Oh! From thy brow
These treacherous slumbers shake!”
In vain she calls, she raves, she weeps. (V. LIX. 1-5)

Later, Agnes begs Menteith for Wallace's life in tears but Menteith ignores her. At the end of the canto, Wallace dies because of the treachery of his friend and Agnes also dies because of despair and sadness.

There are many examples of disguised gods and goddesses in Greek mythology, and epic poets use those disguised gods and goddesses in their poems. For instance, Homer in his *Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, employs disguised gods and mortals. Furthermore, disguise was used in Greek New Comedy by playwrights such as Menander. Frances Muecke comments on this aspect as follows:

Disguise and especially, transvestite disguise, becomes a ‘comedy element’ in New Comedy and its derivative, Renaissance comedy, in fact one of the most persistent of all comedy elements, but, all the same, disguise continues to be used by the writers of tragedy, and not necessarily for comic effect. (212)

After it was used in epics and other traditions, element of disguise also found its place on the early English stage and especially, William Shakespeare used disguised characters in his plays such as *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* (Hyland 9). After William Shakespeare used the element of disguise, many playwrights also added characters in disguise to their narratives. Apparently, by using the device of disguise, Margaret Holford shows her knowledge about this convention. The disguise of a character holds a significant place in the plots since it creates suspense and curiosity, and at the end of the narrative, this hidden personality is revealed so as to end the conflicts and confusion. M. C. Bradbrook defines and comments on the element of disguise as follows;

I should prefer to define disguise as the substitution, overlaying or metamorphosis of dramatic identity, whereby one character sustains two roles. This may involve deliberate or involuntary masquerade, mistaken and concealed identity, madness or possession [...] [Disguise] may need a cloak or false beard, or it may be better translated for the modern age by such terms ‘alternating personality’”. (qtd. in Hyland 9)

Margaret Holford’s disguised Agnes can be included in the category of “concealed identity” since she deliberately hides her real self so as to be with her husband, Wallace. However, Holford does not reveal the function of Agnes totally because she is not actively involved in the plot until the last canto, and this raises a question about the function of Agnes. However, Agnes who disguised herself as a page can be regarded as a significant contribution to epic narrative because in epic poems, women are generally pushed to the margins or they are not included in the main plot. However, by putting Agnes in a male territory, as Judith Bailey Slagle states, Holford “[for]ges] a connection between history and romance [...] [she] connects the poem to a female audience” (‘Margaret Holford’ 120). Also, as Robert Crawford points out, the cross dressing of Agnes inspired other writers and Jane Porter also used this convention in her Wallace fiction (Crawford 106). It can be concluded that Margaret Holford not only changes or

subverts some of the epic qualities in her poem but also she brings a new dimension to heroic narratives by adding a female perspective to her plot.

Although Margaret Holford did not receive a formal education, it is clear that she succeeded in writing a heroic poem and employing many characteristics of the epic genre in her long heroic poem. She uses invocation to muses, *in medias res*, the catalogue of warriors and an elevated language. Besides, her protagonist William Wallace reflects many essential elements of the epic hero. Apart from all of these epic qualities, Holford also promotes heroic idealism in her poem. It can be remarked that she did not write a classical epic poem but she brings a new interpretation to epic. In addition, she used the disguise of a female character as an important contribution to the epic genre. With the disguise of Agnes, Holford aimed to connect her poem to the female audience. Not just her heroic mode but also her subject matter and main character in the poem indicate that she did not behave according to the society's expectations. Although William Wallace was a controversial historical figure of the Middle Ages, she preferred to write a poem in which she openly glorified this Scottish hero. Also, she became the first woman writer who contributed to the Wallace trend which took place in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. Until her poem *Wallace* was published in 1809, only male writers wrote about William Wallace in their works but she changed this trend, and she inspired other women writers to write about the Scottish hero such as Joanna Baillie, Jane Porter and Felicia Hemans. Most probably, she was aware of all of the risks of writing in a heroic mode and by choosing a controversial figure as a protagonist but as she clarifies in her preface, she would not beg for the mercy of the public and the critics but she awaited the upcoming criticisms and reactions. As stated earlier, she was trying to build a literary network but she was generally pushed to the margins. Although she was not in contact with the important literary names, she managed to publish her poem by her own efforts. All in all, she and her poem were mostly appreciated by the critics and it can be concluded that Margaret Holford successfully wrote a heroic poem which went into several editions. Most importantly, as a woman poet, she challenged the prejudices and patriarchal ideologies and she continued to write her poems in the heroic mode. Even though she was attacked severely by some critics and reviews, these harsh attacks did not prevent her from

publishing another heroic poem in which she glorified a warrior queen; *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*.

CHAPTER III

MARGARET HOLFORD'S *MARGARET OF ANJOU*; A POEM

But by record of antique times I find,
 That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
 And to all great exploits them selves inclined:
 Of which they still the girlond bore away,
 Till envious Men fearing their rules decay,
 Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty;
 Yeth sith they warlike armes have layd away,
 They have exceld in artes and pollicy,
 That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke t'envy.
 (Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, III. ii. 191)

In this chapter, Margaret Holford's *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem* will be studied as one of the examples of epics which were published in the early nineteenth century. As it is seen in her previous poem, *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk*, Holford again wrote her poem using epic elements. This time, in *Margaret of Anjou*, she only dealt with English history and persons but it did not mean that her poem was more welcomed than *Wallace* since she chose Margaret of Anjou as a protagonist who is claimed to be one of the most unpopular and bloodthirsty queens of England. Moreover, she was a key figure and a leader of the Lancastrians in the last phase of the War of the Roses against the Yorkist opponents (Maurer 1). Many reviews claim that *Wallace* is more successful when it is compared to *Margaret of Anjou* and apparently, *Wallace*'s success overshadowed Holford's *Margaret of Anjou*, but Stephen Behrendt regards Holford's *Margaret of Anjou* as "a minor masterpiece that has not been accorded the attention it deserves" (173).

After her *Wallace* was printed in 1809, Margaret Holford published her second accomplished work, *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem* in 1816. Her poem was printed by John Murray in London and Holford added a dedicatory page in which she thanked and paid tribute to her mother. It was also published in America in the same year. However, her dedicatory page to her mother was excluded from the American edition. *Margaret of Anjou* is written in canto format also and it consists of ten cantos. As it can be understood from the title of the poem, Holford's protagonist is Margaret of Anjou who

is the wife of Henry VI. In the poem, Margaret Holford narrates the events between the battles of Hexham (1464) and Tewksbury (1471) which can be regarded as the last confrontations between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians in the Wars of the Roses (Webster n.p.). In ten cantos, what Margaret of Anjou and her son experience between these battles is recounted by the poet. Although it is not exactly known whether she commanded her soldiers on the battlefield, these battles are very significant since the results of Hexham and Tewksbury changed the fates of not only Queen Margaret but also the whole English nation.

After her poem's publication, Holford again received both positive and negative criticisms from reviews and journals. Her long poem is mentioned and analyzed in *The Augustan Review* (1816), *The New Monthly Magazine* (1816), *The Eclectic Review* (1816), *Monthly Review or Literary Journal* (1816) and *The Literary Panorama* (1817). Clearly, she succeeded in attracting the attention of many reviewers but only *The Augustan Review* praised Holford's *Margaret of Anjou*. The others harshly criticized Holford for her choice of protagonist and Holford's way of treating her subject matter since Margaret of Anjou was a controversial queen figure of the Middle Ages and she was depicted negatively in the documents of the fifteenth century. As Raluca L. Radulescu argues, in the historical documents, Margaret of Anjou was shown "as a malicious, selfish, manipulative French queen who placed her interests above the welfare of her husband's subjects" (118). Because of her negative image, there was always prejudice against Queen Margaret. On the contrary, Margaret Holford does not depict Margaret of Anjou negatively in the poem, and her motherhood and her political activities are praised. Since she presented Margaret of Anjou in a positive light, Holford became the target of the critics. One of the most severe criticisms for Holford's protagonist came from *The Literary Panorama* and they claimed that "perhaps the chief error in this Poem is the choice of the Heroine" (*Margaret of Anjou* 563). According to the critics, a national hero should be brave in combat, he should have good management in command and he should resist his enemies in difficult situations and Margaret of Anjou does not have many of these qualities: "she is little known to fame [...] [she is] incapable of governing herself or others discreetly and exerting a superiority, which contrasts not to her advantage, over her meek and pious husband" (*Margaret of Anjou*

563). However, it can be argued that although Margaret of Anjou has “a meek and pious husband”, she bravely encountered her enemies and she won a battle thanks to her courage and determination. From this vintage point, the comment of the critic is not acceptable.

Also, *The Eclectic Review* did not recommend Holford’s protagonist for any literary work since “No reader, with the very best of his wishes and endeavours about him, will be able to secure a due degree of sympathy for the sorrows of a woman who is prominently represented as forgetful alike of the ties of humanity and of nature” (*Miss Holford’s Margaret of Anjou* 74). Because of Margaret of Anjou’s previous negative representations and depictions, the review suggested that readers might not understand her motives and actions in her life and they could not feel an instant connection with the queen. Furthermore, in her second attempt in writing a historical epic poem, Margaret Holford was again accused of imitating Sir Walter Scott’s style. Scott’s imitators were not welcomed by the critics because it was argued that authors who took him as a role model did not have the same ability and natural gift so as to produce such successful poems as Walter Scott. *The Monthly Review* touched upon this issue while analyzing Holford’s *Margaret of Anjou* and they believed that these imitators found themselves in “the abyss of silence.” In other words, they openly declared that his imitators would be forgotten in their own time. Interestingly, the review foresaw the fact that Margaret Holford’s *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou* “will obtain place[s] of distinction in any but the *curios* and *rare* libraries of the twentieth century” (*Miss Holford’s Margaret of Anjou, a Poem* 354).

Not just the reviewers but also Holford’s contemporaries such as Lord Byron criticized the quality of her poem. Byron wrote to John Murray, who was the publisher of Holford so as to criticize John Murray’s choices in regard to the unpopular works which were published by him: “And so you have been publishing ‘Margaret of Anjou—’ and an Assyrian tale—and refusing W. W.’s Waterloo—and the ‘Hue and Cry’—I know not which most admire your rejections or acceptances” (Byron, *Life*, 324) and Lord Byron continued to humiliate Holford by writing a mocking verse about *Margaret of Anjou*:

I read a sheet of 'Margaret of Anjou'
 Can—You? . . .
 [...] To hook the Reader—you—John Murray—
 Have published 'Anjou's Maragert,'
 Which won't be sold off in a hurry... (Byron, *Poetical* 579)

It is not known whether Margaret Holford answered or had any reaction against Lord Byron's harsh and unethical comments on her poem but it can be suggested that between Byron and Holford, there was a never ending controversy and this situation led Holford to write the three volume novel, *Warbeck of Wolfstein* (1820) about Lord Byron in which she severely attacked his life.

Although Holford chose an important historical figure of English history as a central character, she was severely criticized for her choice since Margaret of Anjou was an unpopular queen figure in the eyes of the English public. In order to understand the hatred and prejudices against Queen Margaret, it is crucial to take a closer look at her life. Margaret of Anjou, who came from a noble family of France, stood for a hope in the eyes of the English when it was decided that she would be the bride of Henry VI of England. The relation between France and England had always been tense since there were continual wars between these two countries. Henry VI and his councilors wanted to ease this struggle with France. Choosing a French bride was a common practice of the English royalty because almost all the queens of England came from the royal lines of French families (Maurer 17). Henry's marriage to Margaret not only had political implications but also it was expected from Margaret that she could give a legitimate heir to the English crown since there was no legitimate offspring in Henry's family to be crowned after him. So, Margaret's child/children would become a symbol of a continuation of the Lancastrian dynasty. It can be indicated that before Margaret arrived in England, political and familial expectations were burdened on her. On 23 April 1445, the couple married and Margaret was crowned at Westminster on 30 May. Although Margaret of Anjou became an unpopular queen in England, she was regarded as a sign of peace between England and France. As Helen Maurer states, when Margaret arrived in London, eight pageants welcomed her. The common theme of her reception was peace (19-20, 23). It can be suggested that her arrival was celebrated by the public because she stood for hope and peace for the future of England.

In the early years of their marriage, Margaret had a great influence over Henry VI; she persuaded her husband to surrender Maine, which was invaded by England earlier, to France. Then, Henry wrote to Margaret's uncle Charles VII to say that he agreed to surrender Maine to France upon the continual requests of his wife: "our dear and well-beloved companion the queen, who has requested us to do this many times" (Stevenson 640). However, in 1449, Margaret's uncle declared war on England and this also gave harm to her queenly image. It was expected that her marriage should have prevented any conflict and war with France but she could not succeed in creating a peaceful relation between these two countries. Before this war, there was a growing hatred and antipathy for Queen Margaret since she was very close to Suffolk, the hated chief minister of Henry VI. Margaret and Suffolk were even called lovers and these rumors would continue during Margaret's life. However, these rumors were created intentionally to damage Margaret's image in public. Moreover, Suffolk and his wife were the ones who arranged the marriage of Henry and Margaret. It is clear that Margaret saw Suffolk as her spiritual father. When Suffolk was murdered in 1450, both Henry and Margaret grieved deeply and this shows how much they cared for and loved him (Norton 162).

Another reason for the growing antipathy for and distrust of Queen Margaret was the result of her inability to give birth to an heir. In the first eight years of their marriage, Margaret could not get pregnant and this was not usual for her time because medieval queens were able to give birth to children in the first years of their marriages. The childlessness of Margaret created unrest both in the public and the royal family because they were desperately waiting for a legitimate heir for the throne. Finally, Margaret learned that she was pregnant in 1453. However, Margaret's happiness about her pregnancy was prevented by the news of the English army's defeat against France at the Battle of Castillon. When Henry VI received the news of the defeat of his army, he felt very tired and he confined himself to his bed. Apparently, the king was in a catatonic state and he did not have the ability to think and act properly (Castor 337). Most probably, his condition was hereditary; his grandfather, King Charles VI of France was known as a mad king. After this point, Margaret found herself in a very difficult position; her husband was not healthy and she did not have any child or relative to

support her. After Margaret's only child, Edward was born, her only aim was to provide a safe environment for Edward and she knew that his father, Henry should recognize and declare his son as the true heir. However, when Edward was presented to his father for the first time, Henry did not have any reaction. Moreover, there was a growing accusatory propaganda against Margaret that her son, Edward was not the son of Henry and it was believed that Edward was either a changeling or a child by Margaret's lover (Norton 161).

In order to secure her position as a queen and her son's position as a true heir, Margaret decided to take firm action. Margaret presented a bill which consisted of five articles and if this bill was accepted, it would secure her as regent in the absence of her king husband. According to Helen Maurer, "Margaret's proposal constituted an effort to protect her son's interests by maintaining or re-creating a real royal 'center' that stood above private enmities and could command – and demand – the loyalty of all" (101). However, her proposal was not accepted and in 1454, the Duke of York was declared as Protector of England. Then, Margaret cooperated with the enemy of the Duke of York who was the Duke of Somerset. During this time, Henry emerged from his catatonic state and he also supported Somerset. In 1455, the first battle of the Wars of the Roses took place at St Albans and the Lancastrian side was defeated by the York side. Hundreds of soldiers including Somerset were killed and Henry was taken prisoner. In 1459, Margaret was recognized as the true leader of the Lancastrian army and her army confronted with the York side in the Welsh marches and Margaret gained her first victory against her enemy (Norton 164). However, when she lost another battle after her victory, her husband again was taken prisoner and this paved the way for the Duke of York's claim over the English crown. As Castor summarizes, York declared to the parliament that he should be the heir after Henry VI and the parliament decided that after Henry died, York would be crowned instead of Margaret's son, Edward. Upon hearing her own son's disinheritance from the throne, Margaret raised an army to fight for her son's claim. In 1460, Margaret and her army won a decisive victory over the York side at Wakefield and the Duke of York was killed and his head was presented to Margaret (372).

After her victory at Wakefield, Margaret again met a Yorkist army and she defeated the York side at St Albans once again. After she gained two victories against her greatest enemy, Margaret and her army marched to London so as to enter the city but the public did not allow Margaret to enter the city and she retreated from London. As Norton puts it, this situation indicates that Margaret as a queen was not loved and recognized by the English public. More than that, her army was notorious for its cruel treatment of the citizens of England on their way to London (166).

Few days later, the son of York, Edward, Earl of March entered London and he was declared as King Edward IV. In 1464, Margaret asked a favour from her cousin in France so as to defend her son's rights in England and she was provided with soldiers to overcome Edward IV's army. Margaret and Edward IV confronted each other at Hexham Forest and Margaret's army was defeated and, she and her son were forced to flee from the battlefield. On the other side, Edward IV and his closest ally, the Earl of Warwick had a disagreement, and Warwick left Edward's side and he went to France so as to make an agreement with Margaret. However, Margaret saw him as a true enemy who brought destruction to her and her son's life. After a long discussion, Margaret and Warwick came to terms that they would be allies against Edward IV and Warwick was going to help Margaret to dethrone Edward IV (Castor 374-375). Furthermore, Margaret's son and Warwick's daughter, Anne Neville would marry as a sign of alliance. After their marriage, the forces of Margaret and Edward IV met at Tewkesbury and the Lancastrians lost the battle and Margaret's son Edward was killed. After this heavy loss, Margaret was taken prisoner and put in the Tower of London and her husband was also murdered. Without her husband and son, Margaret was no longer an important political figure in England. When she died in 1482, Margaret of Anjou was long forgotten (Castor 392-399).

There are certain reasons why Margaret of Anjou was presented as an unpopular queen in the English society. Medieval queens were expected to follow the rules which were defined by male authorities. As Dunn points out, primarily, a medieval queen had to bear the characteristics of a chaste woman who resembled the Virgin Mary. She should be obedient, submissive, kind and a pure woman. The fundamental duty of a queen was

to give birth to an heir as soon as possible since the queen's child/children would guarantee the continuation of the dynasty. Until her children came to the expected age, she was responsible for the spiritual and moral guidance of her children. Moreover, a medieval queen could perform leadership in spiritual, educational and cultural areas of life but she should not have any responsibility or power in political affairs (Dunn 143). When all of these duties and expectations from a medieval queen are taken into consideration, it can be put forward that Margaret of Anjou definitely did not comply with the stereotype. First, she could not give birth to a child in the early years of her marriage and this raised suspicions and questions in the minds of the people. Henry VI's family and councilors were desperately expecting an heir for the throne because they foresaw that there would be serious problems and wars for the English crown. Then, Margaret as a queen took an active role in political affairs and Margaret's intrusion in the political world created an unconventional representation of a medieval queen. Finally, her enemies succeeded in spreading rumors about Margaret's chastity and they even claimed that her son, Edward, was not the son of King Henry. According to many medieval chronicles, this negative propaganda was run by the York side and it gave harm to the chaste queen figure in society. She was in a very difficult situation as her husband, Henry, was not healthy in mind and body, and her son's disinheritance from the throne triggered Margaret's maternal feelings. Margaret knew that if she could not take courageous actions for her son's rights, their lives would be in danger. Besides, taking an active role in a male dominated political world was not unknown to Margaret since her mother, Isabelle of Lorraine, and her paternal grandmother, Yolande of Aragon, also acted as regents in the absence of their husbands. When Margaret's father was taken prisoner, her mother Isabelle fought for her husband and she looked out for his interests (Castor 321-322,327). As a result, it can be claimed that Margaret took her mother and grandmother as role models in her own life. However, Margaret's mother and grandmother were not harshly criticized as Margaret although they were also politically active queens. The French memoirist Philippe de Commines comments on the possible reasons behind the hatred against Queen Margaret as follows:

As it turned out that lady [Queen Margaret] would have done much better if she had acted as a judge or mediator between the two parties instead of saying 'I will

support this party', for there were many battles as a result and in the end almost everyone on both sides was killed. (413)

Many chronicles and memoirs also shared the idea of Commynes; they all blamed Margaret for her willingness for bloodshed. According to the authorities, she should have maintained her role as a mediator and she should have supported the peaceful relation between the York and Lancaster sides. On the contrary, she chose to raise an army and she acted as a political leader. As a result, she could not provide a healthy relation between the two sides, and also, Margaret failed in her queenly role of a mediator in international affairs. It can be indicated that Margaret of Anjou was chosen as a scapegoat and she was held responsible for all the deaths and disasters.

Margaret of Anjou was not recognized as a representative of her husband. Although she seemed to encourage bloodshed and fighting, she only desired to protect her son's interests. She was a woman, mother, wife and a queen but she was given one more title by the public: she was an outsider because of her French origin. It is clear that Margaret was always seen as an intruder who could not succeed in sustaining the order in the royal family and she was always remembered with this negative image of herself by the English public. Although she aimed to show and prove her son as a legitimate heir to the throne, the public never believed that her son, Edward deserved to be declared as king because of the rumors about Margaret's chastity. According to the male authorities, it was accepted that women did not have the ability to rule and lead. This inability of women was attributed to their nature, and they should be subordinate to men. If they were not, they were labeled as unnatural or a flaw of nature (Lee 210).

Women who exercised political power were strictly criticized and Margaret of Anjou was one of the apparent examples since she acted as a political leader in the absence of her husband. Not only in the fifteenth century but also in the sixteenth century, there were uprisings after the death of Edward VI because when he died, "all the most plausible contenders for the English throne were female" (Richards 103) and "Mary and Elizabeth, the two daughters of Henry VIII, had emerged as almost inevitable contenders for the royal throne" (Richards 105). The English crown was not accustomed to a female monarch since all the rulers were male until the death of Edward VI.

Especially, there were very harsh attacks and criticism when Henry VIII's daughter Mary was crowned in 1553. For example, John Knox published his *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* in 1558 so as to criticize Mary Tudor's reign and to express his general discontent about any female rule. John Knox explains how a potential woman ruler subverts natural order as follows:

To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire above any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance, and finallie it is the subversion of good order, of all equitie and justice. (11)

Hande Seber argues that with all his ideas and arguments he put forward, Knox criticized not only the sovereignty of Mary I, but also all the women who had power and authority in general (22). Furthermore, Jane Dawson who published Knox's biography, states that he collected a great deal of material in order to prove his argument and she asserts that:

[t]his all-encompassing thesis was a valiant effort to include as many categories of argument as possible, from natural and divine law to more general social and political order. Knox moved through those categories one by one, presenting a solid phalanx of citations and quotations from the authorities he had collected, partly as proof texts and partly as the framework for his syllogisms. Beginning with the assertion that female rule was 'repugnant to Nature', he trotted out a series of classical authors to demonstrate that this was the accepted view in the pre-Christian period of ancient Greece and Rome. (143-144)

Similar to Mary I, Margaret of Anjou was also the target of certain criticisms and she was looked down upon and was severely criticized by many chronicles and authorities. At this juncture, it can be suggested that Margaret came into conflict with the view of the age. By assuming the role of a leader and ruler, she contradicted the image of a medieval queen who was always regarded as mild, silent and submissive.

Accordingly, the negative representation of Queen Margaret continued even after her death and one of the most severe attacks on her came from William Shakespeare who defined Margaret of Anjou with the pseudonym "the She-wolf of France" (Norton 159). In his *Henry VI part III*, Shakespeare touches upon the disagreement between the York

and Lancaster sides and in the play, Duke of York calls Margaret as the “She-wolf” and throughout the play, he insults and makes accusations against Margaret:

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder’s tooth!
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph, like an Amazonian trull,
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!
But that thy face is, vizard-like, unchanging,
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush. (I. IV. 111-118)

After Shakespeare used the wolf image for Margaret, she started to be known by this nickname and because of his portrayal of her as an evil, vicious and cruel woman, Margaret has never been recognized and remembered as a dutiful and self-sacrificing queen. In Shakespeare’s version, it is clear that he deviated from the historical facts and depicted Margaret as an evil and dangerous woman figure. Diana Dunn even claims that “[o]f all Shakespeare’s female characters, Margaret of Anjou stands out as one of the most evil and sadistic, capable of committing any heinous crime in order to achieve her ends” (141).

In the play, Margaret plays a significant role in the murder of Duke of York and she makes fun of him by placing a paper crown on his head. However, it is said that Margaret was not present on the battlefield when Duke of York was killed. Moreover, it might be suggested that Holford makes references to Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* because at the beginning of Canto VIII, Margaret Holford refers to the Duke of York and says: “What did he gain, the mighty man/Whose pride the woeful work began,[...]/ A paper crown!—a shameful doom!” (VIII. II. 1-2, 7). By saying “a paper crown”, Holford most probably refers to Shakespeare’s play. In the quotation above, the Duke of York resembles Margaret to a wizard who has a poisonous tongue and who occupies herself with evil deeds. Apparently, Shakespeare tries to reflect the image of Queen Margaret from a different perspective and he presents her as a negative medieval queen representation who is guided by her personal pleasure and selfish behavior. It can be suggested that Shakespeare ignores Margaret’s maternal feelings and motives, and he presents her as a war and revenge seeker who mercilessly destroys her enemies for her

own benefit. Moreover, Shakespeare depicts Margaret not as a woman but more like a man. In other words, Shakespeare attributes the qualities, which are usually associated with men, to Margaret's character (Dockray n.p.). The Duke of York uses the adjectives "ruthless", "rough", "remorseless" and "flinty" to describe her. Also, he refers to her by saying that "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!" (I. IV. 137). Besides, by focusing on the adjectives used for Queen Margaret by Shakespeare and Margaret Holford, it can be deduced that Shakespeare aims to portray the queen in a negative light and Holford aims to show her in a positive light. In his play, Shakespeare employs the adjectives which have negative connotations in describing the Queen's character. For example, he calls her "ruthless" (I. IV. 31), "insulting" (II. I. 40), "false" (II. II. 49), "wrangling" (II. II. 50) and "bloody-minded" (II. VI. 62). It can be seen that Shakespeare presents the queen as a cruel and bloodthirsty woman and he does not refer to her maternal side. Conversely, Margaret Holford chooses a different path when she is compared to Shakespeare since she focuses on Queen Margaret's maternal and warrior sides. It can be suggested that Shakespeare aimed to blemish Margaret's reputation by casting her as a villain.

According to Adriana Craciun, Holford's *Margaret of Anjou* is "an epic about an archetypal bad mother and power-hungry queen" (99). However, Holford does not present Queen Margaret as vicious and cruel as Shakespeare does and in the poem, there are no references which support the idea that Holford's Anjou is an "archetypal bad mother." It can be argued that Holford greatly differs from Shakespeare in regard to the depiction of her protagonist. Shakespeare's Margaret is more dangerous and merciless than Holford's version. Shakespeare excludes Margaret's maternal feelings because he wants to create an image of the "she-wolf" and his Margaret's only aim is to seek revenge and to kill her enemies. On the other hand, Holford does not forget to attribute motherly feelings to Margaret's character although she highlights the warrior side of the queen. In this respect, Craciun's adjectives of "bad mother" and "power hungry" are more suitable to Shakespeare's queen. Shakespeare's pseudonym for Queen Margaret, "she-wolf" refers to a false, dangerous and vicious woman who could act selfishly according to her own desires. Although Shakespeare used this term to depict Margaret in a negative light, the term "she-wolf" is not always associated with negative

connotations. Biologically, she-wolves generally have more than one offspring and their only aim is to protect their whelps. Pierre de la Primaudaye argues that “hen the she wolfe hath yong ones, if she find hir selfe oppressed with dogs, or men, she taketh one of hir whelpes in hir mouth to beare away, that shee may not loose them all . . . Shee never leaves them except the hee wolfe remaine for their gard, going both by turnes out” (qtd. in Levin 129). Although the term “she-wolf” is associated with negative meanings, a she-wolf has also a mother’s instinct to protect her offsprings.

Although the historical Margaret of Anjou was criticized and presented negatively by many critics, reviewers and writers, there were also multiple positive approaches to her in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In the 1720s, Theophilus Cibber offered a revised version of William Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* in which he showed Queen Margaret as a worthy defender of her son’s rights. In *Biographium Faemineum: Female Worthies* which was published anonymously in 1766, she was described as a heroic leader of the Lancaster side. In 1834, Alexander Fraser Tytler published his *Universal History* and he also praised Margaret of Anjou’s courage and deeds (McGerr n.p.). It can be observed from these examples that, apart from Margaret Holford, there were also other writers who provided positive representations of Queen Margaret.

As stated, Margaret of Anjou is a historical figure who is at the centre of many discussions in relation to her actions and decisions regarding the English throne. However, the Queen’s notorious reputation did not prevent Margaret Holford from choosing her as a protagonist for her long poem. Holford did not make any comments about why she chose Margaret of Anjou as a central character. Most probably, as she experienced after the publication of her previous work *Wallace*, she was again expecting the same responses and criticisms for her *Anjou*. Margaret of Anjou did not comply with the traditional representation of womanhood and motherhood, and she could not be a role model for women in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, Anne K. Mellor states that many women poets, including Caroline Norton, Eliza Norton and Margaret Holford, “turned to history to challenge the view that women had no role to play in the crucial events of the past” (45). When Holford choose Margaret of Anjou as a protagonist for her work, she aimed to show that Margaret of Anjou played a

significant role in one of the most crucial historical events in English history. It can be proposed that Holford deliberately preferred to use such a powerful woman figure. Margaret of Anjou was not just a woman but she was also a mother, queen and wife of the king of England. As it has been mentioned earlier, both in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, women were expected to be submissive, virtuous and moderate in their lives and they belonged to the private sphere. Margaret of Anjou was not a submissive woman figure since she rebelled against her enemies whose sole aim was to dethrone her son and to make her husband a powerless figure. To put it another way, she was in a continuous struggle and war with males. Also, Margaret of Anjou's chastity was always a subject of contention after she gave birth to Edward because of the rumors about her supposed lover. She did not confine herself to a private sphere and she took active roles in many wars and she gained two victories against her enemies as a warrior queen. When all of the qualities of Margaret are taken into consideration, it is an undeniable fact that her image was in stark contrast with the ideal concept of womanhood of Holford's time. As a result, it can be propounded that Holford sent messages to her society that women could perform the same tasks as men. Although she failed to keep her son alive, in her fight against the enemies, Queen Margaret won battles and she proved that as a woman, she could play an important role in the public sphere.

Another reason for Holford's use of Margaret of Anjou might be the fact that she associated herself with Queen Margaret. It is known that Margaret's mother and grandmother were also exercising political power in the absence of their husbands. So, Margaret of Anjou was not a stranger to women in command. Similar to her, Holford also apparently claims in her dedicatory page of the poem that her mother was the one who inspired and encouraged her to become an author:

To my mother, likewise, I consider this tribute as an appropriate acknowledgment, that from her I have imbibed and inherited the taste which has devoted me to the service of the Muse, and lent me courage to risk the trial, to which, with a mixture of hope and fear, I am looking forward. (n.p.)

It can be said that Queen Margaret became a medium for Holford to pay tribute to her mother. Her dedications in both *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou* are also important in that Holford dedicated her two most acclaimed works to women. Furthermore, her novel, *Warbeck of Wolfstein* was also dedicated to a female friend Joanna Baillie. Stuart Curran highlights the fact that it was a common tradition in women's poetry to dedicate their poems to female friends. By dedicating their poems or by calling upon their muses "[woman poets are] appealing for a woman's collaboration in the creative act. Sometimes it is a close friend who encourages her; sometimes a sister; sometimes a mother" ('Mothers' 576). Curran also asserts that "behind many a successful woman poet, it almost goes without saying, stands a mother, often herself a poet" ('Mothers' 579), and Margaret Holford and her mother are one of the apparent examples since Holford's mother also dedicated her volume of poetry to another female friend. Her dedications in *Margaret of Anjou* and *Warbeck of Wolfstein* indicate that Holford gave importance to female solidarity which underlines the fact that they did not need any male support for their literary achievements.

Apart from her positive portrayal of Margaret of Anjou, her poem's genre is another significant aspect of Holford's poem. It can be claimed that she wrote in a heroic mode, and many reviews and journals of Holford's time accepted her second historical poem as an epic. For example, *The Augustan Review* classified Holford's *Margaret of Anjou* as an epic poem (*Margaret of Anjou* 289). Furthermore, contemporary scholars also regarded her poem as one of the examples of epic narratives published in the early nineteenth century. Modern critics such as Elisa Beshero-Bondar classifies Holford's poem as "a gothic epic," Judith Bailey Slagle underlines that the poem is an appropriation of history in verse which includes epic characteristics, and Adeline Johns-Putra also discusses Holford's poem as an example of an epic narrative which centralizes a powerful woman warrior. In her book, Putra points out that in the eighteenth century, there were a growing number of women poets who started to write epics and Margaret Holford was one of them (14-15). There were certain reasons which limited women's participation in writing an epic. As discussed earlier, the lack of formal education and the ideology of the separate spheres pushed women to the margins, and since they could not receive formal education like men, it was speculated

that women could not produce epics. Besides, it was accepted that women belonged to the private sphere and that they could not take active role in the public sphere (Mellor 82). This ideology was used as one of the foundations for the idea that women were not able to write epic poems. Because in epics, the hero is generally male, and wars and fighting are associated with the public sphere in which women were not allowed to act or speak as freely as men. Sarah Crisler argues that not only in epics but also in romances, there were always male protagonists and females were pushed to the margins. She comments on the issue as follows: “Whether his primary actions are linked to concerns of country or lineage or to a personal quest, it is overwhelmingly a male subject whose story articulates genre [...] the role of female characters is secondary” (27). However, all of these prejudices and unfounded interpretations about women started to disappear in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries since women poets contributed to the epic genre. Apparently, by choosing a woman character as a protagonist for her epic, Margaret Holford deconstructs the idea that an epic hero is always a male. More than that, her character acts as a military and political leader in the public sphere. *Literary Panorama*, which was one of the literary journals of Holford’s time, criticized this aspect of Holford’s poem as follows:

[T]he bloody scenes of battle and murder, and military execution, destruction of families, burning of towns, with all the horrors of war, especially of civil war, should rather be banished from the minds of the sex than cherished—as it must be, in order to do it justice in description. It is then to the honour of Miss Holford, if we consider her as having failed in the Poem before us, so far as it relates to military affairs. (*Margaret of Anjou* 561-562)

The reviewer openly suggested that military affairs, fighting and wars were not suitable for the female sex. As a result, they claimed that Holford had already failed in this poem even before they read it.

In her study, Putra asserts that some women poets directly signal their epic intentions in their titles or subtitles but some others preferred to refer indirectly to the epic status of their poem (16). According to her, these indirect tendencies or references can be understood by looking at certain criteria such as: “the standard epic metre of iambic pentameter in either heroic couplets or blank verse [or] sheer length [...] where it results

in divisions, in the manner of epics, into books or cantos” (*Heroes* 16). Holford belongs to the group of women poets who do not reveal their epic intentions openly since she does not mention that her poem is an epic. On the title page, it is written that *Margaret of Anjou* is “a poem.” However, Holford also used the canto format in *Margaret of Anjou* and there are ten cantos in the poem. It can be suggested that her poem succeeded in meeting another essential requirement of an epic narrative: it should be great in length (Putra, *Heroes*, 15). When *Margaret of Anjou* is compared to *Wallace*, it is clear that she almost doubled the number of cantos in *Margaret of Anjou*. Also, in each canto, she subdivides her narrative into irregular stanzas. Almost all the authors who wrote and published long narrative epic poems used the same form in that they preferred to divide their poems into cantos and stanzas like Holford. According to Clare Regan Kinney,

The manner in which these poems are formally constructed and subdivided not only ‘paragraphs’ their episodes and enhances their graceful and orderly unfolding through time, but also makes available a pattern of meanings revealed in the cross-referencing of motifs over the spread of the narrative. (13)

It can be deduced from the quotation that these divisions and sections in epic narratives enable the poet to create multiple meanings in different directions. In other words, since there is more than one action and several characters in epic poems, the poets can offer more organized and comprehensible plot structures by using these subdivisions. Holford’s canto format also helps her narrate her story in a more disciplined way since there are great numbers of complicated actions, events and characters in the plot.

It can be asserted that the action of Holford’s poem is another essential element in relation to epic qualities. In epic poems, the action of the hero is of great importance and the fate of a group or nation rests on it. In Holford’s poem, the future of England depends on Margaret of Anjou’s decisions and actions. To put it another way, Margaret as a queen is the one who determines the fate of England. Margaret of Anjou not only shouldered the responsibilities of the fate of England’s throne but also the fate of her son. It is seen that Holford reflects the turmoil of the time in which the War of the Roses continued. More than that, it can also be suggested that there is a heroic subject matter in the poem. The heroic subject matter is closely linked to the heroic action which

requires extraordinary courage and strength of the character. In the poem, it can be seen that Queen Margaret shows a great effort to fight for her son's right to the English crown. She never loses her hope and ambition although she sometimes faces serious problems. She acts heroically both as a mother and a queen until her son dies at the end of the poem. It can be concluded that Holford's poem includes both heroic subject matter and the choric element which complement the epic aspect of the poem.

It can be put forward that Holford's protagonist bears the qualities of an epic hero. Hermann Fischer suggests that "[an epic] hero must be a model character in the world being interpreted in the epic" (23) and it is also generally accepted that an epic hero belongs to the noble family or an epic hero is a high ranking personality. Margaret of Anjou is a noble person and she is a model character for the society. Since her husband is not healthy both mentally and physically, she is the one who takes all the responsibilities related to the English crown. As the queen of her husband and the mother of her son, she tries to secure her husband's and son's claims over the throne. Her first priority is to protect Edward's life although she cannot succeed in doing it. Margaret of Anjou aims to confront all of her enemies who cause difficulties for her son's future. As a result, she makes certain sacrifices. A close reading of the first two cantos can provide information about Margaret of Anjou as an epic hero. Canto I serves as an introduction to Queen Margaret's character. Margaret Holford uses positive adjectives to describe the Queen. For example, she calls her "warrior" (I. IX. 3), "frowning" (I.XXXI. 7), "eager" (II. LV. 1), and "warlike" (III.XXV. 4). Also, Holford labels Margaret of Anjou as "meek Henry's warrior Queen" (I. IX. 3) and, she has an iron breast in which there is no female weakness. Margaret converses with one of her followers, Clifford, about the upcoming war. As a leader of the Lancastrian side, Margaret urges her son, Edward, Clifford and soldiers to fight against their enemies without fear. She encourages her soldiers with her heroic speech:

Warriors, begone!—the advancing day
To glory summons ye away!
Begone! A breathless nation waits—
And Victory the lingerer hates!
Begone, begone! (I. XXV. 7-11)

Although she tries to encourage her son and soldiers, she has doubts and fears while waiting for the good news all by herself. Holford signals Margaret's upcoming struggle in her soul in this part of the narrative. The expected news arrives through a messenger and Margaret's army defeats the Yorkist army. It is revealed that Edward sends this messenger to her mother so as to give the news of victory. At the end of the canto, Holford again underlines the fact that there are no maternal feelings in Margaret's breast: "Twas joy, concenter'd, and austere,/ Unwater'd by maternal tear,/ Unmingled with maternal fear!" (I. LII. 8-10). It is clear that Holford aims to establish the figure of a powerful queen whose actions are not hindered by her womanhood and motherhood. Holford even resembles the queen to a wild animal: "She feeds, she feasts her eager aye/ Upon her foeman's misery!" (I. XX. 12-13). It is not certain whether she makes references to Shakespeare's representation of Margaret as a "she-wolf" but it can be inferred from this quotation that Holford's Margaret also attacks her enemies and she feasts on them just like a wild wolf. Adeline Johns-Putra points out that Queen Margaret "resolves what is a veritable inner battle of the sexes, a psychomachia between warring and mothering, with an acceptance of the feminine role of the mother" (*Heroes* 84). In other words, according to Putra, Holford depicts the Lancastrian queen as a woman whose motherhood and her warrior soul are in clash.

However, Elisa Beshero-Bondar argues that "her maternal and regal roles ultimately are one and the same, and both are fused in the body of the woman who falls to the ground in speechless torment in front of her enemies" (116). As Bondar suggests, not only her motherly feelings but also her regal duties can be seen as parts of Margaret's personality. Queen Margaret sometimes tries to suppress her motherly feelings towards her son since she believes that she has to be a powerful warrior queen in the absence of her king husband. If she let her maternal feelings control her emotions and actions, she most probably fears that she might lose control or authority over her army and country. However, at the end of the poem, Margaret of Anjou's motherhood and maternal love for her son take the upper hand and Margaret's deep grief leads her to her own end. It can be put forward that her motherhood and responsibility towards the English crown trigger Queen Margaret's warrior soul and when she loses her son and her claim to the throne, she realizes that she does not need her warrior side anymore.

Furthermore, in the course of the narrative, Margaret of Anjou is not depicted as a sympathetic character for readers. In other words, she has both negative and positive characteristics. Adeline Johns-Putra argues that “Holford’s Margaret is simultaneously admirable and dislikeable, displaying commendable bravery and leadership while exhibiting haughtiness, ambitiousness and even a hint of supernatural evil” (*Heroes* 80). In other words, the readers cannot know how to approach Margaret of Anjou. Sometimes, she is the one who acts like a dominant warrior figure who treats her son as one of her soldiers and in another scene, she is the one who cries for her son and she acts like a caring mother figure. As Putra underlines, it is possible to love and hate Holford’s protagonist at the same time.

Burçin Erol brings a new outlook for Queen Margaret’s character and she points out that in Canto I, Queen Margaret is depicted as a respected leader and she has a strong rhetoric in that she is followed by her soldiers, but she is aware of the fact that her assumed role as a military and political leader suits a man rather than a woman (144). In the poem, there are constant references to this aspect of the queen’s character. Holford underlines the fact that Queen Margaret’s sex is not an obstacle for her since her soul is as brave and strong as any man:

Yet is that breast in iron bound,
And fill’d with rude and sullen guests.
No female weakness harbour’d there,
Relentings soft, nor shrinking fear,
Within its centre deep abide:
The stern resolve, the purpose dire,
And grim revenge’s quenchless fire,
The intrepid thoughts, cold, thawless pride,
And fortitude, in torture tried. (I. VIII. 2-10)

Holford suggests that although Queen Margaret is a woman, there is no female weakness in her body and she does not fear anything. Furthermore, in the poem, the Queen often addresses his soldiers and son in order to encourage them to fight against their enemies. At this juncture, Erol resembles Queen Margaret’s speeches in the poem to the Tilbury speech of Elizabeth I and she puts forward that the themes of Queen Margaret’s speeches share certain similarities with the themes of Elizabeth I’s Tilbury

speech (145) because Elizabeth I also asserts that although she has a weak female body, she has the courage of a male ruler:

I know I have the bodie, but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and Stomach of a King, and of a King of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my Realm, to which rather than any dishonor should grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I my self will be your General, Judge, and Rewarder of everie one of your virtues in the field. (qtd. in Frye 98)

It can be understood that Holford most probably refers to the speech of Elizabeth I while depicting her protagonist because their speeches share the same themes and meanings, as Erol suggests. Both of them accept that they have female bodies but this does not prevent them from acting as military leaders and this depiction of Queen Margaret can also be observed in the poem until the last canto. Clearly, Holford draws a parallel between Elizabeth I and Margaret of Anjou in terms of characterization. Most probably, Holford underlines the fact that being a woman is not an obstacle for becoming a powerful monarch. Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth I prove that women can also have authority in the public sphere.

Canto II begins with the depiction of Margaret's anxiety about the result of the battle. In this canto, it is observed that the warrior side of the Queen's soul is tested through her son. She is hopelessly waiting for the news of her army and son once again. Queen Margaret learns that her army is defeated at Hexham and many soldiers including her son Edward and Clifford are fatally wounded. It is revealed that Clifford sacrifices himself so as to save Edward from an archer's arrow (II. XIX. 1-12). Although her closest knight, Clifford is about to die and her son is severely wounded at the battle, Margaret does not want to accept this defeat. She does not mourn over Clifford's death and she is looking for new allies. Then, Edward hides his wounded breast from her mother but he falls to the ground when he cannot bear the pain (II. XXX. 1-10). After Margaret realizes that her son is lying on the ground like a lifeless body, her motherhood prevails over her warrior side and she cries for help: "Oh, save my gallant boy! Oh, Edward! Oh my son!" (II, XXXI, 10). It can be argued that although Holford tries to establish a figure of a powerful warrior queen in Canto I, Margaret's warrior

side is challenged in this canto when she sees her son's war wound. Moreover, Holford reveals that Edward is the weakness of Queen Margaret since she is afraid of losing her son. It is apparent that her son Edward stands for hope and future for them. It is seen in the first two cantos that she is a model character who inspires others.

From the beginning to the end, Holford praises Anjou's sacrifices and courage in a male dominated environment. She is the one who declares and sees herself as a leader of the Lancastrians in the absence of her husband and when the time comes, she is the one who makes a speech which encourages her soldiers and she acts as a military commander on the battlefield. All in all, Holford's warrior queen who fights for her son and husband can be interpreted as an epic hero since she is the one who is regarded by others as a role model in the world created by Holford. Moreover, Queen Margaret in the poem is both noble in blood and noble in deed.

A close reading of the poem shows that Holford's narrative bears other essential characteristics of an epic poem. First of all, Holford uses the structural epic device of *in medias res*. Holford's narrative only sheds light on the Battle of Hexham and Tewksbury which can be regarded as the final phase of the War of the Roses. As a result, the readers are not informed about what happened before Hexham. Also, it is not clear how the deaths of Margaret of Anjou and her son Edward affected England and its political atmosphere. It can be indicated that Margaret Holford expected from her readers to have the background information about the Wars of the Roses and the active royal participants. Furthermore, it can also be suggested that since the focus is on the main character in epics, there is no need to tell artistically what will happen after the deaths of Margaret of Anjou and her son. As a result, when Queen Margaret dies, Margaret Holford also ends her poem.

Secondly, Holford consciously makes use of another well-established epic device: invocation to the Muses. Elizabeth Minchin argues that there are certain reasons which lead epic poets to use the epic device of the invocation:

[I]t announces the performance. It is the signal for the audience-to-be to stop talking amongst themselves and to listen to an extraordinary tale [...] the poet makes a number of claims on behalf of the story he is about to tell and on his own behalf. By implication he assures his audience that his story will be a story worth telling; its divine source is a guarantee of its authenticity and its quality. For this reason it deserves their attention. Finally, through each proem he offers a bare outline of the story to come. This, indeed, is one of the functions of any such passage: to foreshadow the tale, or some aspect of it. (27)

It can be put forward that Margaret Holford also gives clues about her epic hero's upcoming struggles and difficulties in these invocations. She constantly refers to the fact that her task as a poet is very challenging since she is going to tell a great story. As a result, in Canto I, Holford invokes her muse to support and help her for days:

Lead on, my Muse ! For many a day,
 With rapid pulse and uprais'd eye,
 How have I chidden thy delay
 And woo'd thee from thy sky!
 Oh, thou art she who led me forth
 Mid the cold mountains of the north,
 Where freezing whirlwinds blow;
 She, whose benign and generous glow
 Pour'd warmth into my heart even in those realms of snow. (I. II. 1-10)

She begins her two poems *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou* by invoking her muse and she gives a clue about her heroic mode at the very beginning of her poems. In *Margaret of Anjou*, not only in Canto I but also in other cantos, Holford refers to her muse so as to be inspired by it (III. I. 1-9, VI. II. 1-12).

Moreover, it can also be observed that Margaret Holford uses an elevated language which is one of the essential requirements of epic poems. Holford makes use of similes, personifications and metaphors. Notably, in every canto, personifications of abstractions can be found. It can also be suggested that Margaret Holford employs high style in this poem. According to Steven Shankman, "the high style is appropriate to the genres of tragedy and epic; it is elevated above the concerns of the everyday and it attempts to evoke, through both the grandeur of its language and of its subject matter, the emotions of wonder and of pathos" (xi). Since the epic action has magnanimity and the characters display nobility, due to the rule of decorum, high style is required. In many of the passages of the poem, Holford's use of the high style can be observed. Especially, the

passages in which Holford addresses her muse or abstractions evoke certain emotions in readers:

Oh, Sorrow! Which of Adam's race
 Has not beheld thy wrinkled face?
 Of all the hearts which life has warm'd
 Since the first man of clay was form'd,
 Of all the mortals who have hasten'd,
 Like shadows, o'er this rolling sphere,
 Has once return'd to earth unchasten'd
 By thy reproof severe? (II. I. 1-8)
 [...]
 Oh no! Tho' every Muse but mine
 Shall follow yonder plumed train,
 Led by a Victor, young and vain,
 Yet must a nobler task be thine!
 Thou shalt not follow in the crowd
 Which tracks the footsteps of the proud!
 Fear not, my Muse! Enow there be
 To dog the heels of Victory! (III. I. 1-8)

It can be concluded that Holford's high language reveals her knowledge about the epic tradition in regard to decorum.

In classical epic poems, there are supernatural agency and mythological characters, and generally, gods and goddesses appear in the plots of epics (Fischer 16). Margaret Holford also uses the device of the supernatural agency but she gothicizes her poem by adding gothic elements to it as she does in her *Wallace*. Especially, Canto VII can be regarded as the most gothic canto of the whole poem, and these gothic scenes support the heroic idealism of the poem. Thus, it is important to analyze this canto in detail.

After Queen Margaret learns that her army is defeated at Hexham and many soldiers including her son Edward and Clifford are fatally wounded, they escape from the enemy and they seek shelter in the forest. All of a sudden, Margaret and her troop arrive at Dame Maudlin's cottage for food and shelter. At the beginning of Canto VII, Margaret and Geraldine sit in this cottage. Prince Edward is very enthusiastic about learning the way shepherds live. Then, he urges his mother to join them but Queen Margaret openly declares that she will not join them and she does not need nature to forget or ease her

anxieties. As Judith Bailey Slagle puts it, Margaret “is not a Romantic queen but a medieval one—maybe even a Frankish one” (*Romantic*, 71). Later, Rudolph and Queen Margaret leave the cottage so as to search for a sorcerer who will inform them about the upcoming events and their destiny. Rudolph exclaims that he is not as brave as her to witness such a dark spirit: “Man’s pow’r I know I may abide,/ But this dark race, unknown, untired,/ I am not brave for them!” (VII. XIII. 7-9). Although Margaret also feels uncomfortable in this dark scene, she is willing to continue for her cause. Slagle argues that this gothic confrontation “is a strange development in Hodson’s poem, as it adds to Margaret’s Lady Macbeth- like ruthlessness and echoes Macbeth’s own visits to the Weird Sisters” (*Romantic* 72).

On the other hand, Erol asserts that these two women Margaret of Anjou and Lady Macbeth do not share many similarities except for their dominant personality and determination. Erol points out that Margaret of Anjou is fighting for a right and just cause in regard to her son’s claim over the English throne. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth forces her husband to murder the king for their unjust claims over the throne. (147). When the sorcerer shows Margaret what will happen in the future, she cannot bear what she sees because it is shown to her that the Lancastrian side is going to lose the war. With rage and disgust, Margaret uncovers her poisoned knife and she demands Rudolph to kill the sorcerer. However, Margaret’s knife melts away and they mysteriously find themselves at the cottage.

Elisa Beshero-Bondar comments on Holford’s use of the gothic in the poem as follows: “[Queen] Margaret’s exposure to supernatural scenes of horror in Canto VII exemplifies the hybridizing of gothic drama with Romantic epic poetry, to move woman characters to the foreground in a plot of historical and national importance” (115). As Beshero-Bondar puts it, Holford aims to merge gothic qualities with epic. Interestingly, When Margaret Holford’s two poems are taken into consideration, it can be asserted that she uses gothic scenes and characters as a means of foreshadowing the ending of her poems. In *Wallace*, the wizard Warlock warns Wallace that he is going to lose his fight against his enemy. Similarly, Queen Margaret is also warned by the sorcerer about her future. Another noteworthy detail is the protagonists’ determination to pursue their cause. To

put it another way, her protagonists do not want to accept what the sorcerers tell. Although they know that they are going to be defeated by their enemies, they choose to continue their struggle. Holford's protagonists' determination shows another important reflection of an epic hero since in epic poems, an epic hero fights although there is no hope. Thus, he gains immortal fame and acknowledgement. Margaret Holford reflects heroic idealism in these gothic scenes since Holford's protagonists decide to continue their fight although they learn that there is failure at the end. In other words, their determination supports heroic idealism in the poems. However, Holford's Wallace differs from her Margaret of Anjou because when Wallace is told that he will lose the war, he does not give any harm to the wizard who tells the future. On the other hand, when Margaret of Anjou realizes that the sorcerer foretells her failure in battle, she attempts to kill the sorcerer. This confrontation of Queen Margaret and the sorcerer is the only scene in which Holford presents her protagonist as an impulsive and passionate woman figure.

In this poem, Margaret Holford again employs the device of disguising of a female character in a man's appearance. In *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou*, it can be observed that some of the women characters disguise themselves as men. On the one hand, it can be claimed that Holford's use of the disguise element is an innovative contribution to epic narratives in terms of women's involvement in epic plots because generally there is no place for women in the epics or they are under the influence or control of other male characters. Sheila Murnaghan asserts that "Greek mythology provides many examples of gods who disguise themselves as mortals, go among men, usually for the purpose of testing them, and ultimately disclose themselves" (qtd. in Keightley 284) and many epic poets use these disguised gods and goddesses in their poems. Also, mortals sometimes disguise themselves in epics. For example, Homer also uses disguised characters in his *Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. It can be deduced that examples of disguised characters in her poems are signs of Holford's knowledge of these traditions.

At this juncture, it is crucial to take a closer look at Canto III so as to understand how Margaret Holford uses the device of disguise in this poem. Canto III is one of the most important cantos of the poem since Geraldine's real identity is revealed to the readers.

Margaret's son, Edward's wounds are healing thanks to herbal medicines of Gerald, and he starts to tell how he was wounded on the battlefield. He also does not forget to mention a stranger who saves Edward from the attacks of his enemy. Then, Queen Margaret hears the sound of the approaching band of the Yorkists and she leaves the cottage in a rush in order to make a plan. Gerald also has a plan to deceive the enemy. He covers Edward's bed with herbs and flowers as a sign of Edward's death. Gerald mourns as if Edward had died in his bed, and in this mournful atmosphere, Margaret returns to the cottage with an unknown knight. When she hears and sees Gerald's mourning and the funeral wail, she assumes that her son had died after her departure. However, Gerald explains his plan designed to fool their enemy and Margaret's heart again fills with hope and happiness. Edward realizes that this unknown knight who comes with his mother is the one who saved him from death at Hexham and the knight starts to tell his tale. After he finishes telling his tale, he takes off his armor in order to show himself. At this moment, Gerald and Old Oswald open the cottage door. When Gerald sees this knight's face, he falls on the ground with desperation. Then, the canto ends with the cry of the knight and he exclaims "Revive, my Geraldine!" (III. LVII. 15-16).

Margaret Holford ends the third canto in suspense. However, in the fourth canto it is revealed to the readers that Gerald, who is known as the healer is actually the sister of the knight and her name is Geraldine. She uses her brother's name so as to hide her real identity. Gerald and Geraldine suffer shipwreck and each one assumes that the other is lost and dead. When Geraldine sees her brother, she faints out of excitement. It can be concluded that Holford's Agnes in *Wallace* and Geraldine in *Margaret of Anjou* are similar to each other. Both of them hide their female identity by disguising themselves as male although their purposes in hiding their real identities vary greatly.

What is more, Margaret Holford uses other characters who disguise themselves. Herbert Tucker comments on the disguise element of Holford's poem as follows: "this poem that disguises a noblewoman as a rustic leech (Canto 3), a nobleman as a monk (Canto 6), and a king as a hermit (Canto 7), *a` la* Scott, unmask them all in the interests of unmasking the epic essence of romance itself when stripped of padding and evasion"

(*Epic* 159). In Canto VI, Rudolph tells what he experiences while he was away. It is also revealed that he is accompanied by a mysterious person who wears the cowl of a monk. Rudolph mentions how Somerset is executed and he informs them that the enemy has set a price on the heads of Margaret and her son. Besides, anyone who provides shelter to them will be executed by the authorities. After hearing his words, Gerald swears loyalty to Queen Margaret's cause and then, the mysterious monk reveals himself to be Somerset. Also, Holford uses another disguised character in Canto VII. At the end of the canto, Holford focuses on Edward and Geraldine. Edward repeatedly claims that he cannot live without Geraldine and his crown and future are meaningless if he is not accompanied by her in the future. All of a sudden, a storm breaks out and Edward wishes to protect Geraldine. They come across a hermit's cell and then they meet the hermit. Edward realizes that the hermit is his exiled father, Henry VI.

In these three cantos, Canto III, Canto VI, Canto VII, Margaret Holford prefers to employ three different disguised characters. However, Geraldine who disguises herself as a rustic leech differs from other disguised characters since she is the only female who disguises herself as a man. Somerset in Canto VI pretends to be a monk and King Henry hides himself in the wilderness and he lives like a hermit. After she uses only one disguised character in *Wallace*, Holford decides to increase the number of her disguised characters in *Margaret of Anjou*. However, she does not prefer to hide all of these disguised characters' identities until the end of the poem. On the contrary, in *Wallace*, Agnes' identity is revealed at the end of the poem. Apparently, these disguised characters help her create mystery and suspense in the plot, and it can be claimed that Holford successfully includes these disguised characters in the plot.

There are other very important characters and events which test Queen Margaret's determinism and courage in the poem. For example, the confrontation between King Henry and Edward in Canto VII is significant because it is observed that King Henry explicitly utters his hatred for the Queen and his own inefficiency as a king. King Henry's speech reveals why the Queen fights for her son's claim to the throne all by herself. After it is revealed that the hermit is King Henry, Edward asks his father's

blessing for his union with Geraldine and when Queen Margaret's name is mentioned, the king expresses that he does not want to hear the name of his wife, Margaret:

The Queen! The Queen!—her very name
 With ague shakes my inmost frame!
 [...] My Edward, on thy gallant course!
 I have not heart to fight, nor head
 To marshal others to the fray,--
 [...] Oh! How I hate the field with human slaughter red! (VII. LXIX. 7-8,17-19,22)

It can be argued that these lines are important in showing the difference between King Henry and his queen, Margaret. Holford reveals that Henry does not share the same ambition and strength as his wife. However, he should be the one who fights for his son. He lacks royal responsibility, and he claims that he is neither physically nor mentally suited to undertake any heroic action. Most probably, Holford refers to the mental illness of Henry VI which prevented him from taking an active role in political affairs. Interestingly, this is the only scene of King Henry in the poem. It can be suggested that Holford excludes the king from the plot so as to show the inefficiency of Henry VI as a king and as a political leader. It can also be put forward that Holford draws a parallelism between Henry and his son in that in the previous cantos, Edward behaves just like his father. He loses his ambition, strength and belief in regard to his cause. Queen Margaret always tries to encourage her son to fight for their cause and she does not want him to be distracted by anything. When Edward loses his enthusiasm for the war, Queen Margaret tries to urge her son:

Get thee to horse!—if longer here
 Thou waste in idle talk the day,
 By heaven! Ourself will seize the spear,
 And rush before thee to the fray! (I. XXVII. 1-4)

Although Queen Margaret consistently forces her son to take an active role in their cause, Edward clearly exclaims that he does not share the same ambition and he laments his fate:

“Why,” cried the Prince, “did adverse fate
 Oppress my lot with toys of state!

Oh! I could curse the star that shone
 Upon the inauspicious morn,
 When to the cares of England's throne
 A hapless heir was born! (VII. XLVII. 1-6)

In these lines, Edward calls himself an unfortunate heir since he is the one who is responsible for the future of England's throne and apparently, he is not eager to become a king. It can be indicated that the contrast of character between Queen Margaret, Edward and King Henry is given to the readers. On the one hand, the Queen is never depicted as timid or skeptical about her actions or decisions. On the contrary, she is cast as a strong, determined and brave character. From the beginning to the end, she has always the upper hand and she is listened by her followers. On the other hand, Edward takes after his father, Henry VI. He is depicted as naïve, soft and incompetent as an heir. Additionally, King Henry and Edward can be accepted as almost foil characters to Queen Margaret.

Geraldine, who was first introduced as a rustic healer, is another significant character in this poem since Geraldine is the one who becomes the target of Queen Margaret's hatred. In other words, the conflict between Queen Margaret and Edward is because of Edward's love for Geraldine. When her real identity is revealed, she becomes an obstacle for Queen Margaret's plan. While the Queen is fighting for the rightful claim to the throne, she tries to control Edward both physically and mentally. She does not want him to be distracted by anything. However, since Geraldine's brother Gerald saves Edward's life on the battlefield, Edward swears to protect Geraldine and he falls in love with her. Queen Margaret always regards Geraldine as a threat for their cause because she believes that Edward does not concentrate on their cause but on his love for Geraldine. This mother and son struggle can be observed in Canto IV. Margaret fears that Edward is going to forget their cause and she scolds Edward as follows:

Has pain so quell'd thy royal heart
 That thou forget'st what man thou art?
 Or dost thou prize a lady's glove.
 An empire and a crown above?
 Sickens thy spirit with thy frame?
 Would thou wert of thy mother's mood!
 Storm after storm my soul has stood,

Yet still amid the blast bright glows ambition's flame! (IV. XVI. 13-20)

Holford reflects the struggle between mother and son in this scene. The Queen underlines the fact that although she has to face a great deal of difficulties, she never loses hope and she is driven by her ambition. It can be seen that Margaret wants her son to act like her mother and he shall not deviate from his cause because of earthly feelings. This struggle is also dominant in the fifth canto and Edward is in love with Geraldine and Margaret's dislike of her is growing. Edward is "placed between a loving girl and a controlling mother" (Slagle, *Romantic*, 69) but his love for Geraldine takes precedence over his controlling mother. It can be propounded that her mother's influence loses its power over Edward. Queen Margaret's hatred and anger towards Geraldine is apparent:

She look'd, as if an adder lay
Hissing and coiling in her way!
Looks kill not, but they can destroy
With fatal blight the buds of joy,--
Had Margaret's glance the pow'r to kill
How had the wasted world deplor'd her deadly skill! (V. XIX. 11-17)

Queen Margaret succeeds in separating Edward and Geraldine through her plan for Edward's political marriage in Canto VIII, and in this canto, Margaret and Edward are in France. Although they are in a difficult situation, they find some relief since Beaufort reports that many people do not accept Edward IV (York's son) as their king. Moreover, Queen Margaret has another plan to strengthen their position. She intends to marry her son to Nevil who is Warwick's daughter. In this scene, Holford highlights Queen Margaret's skill as a political planner which is lacking in the weak son and father. Apparently, she tries to make every effort to defeat their enemies. Adeline Johns-Putra argues that by arranging the political marriage of Edward and Nevil, "[Queen Margaret] is, in fact, so masculinised that she is able to marry the role of the mother with that of the father [...] a gender reversal is effected, in which Edward assumes what is traditionally the daughter's part in gift exchange, and Margaret assumes the father's role of the exchanger" (*Heroes* 83). However, Edward is not happy and he feels desperate about her mother's decision because he thinks that his father had already blessed his union with Geraldine. Oxford starts to insult him by calling Edward as "the puppet"

(VIII. L. 9) so as to persuade Edward to accept this political marriage. It can be argued that Queen Margaret's behavior in regard to the political marriage of her son is quite usual for the time since marriage is regarded as a political and economic contract. The Queen's behavior fits the norm of her time but Edward's behavior is unusual. As a future king, Edward is also expected to behave like his mother. However, Holford shows Edward's incompetency in this aspect. When Geraldine realizes that Edward is ready to risk the throne for the sake of their marriage, she proposes to break this marriage vow and she expresses that she will enter a convent. Then, Geraldine leaves Edward: "Then will we meet!—Farewell, till then!/
For in this nether world—we never meet again!" (VIII. LXV. 9-10). So as to secure and strengthen her son's claim to the throne, Queen Margaret makes peace with her enemy and she arranges a political marriage. This proves that the Queen is able to take drastic decisions as a strong leader. When Geraldine leaves Edward, she is no longer a threat for the Queen. At this point, the mother and son conflict in regard to Geraldine comes to an end with Margaret's plan. In this scene, it can also be argued that the action of Geraldine is noble. Although she loves Edward, she decides to leave him for the sake of the country and the future king. As a woman poet, Holford points out Geraldine's self-sacrifice.

In the last canto, especially at the end, Queen Margaret's character is transformed and her warrior soul leaves her. The image of a powerful woman figure which is supported in the previous cantos comes into conflict with her representation in this canto. So as to observe this change in her character, it is necessary to focus on the ending. Canto X can be regarded as the most dramatic canto of the whole poem. The Lancastrians and the Yorkists confront each other at Tewksbury and both sides are willing to shed blood for their own cause. However, Queen Margaret and Edward's troops are losing their power in battle and they realize that they are going to be defeated. On the battlefield, Margaret's supporters hold back their forces when they believe that there is no chance of victory. As a result, Prince Edward is left alone on the battlefield and the Yorkists kill Edward. Now, there is no Lancastrian claim over the English throne. After her son is murdered by the enemy, Queen Margaret appears and she is looking for Edward. Margaret realizes that she could not arrive early enough to save her only child from the murderous Yorkists and she is devastated when she sees her cold and pale child. After

she utters her final words to her enemies, “the heart-stricken Queen fell senseless on the floor” (X. LXXII. 9):

Monsters! A mother’s curse lie strong
 And heavy on you! May the tongue,
 The ceaseless tongue which well I ween
 Lives in the murd’rer’s murky breast,
 With goading whispers, fell and keen,
 Make havoc of your rest!
 For ever in your midnight dream
 May the wan, wintry smile, which stays
 On yon cold lips, appal your gaze,
 And may a madden’d mother’s scream
 Ring in your ears, till ye awake
 And ev’ry unstrung limb with horror’s palsy shake!” (X. LXXI. 1-12)

Before she falls on the floor, Margaret sends a mother’s curse to all her enemies. Her deep grief that resulted from the death of her son shows that all of Queen Margaret’s hopes and future plans depend on Edward. When she loses her only son, she also loses her ambition since there is no cause any longer. At the beginning of the last canto, the Queen is described as “the English Pallas” (X. VII. 12). Adeline Johns-Putra asserts that “Margaret is no shrinking passive woman on the sidelines. She is depicted in full warrior dress and compared with Pallas Athena, Greek goddess of war” (*Heroes* 80). It is clear that there is a change in Queen Margaret’s character at the end of the poem. Until the last moments of her son’s life, she is the one who is regarded as a powerful and brave warrior queen. She never loses her hope and ambition although she is defeated by the enemy. However, when her son dies, she completely leaves her warrior side aside and she adopts the role of a sorrowful mother. As Elisa Beshero-Bondar puts it, “[t]he queen’s stricken motherhood is exposed in her bursting blood vessels, physically rupturing the royal mother’s body in response to the murder of her only son” (116).

In conclusion, although Margaret of Anjou was at the target of harsh criticism and she was depicted in a negative light for centuries, Margaret Holford chose her as a protagonist of her long heroic poem by disregarding all of those approaches. She centralizes a woman warrior queen in *Margaret of Anjou* and none of the male

characters in the poem is as courageous, powerful and authoritative as her. Holford prefers to focus on the Queen's maternal and warrior sides without showing her as a power-hungry queen as William Shakespeare. It can be concluded that Holford sends messages to her society and readers by choosing Margaret of Anjou as a protagonist. First, she shows that Queen Margaret as a woman becomes one of the most significant historical figures of the Wars of the Roses and Holford underlines the fact that women could also take part in shaping of history along with men. In other words, Holford does not limit her protagonist to the private sphere.

Secondly, Holford tries to change the notorious image of Queen Margaret by reflecting both her maternal and warrior sides. Especially, in the last canto, the poet focuses on the maternal feelings of the Queen and at the end, she even sends a mother's curse to all of her enemies by leaving behind her warrior soul. Clearly, Holford justifies the Queen's actions. Although Holford does not present Queen Margaret as a loveable figure, she tries to convey that the Queen is a respectable figure. Apart from its controversial character, Holford again writes her poem in the heroic mode and she employs epic characteristics in her historical poem. Her *Margaret of Anjou* received harsher criticism than *Wallace* in regard to its protagonist. Since Holford subverted the idea that a protagonist of an epic poem is generally a male, she became the target of severe attacks. If she had written the poem by appreciating a male ruler, she would have been welcomed by the critics. However, she chose to praise one of the underdogs of English history. Also, it can be claimed that she added new perspectives to the epic by including the disguised women characters and gothic scenes in her plot. Although the device of disguise is common in epic poems, by using disguised women characters, she connected her poem to a female audience. Although she did not receive a formal education as men did, she openly shows that as a woman poet, she was capable of producing a successful literary work in which she glorified a warrior queen.

CONCLUSION

Margaret Holford was an English woman poet who lived in the early nineteenth century. In the male dominated literature of the nineteenth century, she tried to resist the ideologies and dogmas of the time by writing in an unexpected manner. Although her poems *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem* did not make a lasting impact in the nineteenth century, Holford greatly contributed to literature of her time. It can be pointed out that there are three significant aspects of Margaret Holford's poetry: Medievalism, history and epic. In *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou*, Holford used two different medieval figures, namely, William Wallace who lived in the thirteenth century, and Margaret of Anjou who lived in the fifteenth century. Not just Holford's characters but also her subject matters are from medieval history. In addition, she did not tell the stories of imaginary medieval figures and events. On the contrary, she used real life figures and events in medieval history. In *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk*, she retold the fight of the Scottish people for independence through the story of William Wallace, and in *Margaret of Anjou: A Poem*, she recounted one of the most important political events of English history which is the Wars of the Roses by centralizing Queen Margaret as a warrior queen. It can be asserted that she combined Medievalism and history in her poems. As discussed above, in the early nineteenth century, Medieval Revival affected a great deal of writers and artists, and they used medieval history and characters in their works. Medievalism was generally associated with male writers and women writers did not produce medievalist texts as often as men. In this context, Margaret Holford can be regarded as a proto-medievalist woman poet since she is one of the first representatives of Medievalist writing in the early nineteenth century. Besides, it can be argued that Sir Walter Scott's influence might have triggered Holford's medievalist tendency because Scott produced a large number of medievalist works during his life time and it was known that Holford is influenced by Scott's *Marmion* when she wrote *Wallace*.

It is seen that Margaret Holford differs from her contemporaries in terms of her heroic mode and tendency to write epic. Many of the women poets did not choose to write in a heroic mode since they knew that they would be the target of severe criticism.

Women poets were aware of the fact that they would oppose the ideologies of the century by writing in a heroic mode. Especially, there was the ideology of the separate spheres which was supported by male authorities against woman writers. According to this ideology, women writers should and could write about the private sphere which was related to their home, family and other domestic affections, and they were expected to serve this ideology by celebrating domesticity in their works and they should not write on subjects such as public sphere such as war and combat. As a result, women writers were quite cautious in regard to their subject matters. However, when Margaret Holford's writing style and subject matters are taken into consideration, it can be put forward that she did not serve this ideology. Her poems are written in the heroic mode and she uses various well-established epic devices in *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou*. Although Holford does not explicitly suggest that her poems are the examples of epic, in terms of subject matter and style, in both of these poems, Holford employs many of the essential characteristics of the epic genre such as *in medias res*, invocation of the muses, catalogue of warriors, heroic subject matter and highly elevated language. Most importantly, the protagonists in these poems meet the basic qualities of the epic hero. Both William Wallace and Margaret of Anjou are respectable leaders in their own circle, and their actions and decisions influence not only their own fates but also their society's future. In other words, it is not personal glory they seek. While adding these epic characteristics to the poems, Holford also combined Medievalism and history in her poems. In Holford's time, it was not possible for women to study at universities. Holford's use of epic characteristics and heroic mode indicate that she was capable of writing epic though she did not receive formal education. Her writing style and subject matters highlight the fact that she is acquainted with classical learning. As a result, it can be assumed that she is a self-educated woman poet.

In these poems, Holford's artistic innovations can also be observed. In the poems, she makes use of the disguise element. Notably, the device of disguise is commonly used in epic narratives but Holford generally uses this disguise element for women characters. In *Wallace*, Agnes hides her real identity and in *Margaret of Anjou*, Geraldine pretends to be a man. Normally, in epic plots, women are pushed to the margins and they do not

play significant roles when they are compared to male characters. However, by using these women characters, Holford connects her poems to the female audience. Furthermore, by centralizing a warrior queen in *Margaret of Anjou*, she also diverts and challenges the epic tradition since the epic hero is generally male. All in all, Margaret Holford apparently tries to give a more prestigious place and voice to female power in her poems than the traditional epic poems.

Apart from her heroic mode and Medievalism, Holford's choice of protagonist is quite interesting. In both of her poems, she uses controversial historical figures. William Wallace was an outlawed Scottish leader and he rioted against the English. On the other hand, Margaret of Anjou was not accepted as a respectable queen figure in English history. Moreover, Holford represents these negatively stereotyped figures of history rather positively. In *Wallace*, she highlights William Wallace's bravery and his devotion to his cause along with his determination of saving his countrymen from English despotism. In the poem, by praising the deeds and courage of William Wallace, Holford aims to act as a mediator between England and Scotland so as to ease the struggle between these two nations, and in spite of all the possible criticism, she does not hesitate to present her attitude and ideas. On the other hand, in *Margaret of Anjou*, Holford depicts Queen Margaret in a positive light. To put it differently, she tries to restore the notorious image of Queen Margaret by emphasizing her sacrifices, motherhood and warrior side. In the poem, Holford openly demonstrates that she supports female solidarity by acknowledging Margaret of Anjou who was previously depicted as a power-hungry and bloodthirsty queen.

It can be concluded that Margaret Holford offers a new approach to the historical figures which are negatively portrayed by the English. As a woman poet, her efforts to change the perspective towards these figures are remarkable. Although she knows that she is going to be criticized severely, she is not apologetic in her prefaces. In the preface of *Wallace*, she declares that she is not going to beg for the mercy of the public (vii). Holford's words support the idea that she challenges her society's expectations. Furthermore, in the preface to *Margaret of Anjou*, she mentions that she is the rightful owner of her poetic genius which she inherited from her mother. It can be claimed that

although Holford knew that she risked her position as a woman poet, she did not hesitate to express her ideas openly.

This study has shown that Margaret Holford's poems are not included in today's canon. As Joanna Baillie's letters warned, her works were also forgotten. Baillie comments in *The Past* (1819) and says: "If this poem were written by Lord Byron, what hosts of critics would employ tongues & pens in its praise!" (Baillie, *The Collected: Vol I*, 706). Both Holford and Baillie knew the difficulty of being a woman writer in a male dominated literary society. It is clear that Holford contributed greatly to nineteenth century literature with her two major poems, two other poetry collections, a three volumes novel and two translations but she did not secure her position in the literary world as a woman poet. First, she can be regarded as a proto-medievalist woman poet. By publishing two medievalist poems in the early nineteenth century, Holford contributed to the development of the movement of the Medieval Revival. Secondly, she changed the direction of the Wallace trend with her *Wallace*, which is the first Wallace poem written by a woman. Thus, as a woman poet, Holford became a role model for her contemporaries. Thirdly, she differed from her contemporaries in terms of her use of the epic genre. Holford's works show that she successfully wrote *Wallace* and *Margaret of Anjou* in a heroic mode. In the male dominated nineteenth century literature, she succeeded in writing epics as a woman poet, and she proves that the lack of formal education and certain unfounded ideologies were not obstacles for her to write. All in all, since Margaret Holford greatly contributed to the women's writing, her works should be studied in detail so as to pave the way for further studies about her. With her daring choices in regard to her protagonists, subject matters and writing style, she can be regarded as a role model for woman writers in every age.

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APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORTS

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU</p>								
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tarih: 27/05/2019</p> <p>Tez Başlığı : Bir İngiliz Kadın Şairden Ortaçağcı Destanlar: Margaret Holford'un <i>Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk</i> ve <i>Margaret of Anjou: a Poem</i> Eserleri</p> <p>Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 136 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 27/05/2019 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Tuminin açılı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 7 'tür.</p> <p>Uygulanan filtrelemeler:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kaynakça hariç 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alıntılar hariç 4- <input type="checkbox"/> Alıntılar dâhil 5- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç <p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p> <p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  27.05.2013 Tarih ve İmza </div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Adı Soyadı:</td> <td>Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Öğrenci No:</td> <td>N15233953</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anabilim Dalı:</td> <td>İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Program:</td> <td>İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı – Tezli Yüksek Lisans</td> </tr> </table>	Adı Soyadı:	Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU	Öğrenci No:	N15233953	Anabilim Dalı:	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	Program:	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı – Tezli Yüksek Lisans
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Program:	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı – Tezli Yüksek Lisans							
<p>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UYGUNDUR.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  (Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL) </div>								



HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MASTER'S THESIS ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

Date: 27/05/2019

Thesis Title Medievalist Epics by an English Woman Poet: Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk* and *Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*

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5. Match size up to 5 words excluded

I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.


I respectfully submit this for approval.


27.05.2019
Date and Signature

Name Surname: Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU
Student No: N15233953
Department: English Language and Literature
Program: English Language and Literature - Master of Arts

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.


(Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL)

APPENDIX II: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KOMİSYON MUAFİYETİ FORMU</p>
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tarih: 17/05/2019</p>
<p>Tez Başlığı: Bir İngiliz Kadın Şairden Ortaçağcı Destanlar: Margaret Holford'un <i>Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk</i> ve <i>Margaret of Anjou: a Poem</i> Eserleri</p> <p>Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır, 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, mülakat, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. <p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurulları ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kurul/Komisyon'dan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p> <p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">  17.05.2019 Tarih ve İmza </p> <p> Adı Soyadı: Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU Öğrenci No: N15233953 Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı - Tezli Yüksek Lisans Statüsü: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Doktora </p>
<p>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  (Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL) </p> <p> Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr Telefon: 0-312-2976860 Faks: 0-3122992147 E-posta: sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr </p>



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS COMMISSION FORM FOR THESIS**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**

Date: 17/05/2019

Thesis Title: Medievalist Epics by an English Woman Poet: Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight of Falkirk and Margaret of Anjou: a Poem*

My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, interview, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board/Commission for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.


17.05.2019
Date and Signature

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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL


(Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL)