

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

“STRANGE IMAGES OF DEATH”:
VIOLENCE AND THE UNCANNY IN FIVE PRODUCTIONS OF *MACBETH*

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ABSTRACT

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DOLORES ARONOVICH AGUERO

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
2009

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This dissertation analyzes how uncannily violent passages in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* occur in three theatrical productions (Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth*, for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1976, Ulysses Cruz's *Macbeth*, and Antunes Filho's *Trono de Sangue*, both from 1992) and in two films (Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*, in 1971, and William Reilly's *Men of Respect*, in 1991). These productions were chosen because of their proximity in the respective dates and their importance: Nunn's *Macbeth* is a highly praised landmark; the two Brazilian *Macbeths* happened at a time when Brazil was unhappy with its president, who renounced before he was impeached. As for the films, Polanski's is arguably the most violent of any Shakespearean adaptation to the screen, and Reilly's is an appropriation that transports the action to the twentieth-century Mafia. By analyzing Ernst Hoffman's "The Sand-Man," Freud developed the concept of the uncanny, that which is strangely familiar, which should remain hidden but insists coming out into the open. The uncanny involves several characteristics, such as doubles, the compulsion to repeat, the evil eye, the gaze, the death drive, *déjà-vu*, ghosts, dolls and automatons, the blurring between fantasy and reality, liminality, epilepsy and madness. Most of these traits are present in the playtext and in the five productions analyzed. This dissertation asks if the

uncanny comes even more to life when violence is added to the recipe, and vice-versa, and why it is that sometimes we are certain of having watched something that was not even shown—which is, in itself, an uncanny feeling. To explore these questions, this dissertation first compares two media, theater and cinema, using Performance Analysis. Another theoretical chapter is dedicated to the uncanny and violence in *Macbeth*. The other three chapters analyze each production, always foregrounding the context in which they were made. It concludes that violence and the uncanny walk hand-in-hand in the five productions and in the playtext itself, but that Polanski's *Macbeth* is difficult to equate in terms of uncanny violence, for it chooses to show on screen much of the violence that is only suggested in the playtext (as in Duncan's murder). However, all of the productions offer interesting examples of uncanny violence in a playtext that has always been considered one of the most violent of Shakespeare's oeuvre, and that may well be seen as the uncanniest.

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RESUMO

“LÚGUBRES IMAGENS DA MORTE”:
VIOLÊNCIA E SINISTRO EM CINCO PRODUÇÕES DE *MACBETH*

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Esta tese analisa como cenas sinistramente violentas no *Macbeth* de William Shakespeare são realizadas em três produções teatrais (a *Macbeth* de Trevor Nunn, para a Royal Shakespeare Company, em 1976, a *Macbeth* de Ulysses Cruz, e *Trono de Sangue* de Antunes Filho, ambas de 1992) e em dois filmes (o *Macbeth* de Roman Polanski, de 1971, e *Homens de Respeito*, de William Reilly, de 1991). Essas produções foram escolhidas devido a sua proximidade nas respectivas épocas e sua relevância: a *Macbeth* de Nunn é um marco muito elogiado; as duas *Macbeths* brasileiras ocorreram em um momento em que o Brasil não estava feliz com seu presidente, que renunciou antes de sofrer o impeachment. Quanto aos filmes, o de Polanski é provavelmente o mais violento de qualquer adaptação de Shakespeare para as telas, e o de Reilly é uma apropriação que transporta a ação para a Máfia do século XX. Através de uma análise de “The Sand-Man,” de Ernst Hoffman, Freud desenvolveu seu conceito do sinistro, aquilo que é estranhamente familiar, que deveria manter-se escondido mas insiste em aparecer. O sinistro engloba várias características, como os duplos, a compulsão em repetir, o mau olhado, o olho grande, o olhar, o impulso da morte, déjà-vu, fantasmas, bonecas e autômatos, a nebulosidade entre fantasia e realidade, a limininalidade, epilepsia e loucura. A maior parte desses

traços está presente no texto da peça e nas cinco produções analisadas. Esta tese investiga se o sinistro vem mais à tona quando a violência se mistura, e vice-versa, e por que às vezes se tem certeza de ter visto algo que sequer foi mostrado—o que é, por si só, uma sensação sinistra. Para explorar essas perguntas, esta tese compara duas mídias, teatro e cinema, sob a ótica da Análise de Performance. Outro capítulo teórico é dedicado ao sinistro e à violência em *Macbeth*. Os outros três capítulos analisam cada produção, sempre dando atenção ao contexto em que cada uma foi realizada. A tese conclui que violência e sinistro andam lado a lado nas cinco produções e no texto em si, mas que o filme de Polanski é difícil de ser igualado em termos de violência sinistra, já que opta por mostrar na tela muito da violência que é apenas sugerida no texto (como no caso do assassinato de Duncan). No entanto, todas as cinco produções oferecem exemplos interessantes de violência sinistra em um texto que sempre foi considerado um dos mais violentos entre as obras de Shakespeare, e que poderia ser visto também como o mais sinistro.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Macbeth, probably written in 1606, is Shakespeare's shortest play, except for the *Comedy of Errors* (Bradley 401). It is also his bloodiest, as if the whole story echoed King Duncan's first line, "What bloody man is that?"¹ Indeed, bloody men—and women, and children—are quite excessive in *Macbeth*. As Francis Barker points out, the main narrative action of the play consists of murder after murder (59). There are, in effect, six very violent scenes in the play: first, when Macbeth kills the saintly king; second, when he kills Duncan's servants; third, Banquo's murder; fourth, when Banquo's ghost appears at the banquet; fifth, the massacre of Macduff's whole family; and sixth, the final act, in which Macbeth kills young Siward, and is then killed by Macduff, who brings his head on a pike. Judging from the few stage directions in the playtext, only the first two of the events just cited happen off stage. Harold Bloom claims Duncan's murder has connotations of sexual violence, and that is why his stabbings occur off stage (Shakespeare 530-1). But David Norbrook offers the more mundane explanation that Shakespeare wrote the play for James I, and that the spectacle of a king being killed on stage would be far from amusing, not to mention impossible (93-4).

Macbeth is also a play with a long history of what Freud calls the uncanny, that is, "that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (124), or, in a definition that Freud borrows from Schelling, "everything that was

¹ *Macbeth*, 4.1.45. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton, 1997. All subsequent references to *Macbeth* are to this edition.

intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come out into the open” (132). It is not in vain that *Macbeth* has been associated for centuries with bad luck and referred to, superstitiously, as “the Scottish play,” so that the play's actual name is never uttered in rehearsal. Not only are the witches’ supernatural traits uncanny, but many other elements are as well. Here is a play in which a king (Duncan) is murdered, a queen (Lady Macbeth) is consumed by guilt for having aided her husband in the regicide and goes insane, a father (Banquo) is killed in front of his son, a whole family (Macduff’s) is massacred, a king (Macbeth) talks to a ghost in the middle of a banquet, and this same man starts thinking he is indestructible because he can only be killed by a man not born of woman. James Calderwood notes that “the action of *Macbeth* assumes the contours of a purgation ritual in which a Scotland polluted by violence and evil is cured by excising the tyrant Macbeth” (98). But how much of Macbeth can really be excised, if even the title of the playtext bears his name? He is the uncanny presence which cannot be repressed. Yet, to me, the most uncanny element in *Macbeth* is its very violence. Not only is this a play depicting “strange images of death”—we could say it also shows strangely familiar images of death.

In his famous essay, “The Uncanny”, Freud analyzes Ernst Hoffman’s short story “The Sand-Man,” published in 1817, to rebut Ernst Jentsch’s notion that the uncanny has to do with intellectual uncertainty. For Freud, the uncanny represents something that is both strange *and* strangely familiar. As he stresses, “the uncanny [the ‘unhomely’] is what was once familiar [‘homely, ‘homey’]. The negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression” (151). Linking this notion to violence, we may argue that even if we repress and try to tame our primitive instinct for violence, it will always and ominously be there. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud

affirms that this primitive instinct, although hidden, remains latent and appears most potently in times of war. Since *Macbeth* too, according to Barker in *The Culture of Violence*, starts and ends with crisis and invasion (72), it will prove interesting to investigate five productions of the play to see how these uncannily violent scenes are presented, on or off stage, on or off screen.

In this dissertation I will analyze two Brazilian productions, both from 1992: Ulysses Cruz's *Macbeth* and Antunes Filho's *Trono de Sangue*. Each of them, which I saw at the time, in São Paulo, has distinct ways of dealing with violence and the uncanny. I will also examine a British production that is perhaps the most acclaimed *Macbeth* ever done, Trevor Nunn's 1976 production for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Comparing these three productions is relevant, since the RSC is considered "official" Shakespeare, and it seems fascinating to measure what is seen as mainstream against what happens to *Macbeth* once it is performed in Portuguese, as in the case of the Brazilian productions. After all, by not owing anything to Elizabethan English, Shakespeare in other languages could, theoretically, be freer to experiment with visual elements (Bulman 8): a production in Portuguese is probably less reverential toward the language. Since my focus is on the play's violence and the uncanny, experimentations with visual elements might make the Brazilian productions more brutal than their British counterparts.

But I do not want to stop there. I want to deal with film as well, because cinema is a more visual medium than theater. Laurence Olivier once stated: "Shakespeare, in a way, 'wrote for the films.' His splitting up of the action into a multitude of small scenes is almost an anticipation of film technique, and more than one of his plays chafe against the cramping restrictions of the stage" (qtd. in Buhler 74). And, of course, cinema itself may be uncanny, with its purpose of making us sit alone in the dark amidst flickering shadows. Nicholas Royle refers to the

“hallucinatory reality of the photograph,” stressing that “[t]he photographic image is doubly uncanny: a question of the double and of what Barthes termed ‘that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead’” (75). I will, therefore, analyze two film versions of *Macbeth*, and see how, benefited by the medium, they end up treating violence. Roman Polanski’s *Macbeth* (1971) is an obvious choice, for the film is arguably the bloodiest adaptation ever made of a Shakespearean play. Notoriously, Polanski directed the film shortly after his pregnant wife, actress Sharon Tate, and four friends were murdered at his house in Los Angeles by Charles Manson’s followers.

My other choice is an appropriation, and I must justify it. First of all, appropriations refer to a reformulation, an exchange. As Christy Desmet puts it, “Something happens when Shakespeare is appropriated, and both the subject (author) and object (Shakespeare) are changed in the process. [...] The history of Shakespearean appropriation contests bardolatry by demystifying the concept of authorship” (4). Stretching the concept a bit, we might say that adaptation is to *copyright* what appropriation is to “*copyleft*,” for appropriation destabilizes the question of authorship, as if it were asking “who owns Shakespeare?” For José Roberto O’Shea et al, the main problem of appropriation concerns “the question of how, why and why not, a rewriting has established a fruitful dialogue with its aesthetic source text and source culture” (Appropriation 11). Just as Shakespeare himself appropriates Holinshed to write *Macbeth*, and Freud appropriates Hoffman’s “The Sand-Man” for psychoanalysis, William Reilly appropriates the playtext *Macbeth* to create *Men of Respect*.

This film from 1991 transposes the action of *Macbeth* from eleventh-century Scotland to twentieth-century U.S.A., and its main characters are no longer kings, soldiers and thanes, but

Mafia mobsters. This appropriation breaks the ultimate taboo concerning Shakespeare—it leaves behind the play’s language. Perhaps what Richard Finkelstein comments about films like *The Lion King* and *The Little Mermaid*—that they appropriate Shakespeare “to authorize their arguments [and] to tame their characters” (182)—applies to *Men of Respect*. Granted, I cringe at seeing Macbeth’s soliloquy about life’s being a tale “told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing” (5.5.26-7) reduced to John Turturro looking at himself in the mirror and yelling “Idiot!” But then again, why be overly concerned with authenticity if there are some scenes in the actual 1623 Folio which seem to be anything but authentic (namely the scenes involving Hecate)? Moreover, analyzing such a “deviation” from Shakespeare as the 1991 film seems interesting because, if the aim happens to be to liberate performance from the canonical text, as I expect to show, little could be more liberated (and liberating) than *Men of Respect*. Besides, the film coincides somewhat with the date of the Brazilian productions, and it will prove worthwhile to discuss violence in the age of Quentin Tarantino.

Unlike what has happened with cinema—which, in its transition from silent films to talkies, was received with prejudice by critics—theater criticism always had a strong literary bias that goes back to Aristotle, since in the poetics spectacle is considered the least artistic of the five elements of drama. Such bias has made us rely too much on words and written records and overlook the visual (Kennedy, *Looking* 5). For many centuries theater criticism has been deeply concerned with the textual, and in many cases *only* the textual. This stressing of the textual has been seriously challenged by the advent of performance criticism, which insists that the words spoken by an actor on stage are as important as, say, the make-up and costumes this actor wears, and just as relevant as the lighting, props and music that surrounds him or her. In Dennis

Kennedy's conception, "[h]ow Hamlet is dressed reveals as much about the style and intention of the performance as anything he says, and may well influence a spectator more than Shakespeare's poetry" (Looking 15). Richard Schechner also insists that we use non-logocentric approaches to analysis so that these approaches can "situate theater where it belongs: among performance genres, not literature. The text, where it exists, is understood as a key to action, not its replacement" (28). Not only that, but just as the visual has gained importance with stage-centered criticism, so have cultural and economic agendas that underlie each and every production. Today, for the purpose of performance analysis, it has become impossible to deal with a production and not delve into the political and social circumstances of the time and place where it is staged.

Even if the playtext of *Macbeth* indicates several instances of uncanny violence, one thing is what Shakespeare wrote, another is how productions may choose to portray this violence. As Kennedy reminds us, each production is a part and a reflection of the age in which it was produced (Looking 9). Hence, comparing a given production with the playtext on which it is based just to check how faithful it has been to its source is pointless, especially because the performance itself should be seen as a source as much as the text. After all, W. B. Worthen demonstrates and criticizes how performance studies in Shakespeare have contributed more to emphasize the playwright's authority in an essentialistic way than not. Fortunately, however, this tendency has changed in recent years, and today more critics and scholars realize that a performance is much more than a mere scenic realization of a playtext. Thus a "performance text"—defined by De Marinis as "*a performance unit which the analyst's intention [...] designates as semiotically complete*" (Semiotics 59, his italics)—includes not only verbal

language, but also music, light, costumes, stage business, and, most importantly, contextualization.

Contextualization is particularly relevant if we consider that Shakespeare, as aforementioned, probably wrote *Macbeth* for King James I, adapting the story of the usurper of the crown from Holinshed's chronicles. According to Holinshed, the historical Macbeth ruled Scotland for seventeen years, and the first decade was peaceful. But Shakespeare ignores those ten years, and makes Macbeth a tyrant since the beginning of his reign, even rhyming his name with *death* (Kermode 203).² Marilyn French points out that "Macbeth lives in a culture that values butchery," so why do we consider him a butcher at the end of the playtext and not in the beginning? For her, the ultimate question the playtext proposes is to why killing is acceptable in war, but not at home (244). Norbrook shows how critical judgment about the characters in *Macbeth* has changed throughout the times and points out how Malcolm's speech at the end and his calling the tyrant a "dead butcher" "does not do justice to our experience of the play" (95).

Barker can see occasions in which people would celebrate, rather than condemn, the death of a king, but affirms that this is not Shakespeare's intent when he portrays Macbeth's killing the pious, old Duncan. The violence committed by Macbeth is looked down on, but not the one committed against him: "That is to say, as long as it is a violence in the name of the restitution of legitimacy [...] it is wholly to be sanctioned" (65-6). Harold Bloom emphasizes that the violence in the playtext certainly affects us more than it impressed its Elizabethan audience, used to public hangings and bear-baiting (Shakespeare 529). He adds that "Macbeth

² In 1.2.65, Duncan announces, "Go present [the Thane of Cawdor's] present death, / And with his former title greet Macbeth."

terrifies us partly because that aspect of our own imagination is so frightening: it seems to make us murderers, thieves, usurpers, and rapists” (517).

In Polanski’s film all of society is corrupt, not only Macbeth. So much so that the director dedicates several scenes to a character who is secondary in the playtext, Rosse. In the 1971 movie, Rosse helps to defeat Cawdor, supports Macbeth, supervises Banquo’s murder, disposes of the two murderers, bribes a servant to open the gates to Macduff’s castle, then betrays Macbeth because the king preferred Seyton, and informs Macduff. He is then the first to support the new king, Malcolm. As Buhler comments, “With supporters such as these, Malcolm has already established his reign on shaky grounds” (88). This film also shows a late, unforgettably uncanny image: Macbeth’s head on a spike, with the camera sharing with us its point of view.

For Barker, it is impossible to talk about *Macbeth* without addressing violence (52). In an appealing article, David Worster deals mostly with editors’ choices of including stage directions when publishing Shakespeare and the potential of leaving dead bodies, so to speak, on stage. He points out that the option for the non-appearance of such an uncanny image as Banquo’s ghost in 3.4 (showing that this only exists in Macbeth’s mind) was not first used by Trevor Nunn’s production, but as early as 1794. Audiences, however, did not like this choice, and the ghost had to be re-introduced. For Worster, “the absence of the ghost resonates within a post-Freudian culture” (364), since the idea that Banquo’s ghost inhabits Macbeth’s conscience alone gained force with the advent of psychoanalysis. Jay Halio talks of the choices between showing and hiding Banquo’s ghost and concludes: “The governing aesthetic consideration is that the image be as uncanny and frightening as possible within the limits of the tolerable [. . .] Would the imaginary terrify more than the ‘real’? What counts is what works in the theater” (42).

Homer Swander focuses his article on stage directions as he analyzes what the playtext does with Siward's body. When Macbeth slays young Siward in 5.7, Shakespeare does not inform us what to do with the corpse. Swander considers the implications of leaving Siward's body onstage, since the text makes no explicit references to removing it. He ponders about Macduff's holding Siward's body in his arms and addressing his lines to him (142). This seems to me to give too much spotlight to a character that is not so important. As Ian McKellen says in an interview that accompanies Nunn's made-for-TV version of *Macbeth*, the last act should be the time for the tyrant's biggest moment, when he should "take the play within his grasp and wrap it around his fist and shake it in the air." And yet, Shakespeare keeps cutting his monologues to silly comments from the approaching leaders of the English army. Siward's existence seems like one more interference. Besides, I have my doubts whether Macduff would even care about Siward's murder. Would Siward mean more to him than the cowardly massacre of his whole family? Swander mars his arguments when he reveals an essentialist streak: "What is now needed in editing and producing Shakespeare [...] is a practicing discipline firmly centered on the text-as-script [...]" (151).

Calderwood allows more freedom to question Shakespeare's stage directions (if they are in fact the bard's directions, for they may be editors' additions). For instance, he asks why, when Macbeth and Macduff are fighting, the action is interrupted by stage directions which read "Exeunt, fighting. Alarums. Enter fighting, Macbeth slain" (5.8). He imagines that this is so to take the audience back to previous acts in which the violence occurred off stage and was only heard, not seen (112). But, of course, theater and film productions are welcome to ignore the directions and stage the violence as they see fit. Polanski's film does not shy away from showing

violence on screen—we see Macbeth’s head being cut. In Reilly’s movie, as well as in Nunn’s production, no decapitated head appears, although in the latter the head is substituted by another uncannily violent image: that of Macduff with bloody hands, carrying the daggers in much the same way as Macbeth did after killing Duncan.

Bernice W. Kliman, who dedicates a whole book to *Macbeth* in performance, examines other instances of how stage directions are interpreted by different productions. For example, at the end of the playtext Macduff brings Macbeth’s head to Malcolm, and the directions point out that “all” hail the new king. But Kliman notices that, in Nunn’s production, only Rosse, not all, repeats Macduff’s feeble “Hail, King of Scotland!” (118). This seems to indicate that Malcolm’s new reign is off to a weak start, with unmotivated supporters. The same happens in Polanski’s film, in which Rosse assumes the part of the most Machiavellian character. Kliman makes yet another distinction among productions of *Macbeth*, saying that they are usually either actor-dominated or director-dominated, although the comment might equally apply to many other plays by Shakespeare. The 1992 Brazilian productions of *Macbeth* fit this pattern. Ulysses Cruz’s production with Antonio Fagundes and Vera Fischer, for instance, belongs to the first category, while Antunes Filho’s *Trono de Sangue* gives more importance to ensemble acting and to the scenography, in which atmosphere reigns over star quality.

Close to the time when these two productions of *Macbeth* were being staged in São Paulo, Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* came out with one of the most violent cinematic images of the 1990s: a criminal tortures a policeman while dancing around him. He takes out a knife and starts cutting the policeman’s ear. Many spectators closed their eyes to avoid watching this scene, but that was hardly necessary: the camera shifts its focus and films a wall. Yet many of us

come out of the movie theater convinced that this was one of the most graphically gory scenes we have ever seen. How can this be if the violence happens off screen? This brings to mind Susan Bennett's work on reception theory applied to the theater, which investigates how spectators receive what they see, as well as Macbeth's line "Present fears / Are less than horrible imaginings" (1.3.137-8). This sureness that we experience of having watched something which was not even shown is an example of the uncanny. When choosing moments to analyze in the five productions of *Macbeth*, I shall foreground this notion of uncanny violence.

In Act 4, scene 2, the murder of Macduff's family takes place. The stage directions point out that one of the murderers stabs Macduff's son, who dies after saying, "He has kill'd me, mother: / Run away, I pray you!" The stage directions then read: "exit Lady Macduff, crying Murder, and pursued by the Murderers." If the child dies onstage, what happens to the body? Is it abandoned on stage? Does Lady Macduff run away carrying it with her? We have to ponder whether it makes a difference if young Macduff is merely slain, and then crawls off to die off stage, or if he immediately dies onstage of his wounds. Is the first option any less violent than the second? In Polanski's film, the child is killed on screen, and the montage indicates that Lady Macduff will be raped, like her servants, and then murdered. In Trevor Nunn's production, both mother and son are murdered on stage, though the scene does not hold the same impact as in Polanski's, mainly because Nunn's child actor is a bit weak. In *Men of Respect* the scene seems softened, for mother and son die in a car explosion off screen.

In this dissertation, I will investigate how violence on and off stage and screen can be associated with the uncanny. As Freud points out, "an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred" (150). Could the violence on stage and on

screen represent reality, and that off stage and off screen represent fantasy? Is that which we imagine more frightening than that which we see? For Freud, we repress “material that is inadmissible to consciousness” (Psychopathology 278). But what are we trying to repress when we opt for not showing violence on screen and on stage? And, by showing so much violence, what are the productions of *Macbeth* actually trying to reveal, or to hide?

Since Freud associates the uncanny with repression, it is worth asking who is repressing what. For instance, why does Shakespeare decide not to show King Duncan’s murder on stage? When productions decide to show or hide violence, how does that affect the spectator? It is uncanny, after all, that the violence in *Macbeth* brought to the stages in São Paulo in 1992 should precede by just a few months the real violence of the Carandiru penitentiary massacre, in which 111 prisoners were barbarously murdered by the military police. And it is also uncanny that, at the end of that same year, when the most important event of the time should have been Fernando Collor de Mello’s impeachment, people only had eyes for the murder of soap opera actress Daniela Perez. What was the attention given to this act of violence trying to occlude?

Two of Francis Barker’s intriguing statements are also worth pursuing further. He says that violence is occluded even when it is shown (194). But how is this so, and what, in this case, is the violence on stage and on screen occluding? Barker concludes by saying: “[t]o a terrifying extent, what now counts as culture *is* the occlusion of that historical violence, then and now” (205). R. A. Foakes, who also dedicates a whole book to Shakespeare and violence, albeit not mentioning *Macbeth* as much as Barker does, makes an interesting point when he says that, in that warrior society, murdering an old man, Duncan, during his sleep might not seem difficult, “but the play brings out the discordances between open violence in battle and secret violence in

murder” (155). The first kind of violence is accepted and encouraged, while the second has to be hidden, and is condemned by the same people who praise Macbeth for his talent for murder.

Contrary to film, a theatrical performance is something that disappears, that is ephemeral, as if written in the wind, or, as Richard Eyre has said, as a snowman melting before our eyes (video). A film production leaves more traces than a live performance, and it is up to the researcher to consider and study those traces. However, more than an exercise in antiquarianism, performance criticism informs scholars to look into the social climate of the times. More than the work of archaeologists, our work approximates that of the anthropologists. After all, we study a performance not only for theatrical reasons, but because we believe it can reveal cultural contexts. For instance, as Kennedy reminds us, “there is no phrase in English equivalent to *coup d'état*” (Language 136); this means that a production of *Coriolanus* or *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* or any other of Shakespeare’s more “political” plays might overemphasize the military potentials of the playtext if staged in Brazil, a country which endured 21 years of military dictatorship, than if staged in a rich nation used to political stability. And even those political undertones may be stronger still if the play is staged in Brazil during the dictatorship or during a time of political turmoil, such as the months anticipating Collor’s impeachment. The production most likely will reflect the values and concerns of the period in which it is staged, for, as Schechner puts it, “Theater places are maps of the cultures where they exist” (161).

Jay Halio informs us that from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century “archeological Shakespeare” prevailed, that is, an effort to reproduce everything exactly as it was at the time of the event the playtext focuses (21). Shakespeare was then regarded as educational. Today few would believe they are learning something historically accurate about eleventh-

century Scotland by watching a performance of *Macbeth*. Patrice Pavis submits that text and performance should be seen as two different spheres in which one does not prevail over the other. Since any performance is lost forever, the analysis “takes as its starting point the fully realized, empirical object and does not attempt to go back to what might have generated it” (Pavis, *Analyzing* 22). Pavis also adds an argument that comes in handy for my study: that, because cinematographic language deals with the human gaze, theater analysis can benefit from it (*Analyzing* 24).

My second chapter discusses the differences and similarities between these two media, theater and cinema, with regard to performance analysis. My third chapter concentrates on the uncanny and violence. Always foregrounding violence and the uncanny, chapter 4 is dedicated to a British production that is highly regarded: Trevor Nunn’s, for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Chapter 5 focuses on the two Brazilian productions of *Macbeth*, Antunes Filho’s and Ulysses Cruz’s, both from 1992. Finally, chapter 6 deals with the two films, Polanski’s *Macbeth* and Reilly’s *Men of Respect*. Both chapters 5 and 6 are rather long, since they analyze two productions each. Also, chapter 5, because it involves the Brazilian productions, requires some translation from Portuguese to English.

CHAPTER 2

“WHAT BEAST WAS'T”³: PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS IN THEATER AND FILM

In Act 1, Scene 7, Macbeth tries to persuade his wife to forget the whole sordid business of killing Duncan, who is not only a gentle, pious king but also a guest in their home. Lady Macbeth replies, referring to her husband's previous plan, “What beast was't, then / That made you break this enterprise to me?” (47-8). She then, famously, decides to question his manhood and, by doing so, succeeds in convincing him to go ahead with their murderous plan. By analyzing distinct kinds of media that are part of what is called performance, we can see that each of these “beasts” has differences that make them unique, even though the similarities between them are also plentiful. In this chapter I shall analyze how film and theater differ, and discuss these media as regards performance analysis.

As Shakespeare writes in the well-known speech about the seven ages of man in *As You Like It*—“All the world’s a stage / And all the men and women merely players” (2.7)—people are always performing. We are used to playing the social roles of parents, sons and daughters, friends, lovers, etc, and most likely we will act differently depending on our audience. Nikolas Evreinoff claims that this habit of playing roles in our social lives is so constant that we even dress up and use make-up in our everyday routine (in Carlson 36). For Yi-Fu Tuan, at first children do not perform, but, as they grow older, they learn the roles expected from them, and eventually fall from “innocence into culture—into a life of performance” (157). And, after we become “merely players,” we perform forever, even when no one is watching, even if our only audience is ourselves. In fact, we adults perform even when we go to the bathroom, because we remember the applause or reprimand we got from our parents when we first started using the pot (Tuan 157).

After a while performing becomes so natural that we tend to forget we are performing. Despite

³ *Macbeth*, 1.7.47.

leading a lifelong of performance, many of us end up taking performance for granted and associating it exclusively with theater. This notion is a mistake because, according to Richard Schechner, a major name in relating performance to the social sciences, theater is only one of several public ways in which humans perform, the others being ritual, play, games, sports, dance, and music (Performance 6). For him, “[t]he phenomena called either/all ‘drama,’ ‘theater,’ ‘performance’ occur among all the world’s peoples and date back as far as historians, archeologists, and anthropologists can go” (Performance 68).

If we display a skill, if we behave a certain way, and most definitely, if we stand on a stage, we are performing, but theorists disagree whether or not performing needs to be a conscious activity. For the celebrated performer John Cage, *considering* an activity a performance *makes* it one (Schechner 30). The “sense of an action carried out for someone” and the sense of consciousness are vital for Marvin Carlson (6), who notes that “[e]ven if an action on stage is identical to one in real life, on stage it is considered ‘performed’ and off stage merely ‘done’” (4). But others go further in affirming that all behavior is a performance. Judith Butler, for example, believes that gender itself is performative. For Schechner, however, “[a]rt is cooked and life is raw” (Performance 38), meaning that, on stage, life is rehearsed and then condensed into a performance that takes a few hours.

Defining performance is notoriously difficult. Carlson explains, “Performance by its nature resists conclusions, just as it resists the sort of definitions, boundaries, and limits so useful to traditional academic writing and academic structures” (189). On the other hand, in spite of the difficulty, several scholars, from varied fields, have tried to formulate definitions for performance. Schechner himself offers his tentative definition: “*Ritualized behavior conditioned/permeated by play*” (Performance 95; original emphasis). Earlier in his book, he calls performance “make-believe, in play, for fun. Or, as Victor Turner said, in the subjunctive mood, the famous ‘as if’” (xiv). For Roger Abrahams, “performance is a way of persuading through the production of pleasure” (qtd. in Carlson 17).

For the ethnolinguist Richard Bauman, a consciousness of doubleness is crucial for

performance; that is, an action done is mentally compared to the original idea that generated it (Carlson 5). This original idea or model comes close to reaching a consensus in performance theory, for, according to Carlson, “There is widespread agreement among performance theorists that all performance is based upon some pre-existing model, script, or pattern of action” (15). This is what Schechner calls “restored behavior.” Dell Hymes takes an anthropological approach to performance and contrasts it to behavior—“anything and everything that happens”—and to conduct—behavior “under the aegis of social norms, cultural rules, shared principles of interpretability” (qtd. in Carlson 14). Hence, for him, performance is a kind of conduct, and conduct is part of behavior (15). Still according to Hymes, in performance people “assume a responsibility to an audience and to tradition as they understand it.” But this “assuming responsibility” itself is problematic, for there is still a lot of debate around how an audience can be responsible for a performance (Carlson 15).

Patrice Pavis also defends the anthropological approach to studying performance, maintaining that it can broaden the horizons of Western theoreticians and performers:

Ultimately, the anthropological perspective, both near and distanced at the same time, on intercultural theater will be of benefit to Western theory and practice. Indeed, it will force them to reconsider existing methods of analysis, to take note of cultural intermixing, and to take their place in a world that is richer and more complex than they ever imagined. (Analyzing 302)

Eugenio Barba, who also takes an anthropological approach, is interested in the physical dynamics of performance and in physiology (Carlson 19). Another defender of the anthropological angle, Victor Turner, focuses on organizational structure, in which performance becomes “a border, a margin, a site of negotiation” (Carlson 20). John MacAloon, for one, views cultural performance as an “occasion in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others” (qtd in Carlson 24-5).

In the sociological sphere, Erving Goffman has contributed as much to performance as Victor

Turner has in the anthropological arena (Carlson 34). Performance for Goffman is “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (qtd in Carlson 37-8). If we follow this definition, which emphasizes the observer, a person may perform without knowing it. Goffman also developed the important concept of *framing*, that is, a device separating performance from everyday life, and marking the beginning and end of a performance, in which not only the performer behaves a certain way, but the observer expects the performer to behave accordingly (26). Schechner adds about framing: “Some rules say what must be done and what must not be done. Between the frames there is freedom. In fact, the better the player, the more able s/he will be to exploit this freedom” (Performance 14). Goffman also uses the term *keying*, which “involves a strip of activity already meaningful on some terms that is transformed by recontextualization into something with a different meaning” (27).

One important question is if performance occurs from what the performer does or as a matter of the context in which it is placed. Anthropological, sociological, and psychological theorists of performance often pay more attention to context and reception than to what the performer does (Carlson 18). For Carlson performance changed its focus in the 1980s, “moving from an almost exclusive preoccupation with the performer and the performative act to a consideration also of who is watching the performance, who is reporting on it, and what the social, political, and cognitive implications of these other transactions are upon the process” (31-2). For William James, an individual “has as many social selves [or masks] as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (qtd in Carlson 45). We perform according to our audience.

Not only approaches to performance theory vary, but so do types of artistic performance, and, hence, analysis of these performances. One point most theorists now agree, however, is that the analysis should not focus only on the text. In the case of an analysis of a theater production, we should strive to escape an obsession with the playtext, because to analyze means breaking into parts, letting go

of our textual bias (when analyzing cinema, to be sure, much more is talked about than simply the screenplay, due to cinema's being such a "visual medium". More on this later). One way to avoid obsession with the text is to start the analysis with another component of the performance, such as the acting, trying to be less "textocentric," or text-centered. In a case against logocentrism, theorists such as Pavis claim that the text cannot be seen as the basis of everything that comes after: "Performance analysis takes as its starting point the fully realized, empirical object and does not attempt to go back to what might have generated it" (Analyzing 22). For Pavis, a major name in performance theory, contexts are much more important than texts. He even favors using terms as *score* and *underscore* rather than *text* and *subtext*, reminding us that a performance is much more than the concretization of a text (Analyzing 96).

Performance is not only related to the traditional arts such as literature and theater but to the circus, sports events, and political debates, for instance. And, when thinking of performance, it is limiting to visualize only traditional theater. Carlson points out that today *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice* have a category, "performance art," in which productions are criticized separately from theater, film or dance (3). There is not really a definition of performance art other than "live art by artists," according to RoseLee Goldberg, the first scholar to dedicate a book to the history of this new art (Carlson 79). Performance art is inevitably linked to postmodernism. As in postmodernism, in this art process also becomes more important than product. Performance art shares some common traits with avant-garde movements: it is antiestablishment, and against the commodification of art; it is fascinated with collage and multimedia. And it uses parody and open-ended forms (Carlson 80).

For Tuan, "[a] critical distinction between 'traditional' and 'modern' theater is that whereas the former is a celebration of life, the latter is a criticism—a deconstruction?—of life and a cold look at death" (161). In performance art artists do not really play characters, or at least characters with what Schechner calls *careers* ("a humanly organized plan of action, often blocked by other people,

sometimes prematurely ended by natural or other causes”) (Performance 20). Schechner also recalls other differences between triangular and open forms of theater: triangular forms, more related to traditional theater, focus on plot and are concerned with linear time and resolution, while open forms emphasize rhythms, circular time and no-end (Performance 26-7).

Schechner differentiates between drama, script, theater, and performance, in which performance is the largest group and covers all (Performance 72). The drama contains the author’s vision, but we should not think the drama contains the script, the theater and the performance (Schechner, Performance 77). According to him, “the drama is what the writer writes; the script is the interior map of a particular production; the theater is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including audience and performers (technicians, too, anyone who is there)” (Performance 85). Schechner summarizes his scheme once again on page 91:

Drama is tight, verbal narrative; it allows for little improvisation; it exists as a code independent of any individual transmitter [...]. A script [...] is either a plan for a traditional event [...] or it is developed during rehearsals to suit a specific text as in orthodox western theater. The theater is the visible/sonic set of events consisting either of well-known components [...] or of a score invented during rehearsal [...]. To some degree the theater is the visible aspect of the script, the exterior topography of an interior map. Performance is the widest possible circle of events condensing around theater.

That is, for Schechner, drama, which he also calls “scripted behavior,” is not universal, unlike theater and performance (Performance 102).

Various practitioners of theater from the twentieth century have distinct visions about the concept of theater. For instance, Edward Gordon Craig, who started the trend of considering the director as a visionary figure, saw dancing, not literature or poetry, as “the father of the dramatist” (Milling 44-5). Vsevolod Meyerhold, however, changes his mind over time. Early on, when he saw beauty as an excuse to prolong bourgeois taste, he said “Down with beauty in the theater.” Later he

asks why the worker should go to the theater if not to be impressed by the beauty he sees (Milling 76). Theater, thus, should be an inspiration for the worker.

Antonin Artaud, creator of the Theater of Cruelty, eventually gained the status of a martyr: “Artaud was imprisoned by his beliefs, condemned by society, and died in great pain professing his faith” (Milling 89). Jane Milling and Graham Ley claim that the idea of a martyr is suitable for a vision of theater as a sacred entity (89). For Artaud, text is a tyrant over meaning, and theater should have a language that mixes thought and gesture. In *The Theater and Its Double*, Artaud’s most important work, he writes that there are two kinds of theater, “our fossilized idea of theater” (shadowless) and “true theater” (Milling 101). He defends symbols and mimicry instead of dialogue and subordinates theater to magic and ritual (Milling 111).

For Jerzy Grotowski, “Poor Theater” would be a theater stripped of non-essential elements like costumes, sound effects, make-up, sets, etc, even of a separate performance area such as the stage, only focusing on the relationship between actor and audience. Grotowski preaches the elimination of any unnecessary elements, including movement from the actor. That, according to him, would result in a purer and morally better art form (Milling 125-6). On the other hand, for Adolphe Appia, who is the master of light on stage, the adjective *living* is the highest form of praise. He believes that, in the future, drama tends to be more of a social act, an act in which people will no longer be passive spectators and will express their feelings: “*living* art is the only one that exists completely, without spectators (or listeners). It needs no audience” (Milling 37-8).

Brazilian Augusto Boal has arguably become the most influential theoretical practitioner of theater today. He defends a theater in which the division between audience and actors is blurred, with everyone involved in social change (Milling 143). Boal asks the question: “Should art educate, organize, influence, incite to action, or should it simply be an object of pleasure?” (xiii). He says: “the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theater and utilize it as a tool for domination. In so

doing, they change the very concept of what ‘theater’ is. But the theater can also be a weapon for liberation. For that, it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative” (ix).

In theater we usually take it for granted that the presence of the actor on stage is vital. To praise an actor we sometimes comment on his/her “presence” (Pavis, *Analyzing* 59), even though in postmodernist productions absence occasionally becomes more important than presence. For Pavis, it is the actor who attracts our attention on stage, for s/he directs our gaze (*Analyzing* 55). According to him, “[a]n actor is constituted as actor from the moment a spectator (i.e., an outside observer) watches him to be ‘extracted’ or ‘removed’ from the surrounding reality, and to be the bearer of a situation, a role, an activity that is fictional, or at least distinct from the spectator’s own reference reality” (*Analyzing* 57). But the person being observed has to be conscious of the observation and of his/her role (*Analyzing* 58). Pavis adds that, since Western actors impersonate characters, trying to become them (like what actors do in most films), and thus erasing themselves, an analysis of acting turns out even more difficult (*Analyzing* 57).

Stanislavski believes that, for an actor, “knowing is feeling” (Milling 9). The actor must rely on sensual memories which are stored in the actor’s “emotion memory” and which will relate the actor to the play (9), because “[e]very physical act... has an inner source of feeling” (qtd. in Milling 18). Psychological objectives, then, will lead to physical objectives. This is considered “true art,” in opposition to bad acting like representation (a mirror form), mechanical (conventional), and over-acting (clichés) (17). Stanislavski does not orient the actor to think that s/he is the character. Rather, he instructs the actor to use the word *if*: “if I am this character, then what follows from that” (Milling 13). He also praises contradiction of feelings: a mother loves her son but will spank him if he is in danger (Milling 11). That is, if we are far from being coherent in “real life,” the actor might as well bring those contradictions onto the stage.

Craig does not want the actor to become one with the part, but to “get out of the skin of the

part” (Milling 49). He defends that the actor should be liberated and stop being the marionette of the playwright (49). But this is contradictory, because he also advocates the removal of actors altogether, substituted by the Ubermarionette (49). Liberation for him is extinction. His view of acting has to do with emotions, against the vogue of using psychology (49-50). For him the actor should be servile and promote a new form of acting that has to do with symbolical gesture (Milling 50).

Meyerhold too is contradictory in his analysis of acting. For him the modern actor “must recreate the forgotten techniques using historical research, and rediscover the power of the mask, gesture, movement and plot” (Milling 67). However, at the same time he wants actors to improvise, many critics think that he reduces the actor to little more than a puppet (68). Ironically, he uses the puppet as a metaphor for the empowerment of the actor (68). Meyerhold is against the “inspirational actor,” claiming that the laws of theatricality could be studied and perfected (69). He sees the need for a new kind of actor-training, in which the main concern would be with the actor’s movement on stage (64).

Contrary to Stanislavski, Grotowski does not want the actor to discover what s/he brings to the role, but to use the role to discover his/her own personality. The role the actor plays is always him/herself (Milling 130). Furthermore, Grotowski claims that, if the actor sells himself to rich theater, s/he is committing “artistic prostitution” (Milling 126). This goes in tandem with Jacques Coupeau’s view of acting, for whom acting is a vocation, not a commercial or even a professional activity (Milling 79), and reminds us of Antunes Filho's criticism of his main actor, Luis Melo (the star of his *Trono de Sangue*), for selling out to TV soap operas in the mid-1990s.

Just as actors are crucial for performances, so are audiences, for what is the use of a performance if there are no spectators? But the separateness between actor and audience, which Schechner calls “the hallmark of aesthetic drama” (Performance 171), is not a universal concept. Rather, it exists mostly in Western performances. Tuan is cynical about this arbitrary distance. For him,

the space between the audience and performers is so marked that in a concert, when the music stops, “there is a moment of silence during which the spectators wait for their souls to return” (163). Schechner affirms that the proscenium theater as we know it is a model of capitalism, in which the richest people can afford the best places, and for whom intermissions were created so this same rich public could see and be seen (Performance 163-4). But in performances that are not part of the mainstream and that can take as long as twelve hours, Schechner proposes a different attitude in the audience, in which selective inattention⁴ is the answer: the spectator chooses what to watch (Performance 196).⁵

Craig believed, back in 1905, that both art and a part of the audience had degenerated (Milling 45). Copeau left Paris in search of a new, less elitist audience, complaining that “[t]here is a professional public (in the pejorative sense) in the same way that there are professional actors and professional authors. They have lost their sincerity” (Milling 81-2). Grotowski wanted to shock the audience, making it engage in self-examination itself, in a kind of social therapy (Milling 123). Boal, too, wished to change the role of the audience. For him, “‘Spectator’ is a bad word! The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him his capacity of action in all its fullness” (154-5). All of these practitioners shared the idea that the spectator is passive, and that this is mainly due to the physical separateness of theater between performers and audience. For Elizabeth Wright the main objective of postmodern performance has been to disrupt this arbitrary separation (177).

If everything we do is a performance, and if performance engulfs every human act, it does not really matter to decide which part—the performer or the observer—is more important. It seems clear

⁴ Schechner defines selective inattention as “unconscious scanning” (203). It should be observed that in theater we can exercise selective inattention more than in film.

⁵ It seems that was what Elizabethan audiences used to do. Considering the fact that, despite the few references (in prologues to some of Shakespeare's plays, e.g. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*) to two hours of “traffic on stage,” performances in Elizabethan England could go on during an entire afternoon, one supposes that Elizabethan audiences would exercise “selective inattention.”

that both are equally vital, and so is the context in which the performance will develop. This is one of the reasons why, in a live performance like theater, overemphasizing the playtext is a mistake that practitioners and theorists alike can no longer afford to make. In performance analysis today it would seem at least incoherent to ignore the performer, the observer or the context that these two parts share. The context shapes the way in which these two parts will act and interact.

For Lizbeth Goodman, the “live dynamics” found in theater is also part of, say, political demonstrations, which can also be considered live performances (34). Live performance is unique in several aspects. In live performance the body is unique because only in this medium does it occupy the same time and space as the spectator (Counsell and Wolf 125). Besides, only in live performance can the performer return our gaze (Pavis, *Analyzing* 230). Pavis adds the following about the uniqueness of live performance: “Without space, time would be pure duration: music, for instance. Without time, space would resemble that of a painting or architecture. Without time and space, action cannot unfold” (*Analyzing* 148). In live performance, therefore, space and time unite so action can happen.

2.1 Film Analysis

Just as theater analysts must be careful not to overemphasize the importance of text, in cinema film analysts should not dedicate all their attention to the images. Cinema is more visual than theater, in the sense that more images can be contained in a frame than on a stage. However, the cliché that “cinema is a visual medium” tends to exclude other important elements of film, such as dialogue, voice-over narration, music, and sound effects in general, which are just as important as the images. For instance, Polanski's *Macbeth* would lose much of its force if its soundtrack, full of details, were to be removed.

As Douglas Brode reminds us, “the term *cinema* is derived from the Greek word for movement” (184). Because movement is connected to images, the ancient prejudice that film should “show, not

tell” has created persistent bias against sound in general, be it voice-over narration, long dialogues, or an overwhelming musical soundtrack. Cinema has had three decades of silent pictures and almost eight of sound, but the opposition that met the first talking films in many ways remains true to this day. Naively, we tend to think that the camera does not lie and that we can believe all our eyes see. If there is a discrepancy between what is being said (by the narrator or a character) and what is being shown on screen, the audience almost always trusts the image (Kozloff 114).

Acknowledging that cinema is more visual than theater, however, should not exclude the importance of sound. Some lines that might be necessary on stage to give us location (as in “This is the forest of Arden” in *As You Like It*) could be rendered repetitive on film. Kenneth Branagh’s four-hour *Hamlet* is an example of redundance, since many dialogues echo what is in the images, and vice-versa. Besides, we must bear in mind that cinema is not only more visual, but also much more costly than theater. It is certainly the most technological and expensive of all media. In 2004, the average cost of a Hollywood production reached a whopping US\$ 64 million, more than twice as much as one decade earlier (Rose, par. 1). Even if other international markets make cheaper films, and if Broadway productions also consume large amounts of money, on average, no medium is as high-priced. The cost of the negative itself is enough to make cinema expensive. Now, with the advent of the digital camera, there is hope that prices will fall, but cinema will still cost more than other media. That is why, as a movie critic, I shy away from praising the quality of special effects – at that price, they had better be good.

Both cinema and theater are visual and auditory experiences, but music is only live in theater (although sometimes theatrical productions also use recorded music). Sure, until the late 1920s, when films had no sound, music was played in the movie theater. But today we are asked not to add our own soundtrack by turning off our cell phones and not talking during a movie. In theater, the live reactions of the audience affect the performance. Antonio Fagundes, the star of Ulysses Cruz's *Macbeth*, is

known for improvising when some different situation occurs in the audience (though there is no record that he did so in *Macbeth*). In one of his greatest theatrical hits, *Morte Acidental de um Anarquista*, he would kiddingly pick on the audience if a spectator could not stop laughing. Today, he might say something if a spectator's cell phone rings, disrupting the performance. These interactions between actor and audience are impossible in cinema. Moreover, a device sometimes adopted in theater, that of actors producing the sounds in a performance (in one scene of Cruz's *Macbeth*, the actors on stage imitate the wind) would probably not work, or would be considered too pretentious, on film. Monty Python does it in *The Holy Grail*—the actors simulate the sound of horses' galloping—but for a comic effect.

In theater, the space is often static. In film, through perspective, camera movement and distance (zoom in and out), the space can change from frame to frame. The closer the camera is to a person, the less of a whole the spectator will see. Most of the time both film and theater apply the 180° rule, with both the camera and the stage showing a semicircle. But each medium involves distinct techniques. Whereas actors, gestures, props (any object that has importance in the story), dialogues, movement, setting, costumes, make-up, lighting, music, sound effects, and even blocking (how characters are arranged on stage and on film to be photographed) exist in both media, some elements such as pacing—defined by Scholes as “the tempo and coordination of performance” (774)—belong to theater. Not that pacing or rhythm in cinema is unimportant, but this is often achieved in the editing room, and often by the editor, not by the director, actors, or cinematographer.

The camera makes all the difference and, for that reason, a unique vocabulary related to camera movements is specific to film, such as slow motion, fast motion and zoom. A theatrical action can represent a long take in cinema, trying to demonstrate no intervention from a camera. For instance, Hitchcock's 1948 *Rope* (in Portuguese, *Festim Diabólico*) utilizes very few cuts, and yet does not seem

like “filmed theater,” for all the movements by the actors and the camera are previously and exhaustively rehearsed. Only in this way editing can become less intrusive in cinema. And, although flashbacks exist and are employed by both media, *dissolves* (one image superimposing on another) belong only to film, and this can create an effect that is very difficult for theater to reproduce. For example, in Polanski's *Macbeth* the image of Macduff's castle burning is dissolved to Lady Macbeth's doctor looking through her window, when she is just about to begin her notorious sleepwalking scene. This has several implications, as I shall discuss in my chapter about Polanski's *Macbeth* and Reilly's *Men of Respect*.

Another uniqueness of cinema can best be described by citing an example. In a film like the 1997 Austrian *Funny Games* and its almost shot-by-shot 2007 American remake by the same director, Michael Haneke, the villain can do something that is unfeasible on the stage (and, frankly, unspeakable to the vast majority of mainstream film productions): “rewind” a cathartic sequence. This is a scene that literally makes audiences cheer, for the victim finally has a chance to avenge her tormentors by shooting one of them. However, the public is only permitted relief for a few seconds. Immediately afterwards, the other executioner grabs a remote control and denies us the pleasure by rewinding the scene and pretending it never happened.

Frequently, the action in a film starts with an establishing shot, which aims to introduce the spectator to the entire scenery. Then, from there, the film moves to medium-shots and close-ups. In theater, everything can be considered an establishing shot, although lighting works to frame images. In Cruz's *Macbeth*, more than once the lights expose only Vera Fischer's face, in her role as Lady Macbeth. However, only with the use of a projection screen (which has become more and more common in theater) can the action on stage really include close-ups. In the scene that opens Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex's face appears in extreme close-up—that is the establishing shot. Only then does the camera expand to his surroundings at the Korova milkbar. This first shot, connected to his

narration in voice-over, creates a sense of intimacy with the spectator that proves very hard for theater productions to replicate. The stage can, however, start with only a face illuminated, and then expand to light more of the surroundings. This would be as near as theater can reproduce cinema's close-ups.

In spite of acting being part of both media, of course, the way of acting is far from being the same. Not that acting is uniform in cinema (or in theater). There are many styles of acting. The Method Acting that comes from the Actor's Studio, so famous in Hollywood films, is only *one* style, and a bourgeois one at that, for it assumes that the character is a perfectly coherent persona that the actor can impersonate and imitate. In Eisenstein's films, the (non-professional) actors are generic and almost interchangeable and, in that way, have little of the aura that Walter Benjamin analyzes. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin claims that we, as spectators of a unique work of art (a painting, a sculpture in a museum, a staged production), experience a sense of bewilderment due to the work's authenticity, cultural value and, especially, its restrictive exhibition. According to Benjamin, when cinema and other art forms that blur the boundaries between original and copy began to be produced massively, the aura disappeared. The work is no longer considered unique, since it can be copied and distributed to the masses. The ritualistic and elitist aspects that made the work auratic in the first place are gone, or so Benjamin believes.

Cinema reaches more people than theater, because the negative—unlike a live performance—can be reproduced. Before postmodernism mixed these definitions, theater would be considered more of a high-brow culture than "popular" cinema. The celebrated Swedish director Ingmar Bergman used to call theater "his faithful wife," and film "his alluring mistress" (Farewell 166). For me, this allure of cinema is connected to aura, something Benjamin insists cinema does not have. Aura, for Benjamin, is related to bourgeois structures of power and ritual. However, even if the uniqueness of a work is gone, now that it can be copied, the ritualistic part remains. Going to the cinema (and to the theater) is indeed a ritual. For groups of teenagers (which compose the main target of mainstream movies), the release of

a blockbuster becomes an event, a part of their immediate lives, something to be discussed with friends and blogged about until the next action flick comes along. For couples, going to the cinema is such a ritual in the U.S. that many chains and multiplexes offer a combo called “a dinner and a movie.” Therefore, cinema continues to be auratic.⁶ When a boxed set of *Blade Runner* is released with *five* different versions of the film, this is aura, for it generates a sense of awe from its faithful fans. The director's cut is considered the “original,” the purest version, not corrupted by the studio.

Benjamin claims that the film actor is acting to the camera, not to a real audience, so his aura vanishes. But can anything be more auratic than, say, close-ups of Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo? The close-up itself is auratic, for it makes a landscape out of a human face. Perhaps, when the digital camera substitutes the negatives, and there are no more flickering shadows, the aura of cinema will be gone. At the same time, cinema may be losing its aura not because it is reproducible and accessible, but because it is no longer considered art. With the dominance of Hollywood productions worldwide, cinema today is seen as pure entertainment, theater's poor (rich) cousin.

Auratic or not, acting in film is usually fragmented and discontinued. It is rare for a movie to shoot scenes in the actual sequence that appears on the screen. The screen actor has the luxury of repeating his or her takes until the director is satisfied, and these takes can be shot in various angles. Naturally, only the stage actor can change his acting in each performance, adapting it to the audience's response. In film, if an actor imposes his voice as he does on stage, he will sound exaggerated. Even Laurence Olivier had to “tone down” when making a movie. In *Marathon Man*, he had to be reminded several times by the director that this was not theater, as we learn from the DVD extras.

In cinema, actors and spectators never occupy the same space (unless in the case of a press screening or collective interview, or when fans ask stars for autographs). The spectator is present during a screening, but s/he is absent during the shooting of the film, when the actor is physically present. In

⁶ And let us not forget: even though cinema attracts a much larger public than most of the other arts, it is still elitist. Going to the movies *is* expensive. In Brazil, this kind of leisure is reserved for the middle and upper classes only.

theater, even though actors and spectators do not always share the same, exact space either, they are close enough during a limited amount of time. And this interferes with the gaze. Only in theater can an actor respond to a spectator's gaze with another, live gaze. This is one of the reasons Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* is such a remarkable film. The character in the movie-within-the-movie notices a lonely and insistent spectator, and decides to abandon the screen for her sake.

Our eyes as spectators focus on the center of the screen. Much more often than not all the components necessary to make a film (such as camera and crew) are invisible to us, who are only allowed to see the screen. In theater it is more frequent to see actors moving scenery around, applying make-up or changing costumes on stage, and speaking to or looking directly at the spectator. The fourth wall appears broken. However, in both media, suspension of disbelief is necessary on the part of the spectator. As Robert Scholes puts it, “Drama is true to life by being false to our conventional notions of reality” (785). According to Barbara Freedman, “What differentiates theatricality from the cinematic is its *display of display*, which returns us to an all-showing state. *Theatricality shows that it knows that it shows*, and so turns itself inside out in a series of frames framed by the contents. The cinematic, on the other hand, seeks, as in dreams, to *deny that it knows that it shows*” (70; original emphasis). Spectators can look at whatever they want on stage, though the clarity of the object will be compromised, depending on the lighting. They can direct their gaze. In cinema, the gaze is dictated to us, through the camera, which also allows details to be explored. Scholes adds, “In a play nothing stands between us and the total make-up of its world. Characters appear and events happen without any intermediate comment or explanation. Drama, then, offers us a direct presentation of its imaginative reality” (773). A resource that has been used more more lately—theatrical productions using a screen on stage, to show part of the action—may serve as a kind of comment or explanation.

Otto Fenichel sees the camera as a “‘devouring eye’, which looks at and incorporates the external world and later projects it outwards again” (32). Yes, but the “external world” projected by the

camera is fabricated, like the external world of theater. We may at best say that, in film, the devouring eye filters the external world. If what theater gives us is “a direct presentation of its imaginative reality” (Scholes 773), cinema gives us an indirect presentation of a reality that is also imaginative. It is indirect because there is camera and film in the process, but the idea that film reproduces reality seems as naïve as the tired cliché that the camera does not lie. Freedman has another opinion:

In cinema, we are sutured into identification with the camera and with the story. In theater, however, the processes of seeing and being seen are inseparable from each other and from the recognition of a fracture at their core. Because of the cinematic fiction’s reliance on a series of cuts that continually shift our focus, the rule of spectatorship in cinema is to seek closure at any cost. When we go to see a film, we have no choice but to allow the camera to position us *somewhere*. Yet theater forces us to acknowledge that we are displaced from any sure position and indeed *constituted* by this fracture between showing and seeing. Whereas cinema encourages a more direct perceptual identification with the seeing eye of the camera, theater divides and disperses the possibilities of identification, in the process problematizing both identification and point of view. The cinematic foregrounds a moment in which the subject is clearly identified as the object of another’s regard. Yet theater addresses the process of self-identification and its consequences. (67-8)

For Fenichel, “[o]ne looks at an object in order to *share in* its experience” (10). When we are watching either a play or a film, we want to be taken in by what we are observing. The darkness of the room, the volume of the voices and sounds we hear, the passivity we face as spectators (speaking is not encouraged in mainstream theater), our eyes fixated in one direction—all conspire for us to be “taken in” by the experience. Both cinema and mainstream theater are media that do not allow a whole lot of distraction. The spectacle has to be the center of our attention for the next two hours. Although Fenichel reminds us that we may also look at something to destroy it (as in “if looks could kill”, or as in snakes hypnotizing their prey before attacking), clearly this is not the case of spectators in cinema or theater—we are there to experience something unique that most probably we do not see in our everyday lives.

When analyzing either film or theater, the concept of the gaze is important. In her landmark

article, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey describes three possible gazes in cinema: the gaze of the camera, the gaze of the spectator, and the gaze of the characters inside the film, looking at one another. It seems acceptable to say that only the first kind of gaze, that of the camera, is absent in theater. On stage we still have the gaze of the characters, the gaze of the spectator looking at the actors, and something unthinkable in film—the actors returning the spectator's gaze. It is true that, in cinema, the gaze of the camera defines much of the other two types of gazes. For instance, if the camera refuses to show the gaze of the characters, the spectator will simply not see it, whereas in theater, if characters exchange stares, this will be visible to the audience. On the other hand, cinema, through close-ups, has a way of highlighting that gaze.

Film is particularly good at dealing with the uncanny, because it is uncanny itself, with all those flickering shadows. It might as well be the most uncanny medium. Just as Roland Barthes claims that the still photograph carries the menace that the person portrayed will come to life (9), cinema fulfills that possibility. For Lisa Starks and Courtney Lehman, “If, at the close of the nineteenth century, photography inspired what Walter Benjamin describes as a ‘cult of death’—the belief that the dead could be at once contained, transmitted, and preserved through the photographic image—then at the dawn of the twentieth century, cinema audaciously aspired to conquer death itself by capturing real life” (9). Marjorie Garber compares the negative to ghosts: “The photographic negative is in fact very like a ghost; it reifies the concept of an absent presence, existing positively as a negative image. In a negative we see light as dark and dark as light; we see, in effect, what is not there” (17). While Steven Shaviro calls cinema “a machine for raising ghosts” (qtd. in Burgoyne 8), Tom Gunning points out in the documentary about terror films *The American Nightmare* that “cinema itself could become a haunted house. The images themselves have something of a quality, not just of a representation, but a zone between reality and representation—which is exactly what ghosts are, images of people long dead. What first seems to promise immortality, ultimately delivers ghosts.” Gunning proceeds by

claiming that film, unlike photography, offers more than still pictures. The actors' movement and shadows have a compulsion to repeat their actions and words forever, and this compulsion to repeat is one of the traits of the uncanny.

In film living actors become ghosts, for the actor's image is captured in a celluloid negative, from which it cannot escape. That way, cinema “elicit[s] a sense of emptiness and death more often than the experience of ‘real’ life it promised to contain” (Starks 10). However, ghosts (actors long dead in real life) also become living actors on the screen. In theater, it is impossible to see a dead person acting. In film, it is far from uncommon. Naturally, all the classics of the screen involve dead actors. Garbo, Bogart, Chaplin, Mastroianni, Grande Otelo—they are all dead, yet their films continue to be watched, and their ghosts persevere, doomed to repeat the same gestures. Talking about a more recent example, it seems undisputable that part of *The Dark Knight's* amazing success, in terms of box office as well as of praise by both critics and public, is the uncanniness of Heath Ledger's performance as the Joker. Ledger died at the end of January, 2008, and the film opened five months later, when the shock of his accidental death was still very fresh in people's minds. More than ever, looking at the ghastly, white-with-smudged-makeup villain was like watching the farewell of a ghost. One year after his death, Ledger received a posthumous Academy Award for best supporting actor.

In the beginning of spoken cinema, in the late 1920s, even the voices that came out of actors' mouths seemed uncanny, for they were unnatural, their sound rispy (Spadoni 6). Shadows were suddenly talking! (Spadoni 11). As *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) demonstrates, when the technology for the talkies was introduced, it was referred to as a freak show and met with surprise, as if such films were something uncanny: how could a piece of celluloid, a negative, speak? After all, synchronization is also different in other media. In film, distinct mechanisms are used to record image and sound. In theater, most of the time these are simultaneous. Slavoj Žižek says that hearing oneself speak is the main experience in living. It is when we fully realize we are alive. The opposite is seeing oneself

looking, which stands for death: “Voice and gaze relate to each other as life and death: voice vivifies, whereas gaze mortifies” (94). In the same musical, this device of a negative speaking is made fun of: the lack of synchronicity makes an actor and actress change voices, creating a truly—albeit humorous—uncanny effect. The result is funny and phantasmagorical at the same time.

Because, in my analysis, I will be using videos, I must dedicate a few lines to TV and video. I am glad to have a copy of a videorecording of Antunes' *Trono de Sangue*, because it helps in remembering details of the performance. However, it is relevant to point out that video can be helpful, yet it represents, as Marco De Marini stresses, “a faithful betrayal of performance,” that is, it is *one* tool in the analysis of a production, but it cannot be the only one, for it can be misleading. We cannot rely too heavily on video because it is one way only to look at a performance on a given night. Ulysses Cruz's *Macbeth* was filmed and aired on TV Cultura, so many of the cuts and camera angles of the video I have were made for a medium different from theater, TV. Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* was filmed two years after its highly successful theatrical run, specifically for TV, and even if, by all accounts (Kliman, for instance), the film for TV is a faithful reproduction of the acclaimed theatrical production, it still is another medium. As Michael Anderegg affirms, Shakespeare on television is “a hybrid form, blending the *mise-en-scène* of the theater with the framing and editing strategies of film” (149).

Since, in my dissertation, I will deal with productions of *Macbeth* in both theater and cinema, it is relevant to keep in mind Pavis' words:

[B]earing in mind cinema's perspectives on theatrical reality, one could imagine that the analyst's gaze is comparable (albeit metaphorically) to that of film apparatus: point of view, distance, scales of shot, framings, connections, and free associations made through montage within a shot, and so on. In this way, theater analysis would benefit from the central elements of cinematographic language, which itself stems from a particular logic of the human gaze. (Analyzing 24)

Thus, it will be easier to reflect on “what beast” is it, cinema or theater, or both, that moves Macbeth to his masterful scheme of uncanny violence.

CHAPTER 3

“SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES”⁷: THE UNCANNY AND VIOLENCE IN
MACBETH

“Something wicked this way comes” (3.4.121) is how one of the three witches, noticing Macbeth’s arrival, describes the tyrant, to the great amusement of her peers. But it may well be an apt metaphor for the sensation caused by Freud in the academic community after he published his essay “The Uncanny,” in 1919. Wickedness is surely only one part of the uncanny, and there are many others, as we shall see as this chapter develops. I want to concentrate on the various elements of the uncanny, for several of them are related to violence, and show the connection of the uncanny to visible violence for, as Paul de Man points out, “[t]o make the invisible visible is uncanny” (qtd. in Royle 108). However, if the uncanny is, in Freud’s definition, something that is strangely familiar, then the invisible may not be so invisible after all. And, as something familiar that keeps trying to be repressed, the uncanny need not be scary. We might as well approach the uncanny with a more welcoming attitude than when Macbeth, afraid of ghosts, shouts at Banquo’s spirit, “Hence horrible shadow! / Unreal mockery, hence!” (3.4.105).

Many scholars have used Freud’s essay as a starting point to arrive at definitions of the uncanny. For Samuel Weber, the uncanny is “not simply a form of anxiety, but is located between dread, terror and panic on the one side, and uneasiness and anticipation on the other” (1131-2). Gordon Bearn explains the difference between *eerie*—“the absence of what ought to be present”—and *uncanny*, “the presence of what ought to be absent” (qtd. in Royle 88). For Harold Bloom, *Kafkaesque* may be “a universal term for what Freud called ‘the uncanny’” (Canon 448).

⁷*Macbeth*, 4.1.45.

As we shall see, the uncanny can include *déjà vu*, frightening and terrible circumstances, or things strangely beautiful, connected to the sublime. Jean-Marie Todd calls attention to the “double movement” of the uncanny, that of veiling and unveiling (522). And, according to Hélène Cixous, “Freud relates [the uncanny] to other concepts which resemble it (fright, fear, anguish): it is a unit in the ‘family’ but it is not really a member of the family” (528). When things that are unnatural happen, the uncanny arises. It is strange for a person to be not born of woman, or for an inanimate object such as a forest to move, though the violence in *Macbeth* is more than strange—it is strangely familiar.

Freud begins his essay “The Uncanny” by pointing out that the psychoanalyst seldom concentrates on the aesthetic. He continues this exploration on the topic writing in third person, as if he himself were not a psychoanalyst. On the same page he moves from “he” to “one” to “we” and finally to “I,” when he mentions Ernst Jentsch, who appears to have been the first and only to write about the uncanny before Freud assumes this arduous mission. All of a sudden Freud goes back to using third person again, when he admits that he has not experienced the sensation of the uncanny for “a long time” (124). Two pages into the essay, he attempts a conclusion about what the uncanny actually means: “that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar” (124). Then he goes on to look for the meaning of the *heimlich* (homely, familiar) and the *unheimlich* (unhomely, mysterious) in a myriad of dictionaries. His triumph is evident when he realizes that the two apparently antonymic terms converge at one point (mysterious *and* homely at the same time), so he adopts Schelling’s definition of the uncanny as “everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come out into the open” (132).

With a definition in hand, Freud is now ready to scrutinize “The Sand-Man,”⁸ a short story from 1817 written by E. T. A. Hoffman, whom he considers “the unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature” (141). Freud makes a tremendous effort to exclude the more familiar characters, such as Clara and her brother, and confines the automaton Olympia to a footnote. For Cixous, he tries to tell the story linearly, without all the interruptions and diverse points of view that are part of its charm (533). Again, criticizing Jentsch, Freud tries to convince his readers that “the motif of the seemingly animate doll Olympia is by no means the only one responsible for the incomparably uncanny effect of the story, or even the one to which it is principally due” (136).

After offering a summary of the story, he adds that it “will probably make it clear beyond doubt that in Hoffman’s tale the sense of the uncanny attaches directly to the figure of the Sand-Man, and therefore to the idea of being robbed of one’s eyes—and that intellectual uncertainty, as Jentsch understands it, has nothing to do with this effect” (138). This sentence is followed by another that illustrates Freud’s compulsion for repetition: “Uncertainty as to whether an object is animate or inanimate, which we were bound to acknowledge in the case of the doll Olympia, is quite irrelevant in the case of this more potent example of the uncanny” (138-9). And then he concedes: “It is true that the author initially creates a kind of uncertainty by preventing us—certainly not intentionally—from guessing whether he is going to take us into the real world or into some fantastic world of his own choosing” (139). In the influential “Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud’s *Das Unheimliche*,” Cixous makes a big deal of Freud’s use of expressions such as *no doubt*, *undoubtedly* and *certainly*. She is right to point out how excessively he recurs to these terms in an essay that uncannily and ironically leaves many

⁸ The spelling of “The Sand-Man” and its characters varies from source to source. Nathanael may be spelled Nathaniel, Olympia becomes Olympica, even the title of the story sometimes appears as “The Sandman.” I have decided to follow the spelling of my copy of “The Sand-Man,” edited by E. F. Breiler: Nathanael and Olympia.

doubts. At one point Freud openly admits that his interpretation of “The Sand-Man” seems “arbitrary and meaningless if one rejects the relation between fear for the eyes and fear of castration, but they become meaningful as soon as the Sand-Man is replaced by the dreaded father, at whose hands castration is expected” (140). His key to linking Hoffman’s tale to the uncanny is, thus, the fear of losing one’s eyes, which underneath represents the fear of castration.

In a third part of the essay Freud offers other examples of the uncanny, such as getting lost and returning to the same familiar point. He stresses sentences like “We can no longer be in any doubt about where we now stand” (147), confessing in earlier parts of his essay that we could have been in doubt *before*. This uncertainty is further demonstrated by a sentence like “if psychoanalytic theory is right” (147)—so is there a chance that it is wrong? He also discusses fairy tales, coming to the conclusion that, when Snow White reopens her eyes, it is not uncanny, for this occurs within the universe of the fairy tale, in which such things happen (153). Finally he creates a strange and arbitrary rule: that the uncanny and humor cannot go together. He had already suggested this when he seemed to take Hoffman’s tale *too* seriously, apparently oblivious to the fact that, especially towards the end, the story becomes hilarious, since Nathanael’s infatuation with Olympia becomes ludicrous. Now he gives another example: “Even a ‘real’ ghost, such as the one in Oscar Wilde’s ‘The Canterville Ghost’, inevitably loses any claim to arouse even feelings of fright when the author amuses himself by ironizing it and exposing it to ridicule” (158). Freud was probably unfamiliar with Mark Twain’s saying that “humor is tragedy plus time,” since he refuses to admit that humor may be a part of the uncanny.

It seems quite safe to say that Freud’s essay is phallogocentric in its more “literal” meaning. For instance, he writes: “one finds it understandable that so precious an organ as the eye should

be guarded by a commensurate anxiety” (140). If tearing out one’s eyes represents fear of castration, then his “so precious an organ” is really alluding to something else. His example in this sentence looks like a give-away: “One may [...] have lost one’s way in the woods, perhaps after being overtaken by fog, and, despite all one’s efforts to find a marked or familiar path, one comes back again and again to the same spot, which one recognizes by a particular physical feature” (144). Yes, and what “particular physical feature” could that be, we wonder.

Obviously, Freud’s essay possesses great qualities, or else it would not have been so influential since its publication, in 1919. Perhaps one of the ways to forgive its single-mindedness is to see it, as Cixous does, as “less a discourse than a strange theoretical novel” (525). If we regard Freud’s analysis of the uncanny, especially in regard to “The Sand-Man,” as fiction, Marjorie Garber’s quote makes perfect sense: “It may indeed be the case that all stories about the uncanny are stories about the repression of the uncanny” (91). In his book about the uncanny, Nicholas Royle puts it another way: for him, “‘The Uncanny’ is an extraordinary text for what it does not say, as well as for what it does” (7). It would be difficult to dispute Freud’s status as the first to connect the uncanny not only to the mysterious but also to the strangely familiar. According to Hugh Haughton, “Freud’s haunted essay certainly put the uncanny onto the aesthetic map in ways not even he could have predicted. ‘The Uncanny’ has come back to haunt subsequent commentary on literature, film, photography and art ever since” (lv).

And yet, Freud is somewhat reductionistic in both his reading of “The Sand-Man” and of Jentsch’s “On the Psychology of the Uncanny,” the latter published in 1906. For Jentsch, the uncanny has to do with uncertainty, with not being able to decide. Like Freud, he also starts his piece with references to language: “Without a doubt, this word [*unheimlich*] appears to express

that someone to whom something ‘uncanny’ happens is not quite ‘at home’ or ‘at ease’ in the situations concerned, that the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to him” (7-8). According to Jentsch, when we face something new or unfamiliar we are also facing the uncertain, and from this feeling uncanniness arises, making us want to master the unknown (9). He goes on to state that no feeling is as uncanny as the doubt concerning animate and inanimate objects (11). As an example, he mentions wax figures: are they dead or alive, real or unreal, animate or inanimate? (12). When in doubt it is safer for us, thus, to undergo “a kind of intellectual mastery of the situation” (11). He briefly mentions Hoffman, although not “The Sand-Man” in particular, as a model of uncanny literature.

Jentsch does a good job in talking about the *unheimlich* until he states that women and children may see the uncanny in more objects because they have a weak critical sense (13). Of course, what could be more intellectually uncertain than women? This is the age-old prejudice linking women to hysteria, superstition, and witchcraft. However, even in “The Sand-Man,” which Jentsch refuses to analyze, Clara is the practical, rational being: Clara is the defense of Enlightenment against Romanticism (Wasserman⁸), Clara is the light, unaffected by poetry or alchemy or the uncanny; for that matter, Clara is wholly ignored by Freud. Besides, *Macbeth* contradicts the thesis that women have a tendency to see more ghosts than men. It is Macbeth who sees Banquo’s ghost after all, and who hears the witches say exactly what he wants to believe. Lady Macbeth goes crazy, to be sure, but she merely sees blood on her hands and talks to herself in her sleep. She does not begin a conversation with a ghost in the middle of a banquet, nor does she become so paranoid about her own future as to order the murder of children.

⁸ Renata Wasserman’s course on Gothic Literature at UFSC. Class notes from August 23, 2006.

Jentsch states: “Another important factor in the origin of the uncanny is the natural tendency of man to infer [...] that things in the external world [...] are animate in the same way” (13). Since he has made a questionable connection between women and weak intellects, we wonder if by “man” he means humankind or just the male species. To be fair, Clara does see a bush moving at the end of “The Sand-Man,” which, interestingly enough, echoes Birnan wood coming to Dunsinane at the end of *Macbeth* (5.5). But just seeing a moving bush does not make Clara want to throw herself or others from the tower.

In a way, Freud elides the fact that Jentsch has much to contribute to our understanding of the uncanny. Cixous calls it a repression of the repression: “Does not Jentsch say more than what Freud wishes to read?” (534) For Haughton, “Uncertainty is a more interesting subject than Freud is prepared to acknowledge, and this particular essay [‘The Uncanny’] is riddled with it” (xliii). So much so that Freud’s abusive *no doubts* go against the general tone of his essay.

In 1901, before writing “The Uncanny,” Freud, in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, mentioned the difficulty a psychoanalyst would have “to discover anything new that has not been known before by some creative writer” (262). This becomes clear with “The Sand-Man.” As Royle affirms, “Reading or re-reading [Hoffman’s story] after reading ‘The Uncanny’, one cannot help feeling rather sorry for the founder of psychoanalysis,” since the tale is so creative in its psychological traumas (39). Thus, let us move on to “The Sand-Man.”

And, in order to close-read the story, I need to engage in a bit of plot summary first, because Hoffman's tale remains a landmark of the uncanny in literature, having been mentioned by both Jentsch and Freud, and second, because it is difficult to criticize Freud for the inconsistencies in his analysis of “The Sand-Man” without explaining what the plot is about. The

short story starts with three letters being exchanged. Nathanael, a young student, writes to his friend Lothair but absent-mindedly posts the letter to his girlfriend Clara, Lothair's sister, who reads it and answers it. Nathanael mentions how nervous he is because something terrible has happened to him. However, before he narrates the cause of his misfortune, he adds that "only to think upon it makes the wild laughter burst from my lips" (1). Since this is a strange reaction from someone so desperate, it seems again mistaken on Freud's part to dismiss humor, as if pathos and laughter were not intimately related. At the same time that Nathanael instructs his close friends to laugh at him, he adds that just thinking about what has happened makes his hair stand on end. He cannot even describe the present without first narrating a childhood trauma. It is his mother who first lets him know of the Sand-Man's existence, the ghost who will terrify his childhood. Although she later claims he does not exist, Nathanael is already terrified enough to ask confirmation from a maid. She tells him: "Oh, he's a wicked man, who comes to little children when they won't go to bed and throws handfuls of sand in their eyes, so that they jump out of their heads all bloody; and he puts them into a bag and takes them to the half-moon as food for his little ones" (2). Nathanael soon comes to believe that the Sand-Man is a German lawyer called Coppelius, who visits his house on a regular basis to meet his father for some never specified adventures with alchemy. One day the boy hides to see what the two men are up to, and is troubled to notice that his sweet father "looked like Coppelius" (4). The lawyer finds him and threatens to burn his eyes, but the father intervenes. The boy goes into a trance, and, when he wakes up, his mother is there to soothe him. One year later, Coppelius drops by a last time; an explosion occurs and Nathanael's father is killed, "his face burned black and fearfully distorted"

(5). Coppelius disappears, but Nathanael is convinced that he now stands by the name of Coppola, an Italian optician.

Upon reading Nathanael's letter, Clara, the voice of reason, patiently answers: "it seems to me that all that was fearsome and terrible of which you speak, existed only in your own self⁹, and that the real true outer world had but little to do with it" (6). Trusting Clara, Nathanael, now more relieved that Coppelius and Coppola are not the same person, mentions his physics professor, Spalanzani, and his daughter, Olimpia, whom he has briefly observed through the window: "I thought she was sleeping with her eyes open. I felt quite uncomfortable" (8).

The epistolary section comes to a halt and is substituted by an unidentified third-person narrator, probably a friend of Nathanael's, who addresses us as "gracious" and "indulgent" readers and explains how he did not want to start with "Once upon a time," for the story "is anything but laughable," so he simply chose "not to begin at all" (9). As we can see, the tone here is ironic, and it becomes humorous when the narrator starts commenting on Nathanael's attitude—"quite angry because Clara would only grant the existence of the demon in his own mind" (11)—and his sweetheart's personality. Clara is bored to death by the gloomy poems and tales Nathanael writes and reads to her. While he reads, she has to find something to do, such as knitting or petting a dog. One poem in particular makes her mad: in this one, she and Nathanael are about to get married when Coppelius appears at the altar, rips off *her* eyes, and throws them at Nathanael. She tries to convince him that Coppelius is not a menace to their happiness, but, the moment he looks into her eyes, he sees death kindly gazing at him. When he rewrites the poem, she has to say, "my darling Nathanael, throw that foolish, senseless, stupid thing into the fire"; he

⁹ This echoes Lady Macbeth's telling her husband that the ghost of Banquo does not exist, but is only "the very painting of your fear" (3.4.60).

is so shocked to hear this that he calls her a “damned lifeless automaton” (12). Nathanael and Lothair almost get into a fight, but Clara intervenes, and they all embrace “amidst endless tears” (13). Incidentally: if we count the number of times Clara’s name emerges in this short summary, we see that Freud has no right to ignore her.

The story moves on and now leaves Clara temporarily behind, as it describes Nathanael’s growing fascination with Olimpia. Although “her features were uncertain and confused [...] it was evident that she was constantly gazing across in his direction” (13). Only after buying some glasses from Coppola can he see her clearly, through the optician’s eyes. To make things more uncanny, a new character, also Nathanael’s friend, enters the picture. His name is Siegmund, no less. Neither Siegmund nor anyone else, except Nathanael, thinks very highly of Olimpia. Nathanael monopolizes Olimpia’s company at a ball, dancing with her the whole night. If at some moments her eyes seem undistinguishable, no problem: Nathanael uses Coppola’s glasses to perceive “how her yearning eyes” seek him (15). No matter how much he is infatuated with her, he still notices that she is a bit monosyllabic, sighing “Ach! Ach!” to his declarations of love. He makes an effort to confuse her responses with wisdom. Siegmund cannot believe his friend has fallen for “Miss Wax-face,” a “wooden doll,” with eyes so “utterly devoid of life” (17). We may still be unaware, at this point, that Olimpia is a robot, but we have few doubts about Nathanael’s sanity after we hear him describe the doll’s “Ach! Ach” as “genuine hieroglyphics of the inner world of Love” (17). In this section of the story, the repressed Clara returns only if to be deemed “completely forgotten” (17), and to be compared with Olimpia. Now, with the automaton, Nathanael has an “exemplary listener” to whom to read his poems, one who admires his “poetic genius” and who never embroiders or plays with pets while

listening. Nathanael is head over heels in love and wants to marry her. It is not a coincidence that, looking for a ring, he finds Clara's letters.

Tragedy strikes when Coppola invades Spalanzani's lab, tears out Olimpia's eyes, claiming they are his creation, and escapes. Olimpia is now "an inanimate puppet" (19). Her father grabs her bloody eyes from the floor and thrusts them at Nathanael's bosom. This is too much for our young student: he suffers a nervous breakdown, yelling "Spin round, wooden doll!" and has to be institutionalized. The narrator pauses to tell us that Spalanzani survives, and that the new fashion in "intelligent tea-circles" is that "lovers, in order to be fully convinced that they [are] not paying court to a wooden puppet, [require] that their mistress should sing and dance a little out of time, should embroider or knit or play with her little pug, etc, when being read to" (20). Above all, women from then onwards should voice their thoughts so as to prove they can think. Who would have guessed? The advent of feminism!

When Nathanael awakes from his trance, he finds Clara taking care of him. They decide to get married, but Clara suggests, before leaving for a new house, that they see the city from a tower. Once up there, she exclaims, "Oh! Do look at that strange little grey bush, it looks as if it were actually walking towards us" (21). Since now Nathanael is dependent on Coppola's glasses to look at anything, he takes them, puts them on, and what does he see? Clara. The text says so clearly: "Clara stood in front of the glass" (21). Nathanael goes into another fit and tries to kill Clara, almost throwing her off the tower, but Lothair rescues her. Only then does Nathanael notice Coppelius' presence amidst the crowd, and he jumps to his death. It seems like the end of the story, for the narrator writes, "When Nathanael lay on the stone pavement with a broken head, Coppelius had disappeared in the crush and confusion" (21).

The narrator, however, takes the trouble to return to let us know of Clara's fate. Without assuming much responsibility, he states that "Several years afterwards *it was reported that*" Clara is happily married (21, my emphasis). So far the storyteller has reported the facts himself, but now the third-person narrator decides vaguely to listen to other sources. Clara has at last been definitely repressed, becoming nothing but a shadow, a ghost.

My summary might be accused of mutilating the story, as Cixous accuses Freud's summary of "The Sand-Man" of doing (534). Every summary cuts every story short. According to Royle, Freud ignores the notion that "telling or retelling a story is always, in some sense, something new, another story" (40). But it seems undeniable that Clara *is* a relevant character, for the story opens and ends with her. How can Freud, then, completely exclude her?

This is not, however, his only "slip." Freud says that, towards the end of "The Sand-Man," there is no doubt that Coppelius and Coppola are the same person. Weber asks, correctly, "But is the conclusion of the story *really* all that *clear*? And what is the status of *reality* ('really is') in a text of fiction, where reality-testing and 'material' reality are not directly applicable, as Freud himself admits?" (1120). For Weber, when Nathanael looks through the spyglass, he sees a bush, reminiscent of Coppelius' bushy eyebrows, but that does not mean, of course, that Coppelius and Coppola are the Sand-Man (1122-3). Not to mention that, if Nathanael sees Coppelius (after seeing Clara), why does he try to hurt Clara? First Nathanael is not truly fascinated by Olimpia unless he observes her through Coppola's eyes. Now when he looks at Clara with the spyglass for the first and last time, he wants to kill her, just as when Nathanael sees Olimpia for the first time, through the window, he feels uncanny about it—maybe because deep inside he knows his object of desire is a robot, so this produces what Jentsch terms

intellectual uncertainty—he has his moment of uncertainty with Clara. It is possible that he sees then, with proper assistance from his father-figure Coppola, the castrated woman. Or, more simply, he wants to eliminate the most rational character in the story, the only one who condemns his fantasy world. We have seen this before: Freud is the first to try to eliminate Clara.

In “The Veiled Woman in Freud’s ‘Das Unheimliche’” Todd criticizes Freud for stressing Nathanael’s fear of castration by his father over Olimpia’s importance. Freud seems unable to notice that the fear of castration is also linked to women. He ignores even the part when Olimpia’s eyes are pulled out. “The loss of her eyes,” Todd affirms, “is viewed simply as a representation of Nathanael’s imagined castration by the father. This interpretation veils everything that pertains to woman in Hoffman’s story and reduces ‘The Sandman’ [sic] to a father-son conflict” (523). Freud finally says about Olimpia, in a footnote: “This automaton cannot be anything other than a materialization of Nathaniel’s [sic] feminine attitude to his father in his early childhood” (160), just as the womb only has any significance for Freud because it is the place men come from. That is, women only exist in relation to men. Cixous poses a question: “The reader gets the impression that Freud’s narrative is not as *Unheimliche* as he claims: is that new element which should have remained hidden doubtless too exposed here? Or did Freud render uncanniness something too familiar?” (533).

Royle cites Cixous’s essay to show that Freud not only reduces the importance of women in “The Uncanny,” but also discards the suggestions that the uncanny may be queer. By ignoring Nathanael’s relationship with Lothair, Siegmund and the narrator himself, Freud attempts to repress homosexuality in his essay about “The Sand-Man,” trying to make Hoffman’s short story less uncanny (Royle 42). Freud does include a footnote affirming that Nathanael is “incapable of

loving a woman,” but he says nothing about the love that dare not speak its name (160). For Royle, the uncertainty about one’s sexuality is one element of the uncanny (66).

After reading Freud’s interpretation, it is quite impossible to go through “The Sand-Man” without thinking of “The Uncanny.” For Renata Wasserman, “It’s like looking at a picture after being told what to look at. We can’t see the picture the same way again.”¹⁰ Adam Bresnick believes that the short story changes after each reading, regardless of Freud’s analysis: “Once one has read the tale literally, there is no possible return to the initial uncanny, and with each subsequent reading, ‘The Sandman’ [sic] can only appear increasingly comic” (126). But many other interpretations are possible, naturally. Bresnick states that what is most uncanny in Hoffman’s story is the disturbance or revelation “of the everyday function of language” (120).

When Freud ignores Olympia, dedicating to her nothing other than a footnote, Cixous decides to challenge the situation by asking: “What if the doll became a woman? What if she *were* alive? What if, in looking at her, we animated her?” (538) The uncanny feeling which arises from our doubt about inanimate objects is, after all, Jentsch’s main example. The object seems more uncanny if it imitates human functions (Jentsch 12). For him a doll would not cause this feeling, since it is part of a fantasy realm, a genre (much like Freud’s recognition that the uncanny does not exist in fairy tales), but a robot would be uncanny. Inanimate objects coming to life might not be scary for children, and both Jentsch and Freud are honest in acknowledging this fact. However, in the 1980s, the horror genre in cinema tried to make familiar and childish objects more scary. For instance, the clown’s “coming to life” in *Poltergeist* has to be one of the biggest frights of the decade. The successful franchise of *Child’s Play*, in which Chucky, the killer doll incarnated by a psychopath, torments a six-year-old, is a good reversal of the rule that

¹⁰ Renata Wasserman’s course on Gothic Literature at UFSC. Class notes from August 23, 2006.

dolls are not scary. But just making these dolls animated is not enough to make spectators afraid. The dolls also have to be violent, threatening children's and adults' lives. That is, the uncanny seems to become exacerbated when violence is added to the recipe.

In discussing dolls, a major element of the uncanny, we need to point out that Nathanael is uncomfortable, rather than scared, when he sees Olimpia for the first time. The doll is unresponsive to others, and this can cause dread, reminding us of death (and even necrophilia), but to Nathanael she is a blank screen onto which he can project himself. Although he is able to observe the automaton by himself, he really only notices her once he focuses on her with Coppola's eye-piece, in an attempt to dominate nature. This comes as a bit of a shock to the reader, for we have been listening to the voice of reason all along, believing Clara when she tells Nathanael that his imagination is his only enemy, and all of a sudden he falls in love with an automaton. Bresnick says this moment is uncanny because the reader finds out that reading literally will not do: "When one reads 'The Sandman' [sic] literally it becomes a humorous allegory of the work of art, while when one reads it figuratively, it remains an uncanny tale of romantic madness" (126). Hence the absurd takes over the story.

According to Eva-Maria Simms, Freud is dismissive of the doll and excludes her from his discussion of the story (and of the uncanny) simply because she does not fit the Oedipal structure he wants to write about (663). Since neither Olimpia nor Clara fit in, and both disrupt his analysis, he chooses to erase them from his narrative. Weber puts it more straightforwardly when he mentions that Freud only has eyes for the Sand-Man (1121). Simms cites Winnicott as saying that dolls and other objects help "free" the child from its dependence on the mother, acting as transitional objects (663). We can look at Nathanael's fascination with Olimpia in this way, as

finding a substitute for his mother. Either way, by overlooking the female characters in “The Sand-Man,” Freud ignores this possibility.

Simms is critical of both Jentsch and Freud: “Jentsch still leaves the ‘particular emotional effect of the thing’ unexplained. Our dilemma is that Freud refuses to look at the doll, while Jentsch’s glance only touches the surface. It is almost uncanny: both authors either repress or rationalize the emotional impact of the doll” (669). Nathanael is not too far from being a boy playing with dolls in his relationship with Olimpia. As Simms states, “The doll exists on the threshold of ego-identity, where subject and object are undifferentiated and merge in an erotic fusion” (671). In Trevor Nunn’s *Macbeth* the title character also plays with dolls—voodoo dolls, and at one point he discharges his anger and frustration on them. Simms believes that when children manifest rage against dolls, they are really revolting against their lost connection with the mother, realizing that the doll cannot replace her (671). If we look at Macbeth’s relationship with his wife as reminiscent of a mother/son union, his revolt makes even more sense.

The uncanny also includes a compulsion to repeat, or, as Royle describes, “a sense of repetition or ‘coming back’—the return of the repressed” (2). He further links this to a “compulsion to tell, a compulsive storytelling” (12). Freud argues that sometimes it is repetition that makes something uncanny, a return, sometimes unintentional: “In the unconscious mind we can recognize the dominance of a *compulsion to repeat* which proceeds from instinctual impulses. The compulsion probably depends on the essential nature of the drives themselves. It is strong enough to override the pleasure principle and lend a demonic character to certain aspects of mental life” (144-5). This compulsion to repeat may be one of the reasons the violence in *Macbeth* is uncanny. The tyrant starts by killing the king, and, while he hesitates to do so, he has

no qualms about having women and children murdered. Once he begins, he cannot stop. And, if the violence does not start with him, it will not stop when he is dead. As Weber claims, the uncanny “involves repetition not merely as a thematic phenomenon but as a factor of interpretation itself” (1115). One way to look at the uncanny in *Macbeth* is to examine its interest in repetition. In this way, the uncanny, like violence, is not alien, because it has always been with us, only suppressed. We try to repress violence, but it comes back to haunt us. In fact, it never is something barely repressed, difficult to return – for something to return, it has to leave us before.

But *Macbeth* the playtext, like the uncanny, is also about what Freud calls the “evil eye.” For him, “One of the uncanniest and most widespread superstitions is fear of the ‘evil eye’ [...]. Anyone who possesses something precious, but fragile, is afraid of the envy of others, to the extent that he projects on them the envy he would have felt in their place” (146-7). Macbeth certainly has an evil eye for Duncan’s crown. One of the main themes in the playtext, that of ambition, is intrinsically connected to the evil eye. In Roman Polanski’s film, this evil eye is represented by the figure of Rosse, who wants power at any cost, and, when he cannot acquire it, changes sides.

It comes as no surprise that, for Garber, *Macbeth* “is *the* play of the uncanny – the uncanniest in the canon” (107). She reaches this conclusion after referring to another essay by Freud, “The Medusa’s Head,” in which Freud lists: “animism, magic and witchcraft, the omnipotence of thought, man’s attitude to death, involuntary repetition, and the castration-complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something fearful into an uncanny thing.” Garber sees this list as encompassing “practically every major theme in *Macbeth*” (107).

If we go back to “The Sand-Man” and to the uncanny concept of the evil eye, it seems curious that when Nathanael puts on Coppola's glasses to observe a moving bush, what he sees in front of him is Clara, just as, when Clara tries to console him in the beginning of the story, he sees nothing but death gazing at him. Todd comments that “the male perceives the female gaze as ‘penis envy’. [...] If a woman’s gaze is threatening, it is because man feels threatened by the fear of castration confirmed by his view of the female genitals” (526-7). And she concludes that “women have been silenced, veiled, *hidden away*,” so that the threat they pose to men is diminished (528).

Looking at someone, indeed, may be a gesture of aggression, reminiscent of the primitive belief that taking a picture may take away a piece of a person’s soul (making film, which originates from photography, a very uncanny art). Thus if the male gaze, which for Laura Mulvey is the basis of cinema, transforms women into objects for men’s contemplation, the female gaze reminds men of their vulnerability, making them possible victims. Philip Armstrong adds that, in visual perception the uncanny happens “when the gaze crosses over to [...] the image of the subject’s ego, which may take the form of its reflection in the mirror, or of another subject with whom it has a specular relationship. The gaze, added to the mirror image or ideal ego, creates the uncanny double” (Uncanny 425).

The double becomes a fascinating part of the uncanny, for it “absorbs the unrealized eventualities of our destiny which the imagination refuses to let go” (Cixous 540). Freud draws on Otto Rank’s work, which links the double “with mirror-images, shadows, guardian spirits, the doctrine of the soul and the fear of death” (142). The double, at first “an insurance against the extinction of the self,” changes to become “the uncanny harbinger of death” (Freud 142). That is,

at a more “primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted,” the double was not then a source of horror and dread (143). In many cases, uncanniness arises from this preoccupation with the double.

As Cixous points out, “Fiction resists and returns; Hoffman more and more distinctly becomes Freud’s double” (540). Doubles abound in “The Sand-Man.” Coppelius and Coppola are obvious doubles (as well as doubles to the Sand-Man), since Hoffman himself distinctly calls Coppola “Coppelius’ dreaded double and ghost” (14), but both of these figures are also doubles for Nathanael’s father. A kind man, the father is not only confounded by Nathanael when seen under a certain light, but his face is blackened, nearly unrecognizable after the explosion that causes his death. The double means replacement as well. It is precisely this repetition, with all the doubles appearing and reappearing, which make “The Sand-Man” a model of the uncanny. For instance, the link between Coppelius and the father is echoed in the home situation. Wasserman calls attention to the fact that, in Portuguese, this is very clear: *lar* and *lareira* are the center of the house, of a cozy environment.¹¹ The home is familiar without ceasing to be strange. Nathanael’s trauma goes back to one of his uncanniest moments in childhood, in which he mistakes his father’s face with Coppelius’. This face is strangely familiar to him.

A double that Freud ignores in “The Sand-Man” is that of Nathanael’s mother and the maid. The mother is the first to introduce the idea of the feared monster who robs children of their eyes, and later, realizing her mistake, she lets Nathanael know that she was speaking figuratively. It is too late, however. The boy is already terrorized, and demands an explanation from the maid, who confirms the story. Bresnick observes: “A moment of singular strangeness arrives as the perplexed subject obscurely senses the return of a memory long since repressed, a

¹¹ Renata Wasserman’s course on Gothic Literature at UFSC. Class notes from August 23, 2006.

revenant mnemonic trace that occupies a kind of interior no-man's land, belonging neither to the conscious nor to the unconscious, but to both at once" (117). In this sense the subject is doubled. Nathanael, the perplexed subject in this case, unsuccessfully tries to repress the memory that his mother installed in his mind. Although the maid is not necessarily a cruel character, her contrast with the sweet mother is apparent. We may look at this double as going back to the original concept of the double, when it had a less malign constitution.

Just as the mother is doubled in the maid, Clara is doubled in Olimpia. Of course, Olimpia also represents a double to Nathanael's extra-large narcissism, as Freud acknowledges. Shortly after the automaton is killed, Nathanael kills himself, for his ego is no longer insured. But, if we think of Clara (something Freud refuses to do), she can stand for the fear of the female. Clara is dangerous because she is intelligent and speaks her mind, while Olimpia is "the caricature of the ideal woman: silent, powerless, docile" (Todd 525). If women both attract and repel men, it is tempting to think who represents the repulsion and the desire in the case of this double. All of the men are repelled by Olimpia, except Nathanael, though it is not clear whether anyone desires Clara. And Nathanael certainly desires Olimpia. When she dies, he tries to kill Clara. Probably what repels him about Clara is her attempt to rationalize, hence destroying his fantasies.

There are several doubles in *Macbeth* as well. The saintly and pious king Duncan is doubled in the three witches and their witchcraft. This point is emphasized in the beginning of Trevor Nunn's production, in which two different groups can be seen on stage. One group is formed by the witches and their chanting; the other by the king, his subjects and their prayer. The voices from one group start being mingled with the voices from the other group. Another double

is that of Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff. They are somewhat connected, because Lady Macbeth thinks of her, as revealed by her sleepwalking monologue, when she asks, “The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now?” (5.1.42) This connection between the two ladies is neatly drawn in Polanski’s film. By anticipating the sleepwalking scene and putting it right after the scene in which Lady Macduff and her children are murdered, Polanski makes a cut from Macduff’s home to a window in Macbeth’s castle. The doctor looks through the window before fixing his gaze on the perturbed Lady Macbeth. His gaze links the two women, reinforcing the connection.

If the renderings suggest that the violence in Scotland will continue after Macbeth is killed, they do so by stressing Macduff as Macbeth’s double. Nunn’s production is a good example. In the last scene, as aforementioned, Macduff enters the stage with bloody hands and gives Malcolm the daggers that slayed Macbeth, in much the same way as Macbeth handled the daggers to his lady right after killing Duncan. Macbeth, too, used to be Duncan’s faithful servant, the warrior who eliminated any opposition, before usurping the throne. Why not assume that Macduff, led by ambition, can become Malcolm’s Macbeth?

Even the children can be seen as doubles. The boys (Banquo’s and Macduff’s sons) are the constant target of an ambitious man who does not accept being replaced. But they may be more than victims: if they survive, they may be avengers of their fathers’ deaths, perpetuating the violence. In Nunn’s production, Banquo’s son, who escapes death, and Macduff’s, who does not, are even played by the same actor. Going one step further, both boys may be the double of Lady Macbeth’s ghostly baby, the one she describes in her violent speech:

I have given suck, and know
How tender ’tis to love the babe that milks me;

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
 Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
 And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
 Have done to this. (1.7.54-59)

We do not know if this child exists, if the couple had a child who died, or if she is just saying what she would do. But it does seem like a powerful memory on her part, one that keeps returning even when it is safely stored away. For Royle, “The double is always ghostly and cannot be disassociated from a sense of *déjà vu*” (182).

Ironically, Freud never mentions *déjà vu* in his essay on the uncanny, but, Royle claims, “Excluded, *déjà vu* is more uncannily active in Freud’s essay than if it were included” (179). Freud was amongst the first to use this term, albeit years before, in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, when he noted that “the feeling of ‘*déjà vu*’ corresponds to the recollection of an unconscious phantasy” (qtd. in Royle 174). Royle affirms that even the fact that the term has acquired two meanings over the decades is uncanny: “*Déjà vu* signifies at once the illusion of ‘having previously experienced a present situation’ and ‘the correct impression’ of having really ‘previously experienced it’” (173). The violence we experience in *Macbeth* not only gives a feeling of “we have seen this before” but also an almost certainty that “we shall see this again.”

The uncanny, as “a crisis of the proper” (Royle 1), also involves liminality, for there is no conviction about what is familiar and unfamiliar, what is outside and what is inside, even what is on stage and on screen and what is off stage and off screen. One of the reasons for the uncanniness in “The Sand-Man” is this disturbance of boundaries. For Sarah Kofman, “what characterizes Nathanael is precisely the impossibility of maintaining certain limits, confounding the animate and the inanimate, man and woman” (175). And this confusion with liminality is not only inside Nathanael’s head. Hoffman himself oversteps limits in what concerns genre, humor,

and horror. For example, do we even know for sure if Olympia is an automaton? She is described as one, granted, but when Coppola tears out her eyes and Spalanzani throws them at Nathanael, these eyes are all bloody. Would a robot bleed?

At a certain moment, both Jentsch and Freud deal with epilepsy and the uncanny effect that watching an epileptic attack produces on the viewer. Jentsch claims epilepsy is uncanny because it “reveals the human body to the viewer” (14). Every time Nathanael undergoes unbearable stress in “The Sand-Man” he breaks down, ranting the nonsensical “Spin round, wooden doll,” which seems equivalent to an epileptic attack. He loses his senses. During epilepsy the patient experiences “brief periods of absence [...] during which [he or she] does something out of character, as though he were under the control of his unconscious” (Freud qtd. in Royle 151). Freud says that, to a layperson, epilepsy, as well as madness, may be uncanny, for it unveils hidden forces that may be within the observer him/herself (Uncanny 150). In *Macbeth*, if we consider that the tyrant has an epileptic attack when he sees Banquo’s ghost at the banquet, we will agree that he is unmasking more than his body—his soul. He discloses his guilt for having ordered Banquo’s death to all who want to hear.

As regards Banquo’s ghost, something uncanny is that Freud does *not* recognize it as an example of the uncanny, since, for him, we accept that the ghost is “fully entitled to exist” (156). Freud refers to the line between fantasy and reality, connected to the concept of liminality: “many things that would be bound to seem uncanny if they happened in real life are not so in the realm of fiction” (156). For him, “an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary” (150). Jentsch also says this when he discusses the liminality

between animate and inanimate objects, but now Freud brings this “blur” to the realm of fiction. As Robert Young affirms, when Freud talks of literature and “real life,” literature “is blamed for producing the uncertainties” (96).¹²

Another important aspect of the uncanny is the death drive. Although Freud only coins the phrase one year after the publication of “The Uncanny,” in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, “the death drive lurks, as if forbidden to speak its name, everywhere in the 1919 essay” (Royle 86). Since the uncanny involves the return of the repressed, nothing comes back again and again more than the reminder that we are all mortal. Freud claims that “our unconscious is still as unreceptive as ever to the idea of our own mortality” (148), that is, that we have trouble accepting the fact not only that we shall die sooner or later, but also that this is one of the objectives of all life. According to Jentsch, skeletons cause dread because they are on the limit of something inanimate that may come to life, and also because these symbols remind us of death (15). In a way another keepsake of death is photography, since it captures a person in an inanimate moment, and it is not in vain that one of the oldest tricks in movies is to show a photo of someone with his eyes closed, and then, in a second, show this same person with eyes wide open. After all, there is liminality between life and death. Cixous observes: “In the end, death is never anything more than the disturbance of the limits. The impossible is to die” (543).

In *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud mentions that humanity has an instinct for death and destruction (310). But already ten years before, with “The Uncanny,” the death drive appears in its compulsion to repeat (Royle 89). For Royle, “[t]he death instincts (Thanatos) are the opposite of the life instincts (Eros)” (92). Death is also silence, when words can no longer be

¹² Young produces an amusing sentence to demonstrate how Freud, in an attempt to tame literature, making it *less* uncanny, is defeated: “literature not only can’t be taken in by Freud’s theory, but takes him in, takes him for a ride, back to the *heimlich* places” (98).

spoken, and silence is eerie. That is why the most uncanny image in *The Matrix* happens when Neo's mouth disappears from his face, making him incapable of speech. Furthermore, Cixous affirms that death "does not have any form in life" (543). But I would argue that violence is the form of death in life.

Freud calls attention to the need of differentiating the uncanny we experience and that which we read about or watch (154). He attempts a conclusion: "the uncanny element we know from experience arises either when repressed childhood complexes are revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs that have been *surmounted* appear to be once again confirmed," even though "in real life it is sometimes impossible to distinguish between the two species of the uncanny that we have posited" (155). We can say that in the realm of fiction, the one we read about and watch, there are also two categories of the uncanny, both related to violence—the violence that occurs on stage and on screen, right in our faces, and the one that is merely suggested, happening off stage and screen. In describing the terribly violent act of the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, Armstrong, citing Bradley and Johnson, stresses how such an act produces repulsion in the spectator: "The blinding is for Bradley too horrifyingly physical to take place on the stage, which should after all be the site of fantasy, and for Johnson too extravagantly fantastic to take place in drama, which must after all be lifelike" (Uncanny 417-8). Here the two scholars, Bradley and Johnson, argue whether what Shakespeare wrote on a page should happen on or off stage, although this is a decision that *every* production based on a Shakespearean playtext has to make.

Violence taken to its limit results in death. Death is, after all, at the core of violence, for violence poses a threat to life. When violence hurts physically, it calls attention to our mortality.

Most threats to life are made through violence; that is, if a person wishes someone dead, this person might not want his nemesis to die peacefully, in his sleep, but in a gruesome way. Cixous links the uncanny with death in this way: “The direct figure of the uncanny is the Ghost. The Ghost is the fiction of our relationship to death, concretized by the specter in literature. The relationship to death reveals *the highest degree* of the *Unheimliche*” (542). Violence can be seen as a ghost, both as a warning and as a reminder of death.

Depending on the time and place, violence can be uncanny, that is, strangely familiar to some cultures and strange to others, but even the threat of violence produces uncertainty, because it raises questions about our mortality. Jentsch mentions that children have little experience in many areas of life, so a lot is new to them, producing fear. A way parents have of solving this problem is making the child familiar with the thing that causes fear. Knowing it, mastering it, the child will not be fearful any longer (9). One uncanny aspect of *Macbeth* is that the two boys in the playtext—Fleance and Macduff’s son—do not seem very afraid once their lives are threatened by violence. Macduff’s son even stands up to one of his murderers, calling him a “shag-ear’d villain” (4.2.81). It seems clear that the boys’ lack of fear is related to their familiarity with violence. Violent acts are nothing new to them. Nathanael, as the child in “The Sand-Man,” does not have the courage of the boys in *Macbeth*. But then again, he does not live in a warrior society.

In *The Culture of Violence: Essays on Tragedy and History*, Francis Barker claims that “the way in which *Macbeth* installs violence in itself as a text is as significant as the empirical violence of the action. It is not just that violence is depicted, but that the text is instinct with violence in its very constitution as tragedy. Violence is a critical and not only a descriptive term”

(59). However, even as a descriptive term, violence does not hold the same meaning for everybody. For instance, violence by the State is rarely seen as violence, while violence against the State is usually demonized. Putting it another way, if a social movement like the MST (movement of the landless) invades a farm or Congress, it obviously stands for violence, chaos, disorder. If the police have to kill twenty members of the MST to halt any invasion, then they are merely enforcing the law.

Both Beatrice Hanssen and Anna Stegh Camati cite Hannah Arendt to say that there is a difference between power and violence. Whereas violence has the capacity of destroying power, it cannot create it. Camati adds, “It is the loss of power that makes tyrants succumb to the temptation to substitute violence for power and to implement the use of terror to maintain domination” (342). That is, violence can be seen as a supplement of the anxiety of not having power. Macbeth’s reign starts and ends with violence, from the usurper killing the king to being decapitated himself. And he surely makes use of violence to stay in power, although Shakespeare is clear in showing that Macbeth’s means of domination are always feeble, with traitors and cowards abounding in his reign. The catch is that the playtext does not problematize Duncan’s reign as one of violence. According to Barker, “subversive or revolutionary violence is consistently demonised, while ruling-class violence [...] receives the mystificatory label of metaphysical and secular-historical ‘order’” (89). Certainly there is violence before Macbeth becomes king, but this violence is only narrated to us, not shown. We do not get to see the violence Macbeth commits in the name of law and order to maintain Duncan in the throne. We only hear, albeit in very graphic language, that Macbeth cuts his enemies from “the nave to th’ chops” (1.2.22). This violence is legitimate, sanctioned by the king, and admired by all. But the

violence he engages in after becoming king is nearly all on stage, if we are to trust the stage directions that appear on the page. Except for the killing of Duncan, Banquo's murder happens on stage, as do Macduff's family massacre and the battles in the end. This is how Shakespeare gives more force to "illegitimate" violence. Barker cites Marx in his famous quote about history and tradition: history "makes possible the future, it remembers. [Tradition] weighs like a nightmare; it forgets" (218). Would onstage violence, then, be the one that remembers, or at least the one that leaves more traces in our minds?

Hard to say. Barker has this to observe about *Titus*, although it can also be applied to *Macbeth*: "the clear and simple expulsion of the savage beyond the limits of the civil seeks to locate safely 'out there' the violence which it codes as barbarism but which may in fact belong dangerously 'in here'. But in making violence into the spectacle of the exotic, it serves in a curious way also to domesticate that violence, or at least to render violence [...] *merely* theatrical" (191) (or merely discursive?). "Out there" may as well be the violence committed off stage, whereas "in here", the one on stage. Macbeth the savage can be killed, but the violence does not die with him, just as it was not born with him. For Freud man is close to the beast, to the savage, with an aggressiveness that can either be tamed or unleashed, but never made to go away. We live in mutual hostility, which threatens civilization with disintegration (Freud *Civilization* 138). Macbeth's instinctual drives are not stopped by civilization, certainly, but are Macduff's? Or even Duncan's? Duncan's real difference in comparison to Macbeth is that the former never gets his hands bloody. He has people do his dirty work in his name. But so does Macbeth. After he becomes king, he only picks up a sword to defend his life. Other than that, he

can simply instruct his “secret police” to carry on the executions against his personal enemies, who are also, by the way, the enemies of the State.

No matter where we look at *Macbeth*, violence keeps coming back to the story, featuring a strange repetitiveness. Ghosts appear and disappear, Macbeth’s death drive cannot be controlled, and the witches’ wicked prophecies all come true, one by one, as in a *déjà vu*. The uncanny in the playtext comes to life mainly through violence. And this violence can have a powerful effect when presented on stage and on screen.

Before I conclude this chapter, I wish to narrate a personal experience that has nothing to do with violence but plenty to do with the uncanny. A few months ago, before going to sleep, I asked my dead father to help me with this chapter. Though I do not believe in ghosts or in the afterlife, I sometimes indulge my own wishful thinking to trust that my father will send me some sign or words of advice. When I returned to my room, before turning off the TV, I decided to surf channels to see what was playing. And, at exactly the same second I clicked on one channel, Inspector Clouseau from the second part of the *Pink Panther* series just happened to mention *Macbeth*. That film has absolutely nothing to do with Shakespeare, mind you. But that was a very uncanny moment for me, as if my father had returned from the dead just to motivate me. Of course, not even after hearing a sign from heaven did I get my act together and stop procrastinating. The truth is that perhaps we need violence to see the uncanny clearly. Like Nathanael, who only really sees Olympia through Coppola’s glasses, we might need those same glasses of violence to be able to decipher the uncanny. If, that is, it *can* be deciphered. The uncanny and the violence in filmic and theatrical productions of *Macbeth* seem to beg to be deciphered.

CHAPTER 4

“IT WILL HAVE BLOOD, THEY SAY”¹⁴: AN ANALYSIS OF A BRITISH STAGING OF *MACBETH*

As Marjorie Garber points out, the playtext of *Macbeth* has several connections to the uncanny: “As much as it seeks to repress this acknowledgment, the play’s *subject* is the uncanny and the forbidden—and its ancillary, covering subject is the need to repress or deny that fact. There *is* something uncanny going on here” (90). However, not only the play’s subject is uncanny, but also the history of the staging of the play itself. Its legend as a cursed play probably began in 1672, with its first production outside England, when the Dutch actor who played the title character used a real dagger to kill the actor playing Duncan, who was married to the actress playing Lady Macbeth. Much later, in 1937, several strange and unhappy events happened to Laurence Olivier when he staged the play, such as losing his voice, and almost being hit by a weight that fell from the scenery. During the 1942 production with John Gielgud, four people died, including two of the witches and the actor who played Duncan—apparently, not a safe role. In a dress rehearsal of a Stanislavski production of *Macbeth* that was eventually cancelled, the person inside the prompt box died right there. In 1975, still in the rehearsal stage, Charlton Heston suffered an automobile accident (Garber 88-9). With all this misfortune surrounding *Macbeth*, it is not in vain that many actors refuse to call it by its name, and instead, as already mentioned, prefer to label it, famously, “the Scottish play.”

But bad luck was nowhere to be seen in Trevor Nunn’s 1976 acclaimed production. In fact, it seems accurate to affirm that Nunn was fortunate with the Scottish play. He first staged *Macbeth* with the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1974, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The production, with Nicol Williamson and Helen Mirren as the tyrannical couple, had elaborate costumes and was fairly well-received. Critics praised the “sexual electricity” between the couple, but

¹⁴ *Macbeth*, 3.4.121.

complained that Duncan was *too* saintly, and such a martyr that he was even literally blind. They also disliked the violent scenes, such as Banquo's murder—“all but invisible and messily staged”—and the fact that Macduff's son was a baby, not a talkative son (Coveney 18). In 1975 Nunn took the production to London's Aldwych Theatre, where these “mistakes” were corrected: Duncan was no longer blind, and the baby became a boy, although his lines remained cut.

Some of the values of that production lingered when Nunn decided to stage the play once again (for the third consecutive year) in 1976, with different actors (Ian McKellen and Judi Dench in the title roles), at The Other Place, in Stratford. The theater was much smaller, offering seats for fewer than 200 spectators, so there was no need for scenery. In the DVD extras of the version made for TV, Ian McKellen calls the 1976-78 run “Shakespeare on the cheap,” with costume changes on stage, no scenery, and sound effects performed by the actors themselves. All the costumes cost 250 pounds, and only Duncan's robe from the 1974 production was re-utilized (and it does look dislocated, as if it clearly belonged to another production).



Fig. 1. A scene in the beginning of Nunn's 1976 production: Macbeth kneels to a saintly Duncan, while the thanes inside the circle observe. The contrast between Duncan's white clothes and the others' dark garments is evident

According to McKellen in the DVD extras, the playtext of *Macbeth* generally presents three main problems: first, what should be done to the witches? Are they witches or women? How much do they really influence Macbeth? The tyrant certainly believes the witches to be real, but the audience should not, depending on the production. The second problem for McKellen is whether the play should be set in Scotland, with the need of Scottish accents and costumes. And the third problem is the fifth act, in which Macbeth cannot take control over the play because, while he is delivering great speeches, the action keeps cutting to the invading army saying “rather dull things.” Nunn's production tried to solve this crux by choosing to have Macbeth and the army on stage at the same time. This idea of disappointment because Macbeth cannot dominate the whole action in the end matches what the actor told Marvin Rosenberg: that he (McKellen) saw Macbeth as a “superstar,” “an overreacher formed to grasp beyond what most men dared not try to reach” (Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* 195).

The scenery contained only a chalk-demarkated black circle and about fourteen boxes, on which the actors sat. Each performance lasted about 135 minutes and, as is usually the case with *Macbeth*, there was no intermission (Kliman 100). As Benedict Nightingale pointed out at the time, “Trevor Nunn’s new *Macbeth* occurs in a magic circle, within whispering distance of the furthest spectator. You feel, for once, that you’re supping rather intimately with horrors, instead of listening to after-dinner speakers at a showy banquet somewhere on the horizon” (382). Although Nightingale says the 1976 production offers the same reading as Nunn’s 1974 run, the praise it received was unprecedented. For Gareth Lloyd Evans, “The result was that the experience of the audience in this tiny barn was exactly what it should be, but rarely is—a sense of almost unbearable proximity to, and identification with, the world of the play: terror, apprehension, pity counterpointing with revulsion, an almost physical awareness of great dramatic poetry beating like a tide upon the play’s great bank and shoal of time” (193). Evans even complimented the production for the often unsuccessful scene between Macduff and Malcolm, because this time their circling around each other created tension. J. W. Lambert called

Nunn's *Macbeth* “the most fulfilling production of this dark and difficult work that I have ever seen” (39). According to Judith Cook, Nunn “has honed down his previous versions with their black masses and impediments to a taut, economic and disciplined whole. It is absolutely compulsive,” making it “a stunning production” (35). Robert Cushman remarked, “In this balancing of joy with horror, of lucidity with mystery, the production comes closer to balancing the Shakespearean equation than any other I have seen” (4).

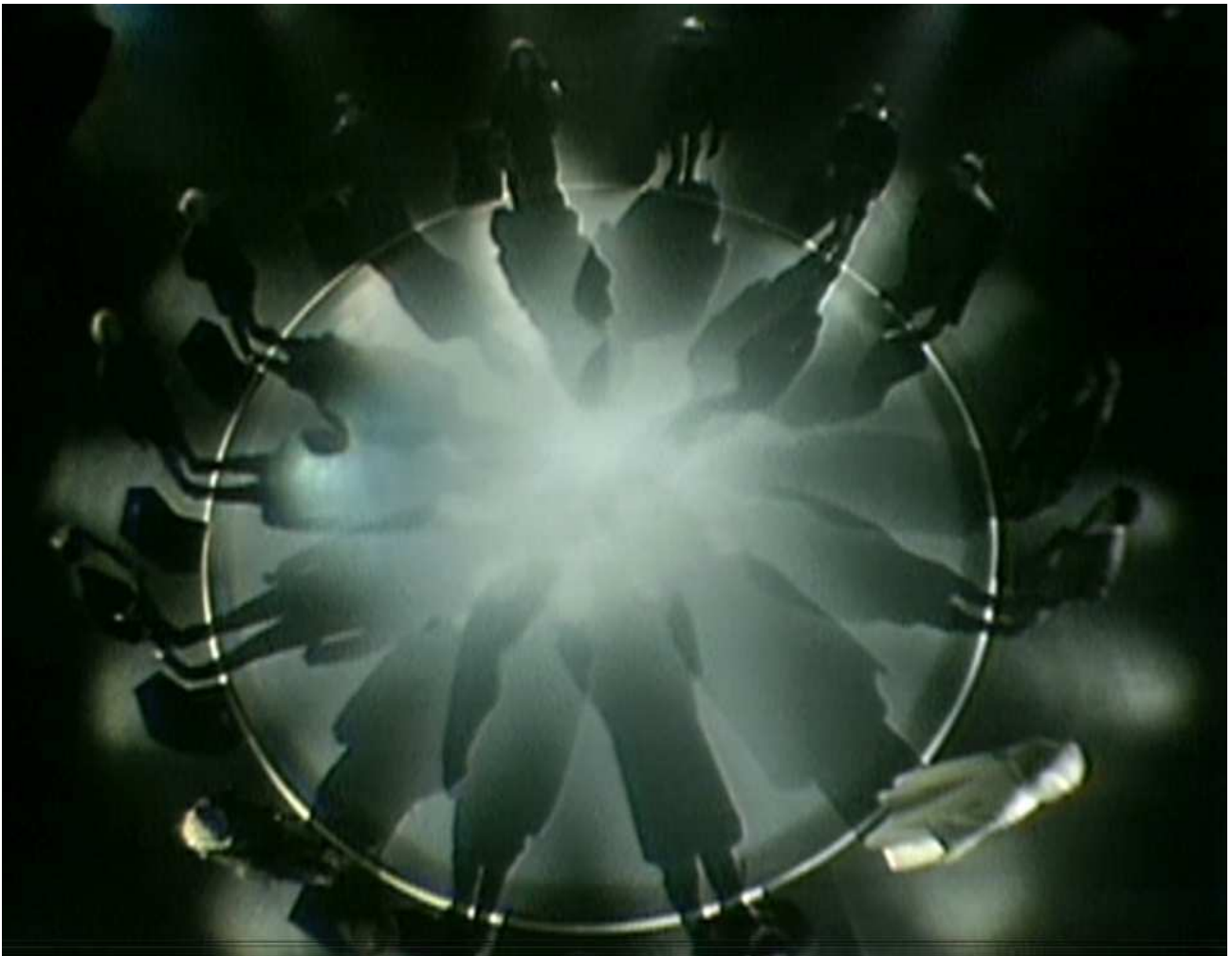


Fig. 2. The circle in the beginning of the TV version. Duncan, on the right, stands out

The *Times* critic, however, did have some reservations, although he believed that, with more

practice, the production could be “unforgettable”:

Mr. Nunn stages a battle of the sacred against the profane. At least it begins that way, with organ music and a sanctimonious hush emphasizing the legitimacy of Duncan’s rule [...]. With actors at first rising from the boxes and assuming their characters as they step in to the circle the performance suggests ritual reenactment, a just and potentially exciting interpretation. Yet muddled costumes, vaguely modern, and a bureaucratic briskness to the acting quickly defuse the initial impact. The production loses its direction [...]. Not until Macbeth seizes power and commissions the murder of Banquo do the differing styles combine. From that point, however, thanks to Ian McKellen’s cold, subdued and intense performance as Macbeth, the production is ceaselessly fascinating. (Chaillet)

Other critics, such as Roger Warren and Marvin Rosenberg, disliked Ian McDiarmid's acting as stand-up comedian representing the Porter, for he "evoked the wrong kind of laughter" (Rosenberg *Macbeth* 196). Warren also criticized Nunn for “all his emphasis on black magic versus white purity”, and complained about how the king was constituted: “Duncan was so mannered and so infuriatingly holy that he simply cried out for assassination” (Theory 180).

Nevertheless, praise for the production, especially for McKellen and Dench, far surpassed any negative feedback. Another great star of this production was surely the place itself. Peter Holland affirms that, because of the intimacy of the stage and its proximity to the public, a stare by McKellen or a swinging light bulb could do wonders (Shakespeare 211). Bernice W. Kliman describes:

In a small barn-like theatre, the audience of no more than two hundred at each performance sat close up, three deep on three sides on stage level (with no raised platform) and two deep in galleries above. Actors (who frequently and sometimes tellingly doubled roles) variously remained on stage or exited and then returned, sitting around the black, chalk-demarked, twenty-foot diameter circle that was the playing space. Seated on upended packing crates, they observed the behaviour of those in the lit centre, heightening by their attention the audience's concentration, enhancing the ritual aspects of the production. Depending on the level of light, the audience could see the watching actors and each other as well as the players, or they could see only the players, captured in spotlights [...]. (100)

The production was so well received that in 1979, after its two-year run, it was adapted by Philip Casson to TV "without loss to either theatrical or telegenic values" (Rothwell History 110). In

the DVD, McKellen states that Nunn's intention was to “photograph the text,” putting “talking heads” so they would look directly into the camera, with plenty of close-ups, as TV often does. According to him, while performing at The Other Place, he insisted on looking at each spectator and saying at least one line while staring at each person in the audience. For TV, all he needed to do was look straight into the camera. He adds that, because cast and crew had been involved in more than one hundred performances of *Macbeth*, there was some kind of “collective memory” that made it easier for them to recreate the experience in a studio. Even though Nunn considers the TV version inferior to the stage production (Kliman 101), it is still very faithful, and a good way of trying to recreate what happened on stage. For Rothwell, it is “arguably one of the greatest successes in the history of televised Shakespeare” (History 110).

The production's overall context was rather interesting. When Nunn's staging was being rehearsed, several important events shook the world. Opposition to the Vietnam War in the United States was increasing, due to the influence of the hippie culture and its defense of world peace. The Watergate scandal in 1974 made Nixon resign. Huge conflicts affected the Middle East, generating the Palestinian terrorist attack in the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich. The oil crisis started when Arab nations refused to provide oil to nations that supported Israel in the war against Syria, Egypt and Iraq, and culminated in the Arab-Israeli War in 1973. This caused recession in several areas and was considered by many the first world event to have lasting effects since the Great Depression (Hakes, par. 1). Moreover, the advent of feminism, partly caused by the popularization of the contraceptive pill, reached its peak. Great Britain was having problems with labor unions and IRA bombings when, in 1975, Margaret Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party (she would become Prime Minister in 1979). The conservative backlash that would dominate the world in the early 1980s, with Thatcher in England and Reagan in the U.S., was already underway when McKellen and Dench shone on stage at The Other Place.

It is ironic that one of the characteristics of this era was the decline of romance, and nevertheless McKellen and Dench portrayed a very loving couple. Because of the general pessimism of the early and mid-1970s, with divorce rates rocketing and women working outside their homes and putting their families in second place, romance was not popular during the period. As Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner put it, “Romance is a traditional representational mode for sanctifying fairly limited heterosexual possibilities; it is conservative to the extent that it enacts male power fantasies and legitimates the positing of the patriarchal family as the one normative sociosexual ideal and institution. The decline of romance as an ideal, unproblematic, always successful model can therefore be seen as an effect of the critique of conservative institutions during the era” (151). By contrast, it is not only the Macbeths who, in the beginning of Nunn's production, cannot keep their hands off each other. Kliman notes that the community as a whole in that production is very affective, always touching and hugging, so much so that “there is a special poignancy often lacking in other productions when [Macbeth] claims that he should not expect 'troops of friends'” (103). Thus, even if Macbeth and his wife are very physically close to each other, this love is extended to others in the production, definitely an influence of community sharing in the late 1960s. Too bad all this affection ends in blood. After all, *Macbeth* is a playtext about murder after murder, and therefore fitting to be staged in the 1970s (what part of the twentieth century was not a period of crisis and war?).

As is known, it is Lady Macbeth who persuades her husband to bring into the domestic sphere killings that traditionally belong to the battlefield. In Macbeth's world, home is the place of women and children, and the battlefield is the place where men kill other men. As R. A. Foakes remarks, “Lady Macbeth makes it seem an easy matter for one so experienced to kill a sleeping old man, but the play brings out the discordances between open violence in battle and secret violence in murder” (155). By convincing Macbeth to kill Duncan in their own house, Lady Macbeth, who in an earlier moment asks to be “unsexed” (1.5.41), breaks that barrier between what belongs outside and what belongs inside.

Violence becomes homely, *heimliche*, and this same violence will later haunt Macduff's family, and invade Macbeth's castle. In Nunn's production, because of the absence of scenery and props, everything seems to be homely. What happens inside the black circle, which can almost be said to represent a womb, belongs to the domestic sphere, making Lady Macbeth's words, "What, in our house?", and Banquo's reply, "Too cruel any where" (2.3.87), even more memorable.

In the playtext, Duncan's murder occurs offstage, probably because Shakespeare could not show a king being killed, or maybe so we would not hate Macbeth too soon in the story. If, for James L. Calderwood, Duncan's assassination represents an incestuous sexual act (89), for Bloom it connotes sexual violence (though not necessarily incest), and that is why his stabbings happen offstage (Shakespeare 530-1). He then proceeds to say, "That image is central in the play, and Shakespeare takes care to keep it phantasmagoric by not allowing us to see the actual murder of Duncan" (Shakespeare 537). And Francis Barker maintains that "Although for ideologico-aesthetic reasons the assassination of Duncan does not actually take place on stage, and in this sense is not represented, it nonetheless occupies a place in *Macbeth* whose importance can hardly be overstated" (59).

In Nunn's production, the dagger, like Banquo's ghost later on, is only of the mind. I find it strange that Macbeth would mention the bell, "Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell, / That summons thee to to heaven or to hell" (2.1.63). There is something uncanny in the suggestion that such a pious king as Duncan might go to hell. McKellen, as Macbeth, pulls his sleeves up, and slowly but determinately enters a place so dark that it resembles a womb. The walls "are separated by a man-wide slit, entrance to the scene of King Duncan's murder, through which Macduff pursues Macbeth and finally emerges with death-dealing bloodstained hands and weapons (no severed head)" (Pigott-Smith). While Macbeth performs "the deed," a nervous Lady Macbeth laughs when she says "Whether they [the guards] live or die." By laughing at such an unfortunate moment, even if it is more of a hysterical laughter, the Lady shows signs that her madness could have started even before this turning point in

their lives. Madness, and also liminality,¹⁵ which she demonstrates by being on the verge of sanity and insanity, are traits of the uncanny. Many of the opposites in this scene, such as *heaven/hell*, and *live/die*, reinforce the idea of liminality.

In this production, even before the horror has become homely, invading the domestic sphere, there is a chance that violence was lurking in the horizon, with or without the witches' or Lady Macbeth's interference. When Macbeth sees Banquo at night, for instance, before heading to Duncan's chamber, his first act is to draw a dagger. The same happens when he goes to see who was knocking, and encounters Macduff. Macbeth already comes armed with a knife. If the place is safe, if Duncan's kingdom was not in crisis before Macbeth becomes a bloody tyrant, why should men have to walk armed in their own houses? Banquo's words, "Too cruel any where," resonate here. It is as if terror is common even in the domestic sphere, and even before Macbeth's reign of terror.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

When Macbeth and his wife reunite, after "the deed," Kliman points out that "directors have to decide what to do about the fact that Lady Macbeth does not remark on the bloody knives for some

¹⁵ Nicholas Royle explains that the word *liminality* originates from the Latin word *limen*, which means *threshold* (136). Liminality, as part of the uncanny, is a sense that does not respect borders, that is between two spaces, inside and outside, almost a limbo. The liminal is uncertain, ambiguous, and could be transitional, as in Lady Macbeth's liminality between sanity and insanity, and between masculinity and femininity, at least in Nunn's production.

forty lines after Macbeth's entrance" (114). In Nunn's production this is achieved by having Judi Dench look only at her husband's very bloody hands, not at the daggers. When she does notice the daggers, which should have been left at the scene of the crime, she calls her husband "infirm of purpose," because he does not want to go back inside Duncan's chamber. She pronounces the words with some fury, which produces his hands to shake, making the daggers clank. After she returns the daggers to Duncan's chamber, she attempts to convince Macbeth by using what, to Kliman, looks like a rehearsed speech, but is unsuccessful: "Totally self-absorbed, he will never listen to her again" (114).



Fig. 5. Blood in the 1970s: unusually red in Nunn's TV version and in *Carrie* (Fig. 6)

I must say, though this is not based on scientific observation, that blood has changed in both theatrical and film productions over the decades. We can see by the 1979 TV version of Nunn's production that the blood used to illustrate Duncan's murder is very red. This used to be the color of blood in the 1970s. Of course, blood *is* red, but during the 1970s, its color was vastly exaggerated, making it *too* red. Maybe the most notorious example would be Brian De Palma's *Carrie*, a film entirely about blood, and it is also from 1976, the same year as Nunn's stage production. The film starts

with menstrual blood running down a horror-stricken teenager, Carrie. In her moment of glory, when she is nominated prom queen, a group of teens drop a bucket of pig blood on her, while she is on stage. Blood in the films from 1990s onwards has become more realistic, less shockingly red, verging on violet, as any recent film can attest. Blood in Nunn's production, therefore, is also a product of its time.

In Nunn's *Macbeth*, Macduff goes to Duncan's room and returns breathless, with difficulty to express "Horror! Horror! Horror!" Kliman sustains that, in the 1976 production, as soon as Duncan's murder is discovered, the group is united (108-9). For her, the decision by Duncan's sons to run away is an interpretative crux for directors. Why would Malcolm and Donalbain leave, if they are not treated with suspicion or hostility? One of the reasons she posits for their decision to run away is that Malcolm is weak (108-9). We can see the boys' fragility because both have their shirts off. As in Polanski's film, nudity is used to signify vulnerability (more on that in Chapter 6).

According to Calderwood, in the playtext, Macbeth, who has an immortality project, "wants less to destroy Duncan than to substitute for him, to become him" (92-3). Macbeth tries to swallow his enemies, and for that Calderwood compares him to a cannibal: "Taking the titles of those who die, he feeds off death" (79). Cannibalism is certainly very uncanny, for it is unnatural and strange to eat the flesh of our own species, and yet no one can say that this same flesh is not very familiar to us. In Nunn's production, because the line about Duncan's murder taking place in an unruly night, in which horses ate each other, was cut out, the reference to Macbeth's "cannibalism" is not so clear.

The scene of Banquo's murder is very brief, both in the playtext and in Nunn's production. In the playtext, there are only two stage directions, and nobody knows for sure if it was really Shakespeare or a later hand who put them there. They consist of "They [the three murderers] assault Banquo" and "[Banquo] dies. Fleance escapes." David Worster quotes Muir, who quotes the nineteenth-century editor Alexander Dyce, who says that the torch may well be a torch bearer. This would help explain how three men are not able to kill a child, Fleance (373).



Fig. 7. Banquo and Fleance try to contain their masked murderer in Nunn's stage production

In the 1976 production, Banquo appears to be suspicious when Macbeth asks him if Fleance will accompany him to the banquet. This will be the last time we see Banquo, since his ghost, like the dagger Macbeth sees earlier, is also “of the mind.” One of the murderers is Seyton (in Polanski’s film, it is Rosse). It is interesting that this production creates rivalry between Lady Macbeth and Seyton, whose name reminds us of *Satan*. They exchange competitive glances, and Lady Macbeth acts as if she were jealous of him. She is right, for Macbeth has brushed her aside. But she does not seem particularly affectionate towards Banquo either. In the only photograph I have of this scene, Banquo is held by two men, and one of them stabs him. In the film version, Banquo is able to save Fleance, but he falls and is furiously stabbed to death by two murderers (the camera only focuses on the murderers, not on Banquo). Seyton makes the murderers stop the mindless stabbing so he can ask them about Fleance. The murderers go after Fleance, and when Seyton turns Banquo around, the corpse is quite bloody, especially his face. What stands out in the TV version, even more than the blood, is Banquo's one open eye (the other is hidden by shadows).

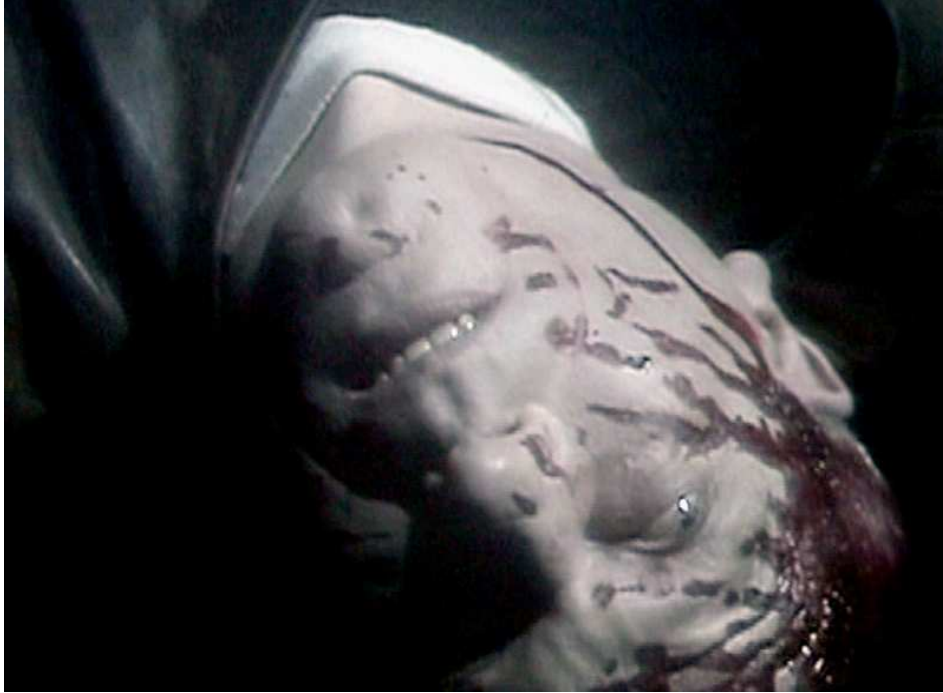


Fig. 8

This last close-up of Banquo, at least in the video version, is uncanny because it reminds us of liminality. The open eye, even if it is lifeless, is a symbol of the living. Plenty about the uncanny has to do with eyes (as in “The Sand-Man,” which is obsessed about that body organ). As Freud maintains, “One of the uncanniest and most widespread superstitions is fear of the ‘evil eye’ [...]. Anyone who possesses something precious, but fragile, is afraid of the envy of others, to the extent that he projects on them the envy he would have felt in their place” (146-7). Thus, Banquo's single eye works as a projection of Macbeth's evil eye for what Macbeth envies the most about him—namely, his succession of heirs to the throne, starting with Fleance, who is certainly “precious, but fragile.” Also, the eye is reminiscent of the I, the ego. It is fitting that Banquo's last words, before his final “O slave!”, ask Fleance to revenge him.



Fig. 9. Parallelism: an impatient Macduff hurts a drunken Porter (who is seen as inadequate by the critics)



Fig. 10. Banquo is stabbed by two masked men. His face echoes the Porter's expression in 2.3, creating an uncanny déjà-vu effect

However, Banquo keeps coming back. He is the memory that refuses to be repressed (Lady Macbeth's washing her hands and shouting “Out, damn’d spot! out, I say!” is another). G. St. John Stott argues that Macbeth definitely sees Banquo’s ghost in 3.4 of the playtext, and that the ghost has to be Banquo’s, not Duncan’s. According to him, Macbeth no longer hallucinates by Act 3, unlike he did with

the dagger in the first act. The ghost appears to let Macbeth know that there will be justice. For Stott, when Macbeth starts talking about the ghost, his dinner guests think he is referring to Duncan, since Banquo's death has not been reported. And the *audience* may also think it is Duncan's (335). But it has to be Banquo's because his is a contradictory figure, contrary to Duncan, who represents purity. I object to that interpretation because, in my mind, I never had any doubt that the ghost was Banquo's, not Duncan's, for Macbeth has just mentioned his friend. Banquo's absence in that specific moment makes him much more important than anything related to the memory of Duncan. Macbeth asks the murderer (in Nunn's production, Seyton) if "Banquo's safe," to which Seyton replies "safe in a ditch" (3.4.24). But Banquo is not safe, for his son is still in danger, and nor is Macbeth safe.

Worster points out that the option for the non-appearance of Banquo's ghost, showing that this only exists in Macbeth's mind, was not first used in Nunn's production. It was adopted two centuries before, in a 1794 production with John Kemble and Sarah Siddons. But audiences did not like this choice, and the ghost had to be re-introduced (364). For Worster, "the absence of the ghost resonates within a post-Freudian culture" (364). In the DVD, McKellen argues that the ghost exists only in Macbeth's head, as does the dagger. Huston Diehl agrees: "Like Lady Macbeth's bloody hands in the sleepwalking scene, Macbeth's vision of Banquo is especially terrifying because no one else sees it; it is invisible" (200). Of the five productions I analyze, Nunn's is the only one in which Banquo's ghost does not physically appear. Is this scene in Nunn's production any more violent, frightening and uncanny because of the ghost's absence? The answer certainly depends on those who are watching. At any rate, both options—Macbeth looking at a bloody corpse, and Macbeth staring in horror at an empty stool—are uncanny enough.



Fig. 11. Macbeth sees Banquo's (invisible) ghost for the first time

In this RSC production, in the banquet scene, “the circle of crates is repositioned with guests moving them into the centre of the stage” (Kliman 115). In the beginning of the scene, Macbeth and Seyton discuss the aftermath of Banquo's murder while “the humble host” distributes a cup of wine for all to drink. Lady Macbeth avidly watches their interaction, seemingly upset that she has been exchanged for Seyton. When she says “My royal lord,” it is meant as an interruption to the chatter between Macbeth and Seyton, something that has been bothering her. When Macbeth first sees Banquo he is relatively calm, more in a state of shock than fear. He takes a while to stand up. He looks at the absent space between the two thanes and, for an instant, will not take his eyes off that space.



Fig. 12. After seeing Banquo's ghost for the second time, Macbeth has an epileptic attack, and his wife tries to restrain him

Throughout the scene, he repeats the word *strange* four times, as it happens in the playtext. He mentions having a “strange infirmity,” one that Lady Macbeth previously describes as “my lord is often thus, and hath been from his youth” (3.4.52). But what strange infirmity are Macbeth and his wife referring to—epilepsy, or seeing ghosts of people he has executed? When Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost for the second time, “with his dagger he stabs violently at the empty stool, his face twisting. His saliva mixed with the reddish wine, looking bloodied, drools out of his mouth. Ironically, he falls into a seizure; just such a one as [Lady Macbeth] had used to excuse him upon his first vision” (Kliman 116). Macbeth's epileptic attack, as performed by McKellen, is indeed terrifying and even disgusting. He spits saliva, which hangs on his chin, making his physical appearance compensate in eeriness for the lack of a bloodied ghost. Freud observes that epilepsy and madness to a layperson may be uncanny, for they reveal hidden forces that may be within the observer him/herself (150). According to Jentsch, epilepsy is uncanny because it “reveals the human body to the viewer” (14). In Nunn's *Macbeth*, an epileptic attack exposes more than his body—his soul.

In this scene, Lady Macbeth's reactions, as played by Judi Dench, are extremely relevant. She crumbles as she watches her husband crumble. She cannot contain her surprise and horror when she realizes that Banquo's absence is somehow related to Macbeth. She tries to restrain him and herself, for this Lady is fragile from the start, at the same time attempting to keep appearances. When Macbeth says about Banquo, after his first vision, "Would he were here!" (the irony being, of course, that he *is* here), she opens her mouth and recoils in shock, having realized that Macbeth's state and Banquo's absence are morbidly connected. She covers Macbeth's mouth when Rosse asks "What sights, my lord?", and slaps the thane's hand that tries to grab Macbeth's hand. And she breaks up, crying and shouting, trying to make the guests leave: "Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once." In the end of the scene, still crying after a silent scream, she is physically and mentally exhausted. As Kliman attests, the only difference in the attire she used in the beginning of the story is a small crown (114). This is all Lady Macbeth has gained by becoming queen. The distance that has come between the couple is visible (unlike Banquo's ghost, who is invisible). Macbeth barely looks at her. When she falls, in the end of the scene, he helps her stand up and hugs her, but is too absorbed in his own thoughts.



Fig. 13. Judi Dench's Lady reacts to her husband's insanity during the banquet scene

As much as Lady Macbeth is shocked to discover that her husband has killed Banquo, she stops crying for a moment when, at the end of scene 4, Macbeth reveals that he has servants spying in every house. She might be realizing that the terror she helped bring into the domestic sphere is now running loose. And she will later be concerned with Lady Macduff, for she asks about her whereabouts. Thus, there is an evident connection between the two ladies, Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff. In the playtext, and in most productions, arguably the most shocking murder in *Macbeth* is that of Macduff's whole family. This is the moment in which Macbeth definitely becomes a serial killer, ordering the murder of innocent women and children. Before, when he hires men to kill Banquo and Fleance, also a child, it could be argued that he is trying to defend his permanence on the throne. But Macduff's family poses no threat to him. Worse still, he knows that Macduff has fled to England and that his wife and children are alone and helpless. In the playtext, this terrible massacre occupies all of 4.2 and basically happens onstage: Lady Macduff discusses with Rosse why her husband has abandoned her; Rosse leaves; the Lady exchanges some bitter banter with her son about his father; a messenger comes to warn her and flees; murderers appear at her castle and stab Macduff's son; and the last stage direction in the scene reads "Exit Lady Macduff crying 'Murder!' and pursued by the Murderers."



Fig. 14. The only photograph related to 4. 2 from Nunn's staging: Angus warns Lady Macduff

I have found only one photograph of this scene in Nunn' production. However, based on the 1979 film made for TV which, by all accounts, closely follows the 1976-78 stage production, both Lady Macduff and her son wear white. She wears a crucifix around her neck, and we hear bells on the background, so the impression is that she might be in a convent, not in her castle. Rosse is dressed in black to serve as a contrast to her purity. Since this production, like its stage predecessor, only cut ten percent of the lines in the playtext, the scene remains quite wordy—as Stephen M. Buhler points out, paying close attention to the language is an RSC trademark (83). The dialogue between Rosse and the Lady in the beginning of the scene, for one, is intact. While the boy cleans a sword, perhaps unknowingly getting ready to fight, the two adults talk about Macduff's leaving Scotland. Rosse seems concerned, whereas the Lady looks conformed, albeit sad. He starts the speech “But cruel are the times when we are traitors / And do not know ourselves” (18-21) almost as an aside, with great feeling, and the Lady touches his arm in a sympathetic move as he finishes.

When Rosse says that, if he stays, “It would be my disgrace and your discomfort” (28), the Riverside edition of the playtext explains that it means “I should weep.” This is not the way I read it, and it is not how it is played in Nunn's production. I understand Rosse's line as an indication that Lady Macduff may say more awful things about her husband, and later on she might regret having said them. Ian McDiarmid's acting favors this interpretation, for he looks ashamed, rather than about to weep, after the Lady tells him her boy is fatherless. McDiarmid opens his arms when he says “I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,” and then leaves abruptly. John Barton observes that a short line like “I take my leave at once” (line 29) usually represents a pause, and the actor needs to choose between pausing before or after delivering it (31). McDiarmid chooses to break it in the middle, after “I take my leave,” giving it a larger sense of urgency.

Rosse, as interpreted by Ian McDiarmid, indeed does not know himself. We could see him less as a traitor than as a typical politician, who changes sides according to the tide. Ian McKellen

comments in the DVD extras of *Macbeth* that when the Prime Minister of Britain, Ryan Wilson, saw a performance in 1976, he said that the most familiar character in it was Rosse, who takes advantages of political situations. Rosse is a character that, even more than others, has to be shaped by the actor. A. C. Bradley observes that all the characters in the play except Macbeth and his Lady are sketches, not individualized, and interchangeable (326). For Bloom “[t]he drunken porter, Macduff’s little son, and Lady Macduff are more vivid in their brief appearances than are all the secondary males in the play, who are wrapped in a common grayness” (Shakespeare 517). Harry Berger Jr. admits that Rosse, “in spite of his predominance, remains essentially a choric figure, the voice of the thanes” (87). It is important to note that the thanes in this production do not look fit to fight. They are politicians rather than warriors, polite rather than rough men of action, as emphasized by Kliman (106). Thus, in Nunn’s production both Rosse and later in the scene another thane, Angus, are decorous enough to be worried about Lady Macduff’s fate, but, of course, not brave enough to hang around to defend her as danger approaches (McDiarmid even grimaces when he pronounces the word *fear* on line 5).



Fig. 15

In the playtext, the second part of scene 2 starts when Rosse leaves, and it involves a conversation between Lady Macduff and her son, in which she tells him his father is dead, and he rejects this idea. The boy's lines provide a bit of comic relief in a moment filled with horror, because we know what is going to happen, since we have heard Macbeth's command to invade the castle and "give to th'edge of th'sword / [Macduff's] wife, his babes, and all the unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line" (4.1.151-3). For Bradley, the boy "is perhaps the only person in the tragedy who provokes a smile" (333). He is witty—maybe *too* witty for his age—as he beats his mother at every turn. All she can do is call him "poor bird" and "poor monkey."

In Nunn's production, from what we see in the TV film, there is no laughter between mother and son during this chat, only sad, shy smiles. The Lady tries to embrace her child as she tells him about his father, but he disentangles himself, for he does not want to hear his mother promoting Macduff's death or calling him a traitor. About twelve lines are cut here, but the scene is still long, interrupted only by the arrival of a nervous messenger, who is none other than a thane, Angus. As soon as he appears, the Lady immediately stands up and hides the boy behind her. Meanwhile, the little boy gets his sword, in an instinctive act of protection. The Lady is scared, but the boy acts "like a man," one of the themes in *Macbeth*, and remains brave and fearless. Since the messenger is a thane whom Lady Macduff probably knows well, his first line, "I am not to you known" (65), is cut out. After the thane delivers the line "Which is too nigh your person" (72), the three of them hear a noise. The thane-acting-as-messenger's reaction is to flee on the spot. The frightened Lady asks "Whither should I fly?" looking in his direction, but he is gone. Holding her son, she becomes resolute when she says, "But I remember now" (74). She seems to pronounce these words in a somewhat feminist vein, facing the camera, and criticizes herself for putting up a "womanly defense" of claiming she has "done no harm." Just being married to someone who deserves retaliation seems to be already harmful enough. Her feminist realization matches the production's criticism of patriarchy, for Macduff is standing right there

in the circle, watching her ordeal, and not doing anything. The rest of her lines, until the murderers appear, are said almost as an aside, since the boy shows no reaction at all.



Fig. 16. Angus comes to warn Lady Macduff, but flies as soon as he hears the invaders

The third and last part of scene 2 only runs five lines (80-5) in the playtext, but it is the most shocking part, visually speaking, for it is here that the murderers come face to face with their victims. Lady Macduff expresses her ultimate loyalty to her husband as she refuses to tell the murderers where he can be found, and answers instead, “I hope, in no place so unsanctified / Where such as thou mayst find him” (81-2). When a murderer calls him a traitor, the boy reacts in some way not specified by stage directions, only accusing the murderer of being a liar and a villain. The murderer says, “What, you egg!” and stabs him. According to the directions, the little boy dies on stage, not before urging his mother to run away.

I have to admit that, whenever I read the play, I see the stage direction related to young

Macduff's death the same way I see the one regarding Iras in 5.2 in *Antony and Cleopatra*: with some suspicion. How can they die so fast? Not that I have seen many people die in front of me to know how long it takes, but in films and TV, where all my forensics knowledge comes from, it usually takes a while. Thus, I consider these deaths a crux that directors staging performances have to deal with.



Fig. 17. Macduff's son is killed on the murderer's lap in Nunn's TV version

But some scholars, like Worster in “Performance Options and Pedagogy: *Macbeth*,” reason that we should read stage directions in Shakespeare’s plays as mere editorial choices, without making the mistake of seeing them as “‘intended’ or ‘natural’ or ‘obvious’ or even just the ‘best’” (368). So, does the boy die onstage? If so, what happens to the body? Is it left onstage? Does Lady Macduff run away carrying it with her? E. A. J. Honigmann argues that the child’s actual dying happens offstage, and that Shakespeare does so in order to prevent our hatred of Macbeth too soon. According to him, the first death onstage does not occur until 5.7.11, Siward’s murder (137-8). Of course, we have to ponder whether it makes a difference if young Macduff is simply slain, and then crawls off to die offstage, or if

he immediately dies onstage of his wounds. Is the first option any less uncannily violent than the second?

In Nunn's production, two of the murderers appear with stocking masks covering their faces, creating a terrifying effect. The camera shows Lady Macduff moving back a few steps, protecting her son, trying to escape the first murderer, only to notice that there is another murderer behind them. Robert Cushman points out that the way the 1976 production was thought out, with sixteen actors sitting in a circle, surrounded by few spectators, made everything more intimate: "We can watch [...] Macduff sitting ignorantly by as his family is slaughtered" (4). In the TV film, to compensate for the circle device which is not visible all the time, Nunn includes the actor playing Macduff in both the stage production and the film, Bob Peck, as one of the murderers, implying that he is guilty for having left his family. Putting the same actor that plays Macduff to play one of the murderers is a clever touch, for it creates an uncanny effect. Even more than implying that Macduff is guilty for leaving his family, it can suggest that quality of the strange and strangely familiar which is central to the uncanny. Macduff as one of his family's killers also shows that, in a patriarchal society, women and children are merely pawns whose injury can be used to offend the patriarch. Undoubtedly, Macduff is as much a part of this patriarchal, warrior society, as Macbeth. Having the actor watching the scene, as is done on stage, has different connotations. Although it makes Macduff an accomplice for watching and doing nothing, it also gives him a sense of impotence. Being a silent witness to his family's murder (even though his face is not totally clear) makes him much more active and responsible.



Fig. 18. Lady Macduff touches the blood on her dead son's back

When Lady Macduff tries to move sideways, yet a third assassin appears: this time it is Seyton, without any disguise. He is also the one to accuse Macduff of treason. The boy says, “Thou liest, thou shag-ear’d villain!”, which causes the first murderer to hold him in his lap and shake him up and down with his dagger. This scene, albeit abhorrent, does not work too well because, frankly, the boy looks already dead before being killed. His way of saying “He has kill’d me, mother: / Run away, I pray you!”, very slowly and broken, before falling to the floor, can hardly be considered good acting. Hopefully it works better on stage, since no critic mentions the boy's lack of skills. Lady Macduff kneels down, touches the boy’s blood, and cries “Murder!” four times. We do not see who holds her arms, who covers her mouth, or who cuts her throat, for the camera is focused on her. But she is held with her arms open, as in a crucifixion, and her throat is cut on screen, while men deny her even the right to scream. On stage, of course, the spectator has a better picture of the scene, in spite of the dim lighting.



Fig. 19. A murderer slits Lady Macduff's throat in the TV version

Critic Richard David praises the production for its “extreme violence with extreme economy,” and describes an early performance in 1976:

A fine example [of violence with economy] was the murder of the Macduffs, a scene in which Shakespeare has very deliberately mounted a visual horror in order to induce a strong revulsion in the audience. Here the two dark-clad murderers, rather oddly accompanied by the black-skirted Seyton (who had also made the third at Banquo’s murder), entered up-stage right to Lady Macduff and her boy, who like her was in innocent white. The murderers were relaxed and smiling, and the boy, though defiant, went up to them without fear. First Murderer, still smiling, took the boy onto his lap—and thrust his dagger into his back, seen bloodied as the boy fell forward onto the stage crying, ‘He has killed me, mother’, while the Murderer, starting up, cut the Lady’s throat. The trick by which a knife, drawn across an actor’s skin, produces a stream of apparent blood was used again when Macbeth, with ‘Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear’, actually applied his dagger to the cheek of the ‘lily-livered boy’ who reports the first sighting of Malcolm’s army (89).

Even Chaillet, who was one of the few critics to express reservations about Nunn's *Macbeth*, praised the scene: “So much of the production is subdued that emotion seems banished by efficiency. Even the murder of Duncan has no horror. But the efficiency itself becomes horrible and the murder of

Macduff's family is so coldly accomplished that it chills" (no page number).



Fig. 20. Macbeth and Macduff fight in the final scenes in the TV version

The final act in Nunn's *Macbeth* is also cold. The famous “Tomorrow” speech has little emotion. After harassing the young messenger who brings him the bad news of ten thousand soldiers coming to the castle, Macbeth strikes Seyton for telling him that the forest is indeed moving. There is no Siward to be killed by the tyrant, so the last fight is straight between Macbeth and Macduff. Rosenberg tells us that, in the end, Macbeth stages “a fierce swordfight with Macduff that seem[s] genuinely dangerous not only to the combatants but also to the spectators only inches away” (*Macbeth* 196). In the playtext, when Macduff and Macbeth are fighting, the action is interrupted by stage directions: “Exeunt, fighting. Alarums. Enter fighting, Macbeth slain.” Calderwood asks, “Why should they exit and reenter; why should there not be simply one sustained battle, as in fact it is sometimes done? The likely answer is that the exit is designed to remind us of two prior instances of off-stage violence—the battle of Act I and the murder of Act 2. In each case the audience hears but cannot see

the action” (112). In Nunn's production, the action is uninterrupted and it happens on stage. Macduff hurts his hand, and Macbeth pushes his sword into a doll's ear (Macbeth is fond of voodoo dolls in this production). The TV version ends this scene when Macbeth, with a dagger in his hands, says that whoever cries “Hold, enough!” loses. On stage, they exit fighting, and we are never to see Macbeth again, since his severed head is not brought back to serve as trophy.



Fig. 21. Macduff brings the daggers that killed Macbeth, in a scene that echoes Macbeth's entrance after killing Duncan

Malcolm and his thanes enter the stage, and Malcolm laments Macduff's absence (just as Macbeth had lamented Banquo's in the banquet scene). But Macduff soon enters, with daggers and blood on his hands. It resembles the scene when Macbeth has just killed Duncan, suggesting that Macduff can be a threat to Malcolm later on. There is no celebration, and only Rosse hails the new king. As Suzanne Harris says, “The quiet Malcolm and the war-weary Macduff at The Other Place simply sat, shocked and silent” (129). Kliman calls the end in this production “inconclusive” because, even though the “righteous” side (represented by the saintly king's son) has won, Macduff remains “unreadable” and “taciturn” (118). According to her, in the 1976 production, “where the witches lack

power, the thanes themselves recognise that Malcolm is not the leader they need; that in generating a Macbeth, the community has revealed a sickness at its heart; that in its Macduff as warrior, Malcolm as king, it has duplicated the situation of the earlier insurrection. No wonder the men subside at the end into brooding contemplation” (102). The TV version seems to be more straightforward than the stage production, for the very last image on tape is that of Macduff’s bloody daggers and a crown being held by clean hands. For Marion Perret, “The striking image overpowers our memory of Macduff’s ‘The time is free,’ disquieting us with an ambiguity not in the text” (39).



Fig. 22. Last image in Nunn's version for TV: Macduff's bloody hands and a crown

The scene with Macduff carrying bloody daggers is enough to establish him as Macbeth's double. Freud claims that “the double was originally an insurance against the extinction of the self” (142). With time this has changed: “having once been an assurance of immortality, [the double] becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (Freud 142). In other words, the double has become an object of terror (Freud 143). It is a curious coincidence that both Freud and Macduff use the same word, *harbinger* (which means something or someone that foretells what is about to happen). In 5.6, before invading Macbeth's castle, Macduff shouts, “Make all our trumpets speak, give them all breath, / Those

clamorous harbingers of blood and death” (9-10). Just as Macbeth, in Nunn's production, returns from Duncan's chamber (a slit on the wall) with bloody hands, Macduff too returns from exactly the same place with his hands red. Scotland will again have a weak ruler with a strong soldier backing him up, a soldier who kills enemies so the king may continue to reign. Yes, it certainly sounds familiar. How many witches will be needed to push Macduff to kill Malcolm? As Cook mentions, in Nunn's *Macbeth* “one sees what Hannah Arendt called ‘the banality of evil’, where murder is a sensible bureaucratic device for getting rid of people that are a nuisance [...]” (35).

This is a widely acclaimed production in which, like Nathaniel in “The Sand-Man,” Macbeth also confuses the inanimate and the animate. Ghosts are alive, though not visible, and the protagonist is constantly talking to juju dolls, as if they were real people. It is also a production in which things (“o proper stuff”?) are suggested, rather than explicitly shown. Macbeth's severed head does not appear in the end. Banquo's ghost is an absence in a ritualistic circle. The dagger is only imagined. When, in the playtext, Macbeth exclaims, “O, full of scorpions is my mind” (3.2.36), he could not guess a production would fulfill his prophecy. Nunn's *Macbeth* is full of scorpions in the mind, but not showing as much violence as, say, Polanski's film is not the same as repressing it. Because, like the uncanny, violence can only barely be repressed.

CHAPTER 5

“ALMOST AFRAID TO KNOW ITSELF”¹⁶: AN ANALYSIS OF TWO BRAZILIAN
PRODUCTIONS OF *MACBETH*

Watching two productions of *Macbeth* in São Paulo, as I did in May of 1992, created a feeling of déjà vu. After all, they were adapted from the same playtext, even though their conceptualization was very different. In one, *Macbeth*, the spotlight was on the stars from Rede Globo; in the other, *Trono de Sangue*, the star was the director himself, Antunes Filho. And yet, even if I realized that these productions were not only different but could complement each other, comparisons were inevitable, and the possibility that one was the other's double arose. I mean *double* in its original definition by Freud, “an insurance against the extinction of the self,” before it becomes “the uncanny harbinger of death” (142). There is often a compulsion to repeat Shakespeare on stage. *Macbeth* and *Trono de Sangue* were not the only two productions based on a Shakespeare play competing with one another in May 1992. *A Megera Domada* (Grupo Tapa, directed by Eduardo Tolentino) and *Sonho de uma Noite de Verão* (Grupo Ornitórrinco, directed by Cacá Rosset) were also playing in São Paulo at the same time (Mendes). And this was not, and continues not to be, exceptional. In São Paulo ten productions a year adapt Shakespeare, on average. It is not so unusual to have two productions based on the same play, such as *Ricardo III* in 2006 (Alves Jr 49). Nevertheless, when two productions adapted from the same playtext are staged at the same time, it is hard not to measure one against the other.

Ulysses Cruz, the director of *Macbeth*, had been Antunes Filho's assistant director in 1983, in the Centro de Pesquisa Teatral (CPT), and his main passion, besides Shakespeare, included directing samba school parades. In 1989 he received a grant to spend nine months studying with the Royal Shakespeare Company, something that made him ambitious: when returning to São Paulo, he originally

¹⁶ *Macbeth*, 4.3.163.

had plans to stage all of the bard's 39 plays in Brazil. After staging *Macbeth*, he also directed three other Shakespearean texts: *Péricles* (1995), *Rei Lear* (1996), and *Hamlet* (1997). It was after *Hamlet* that he decided that theater in Brazil, especially Shakespeare, was “unfeasible”¹⁷ (Mathe 82). At the end of the 1990s, he became part of the main team of TV Globo's directors. Known for adding some theatrical touches to his TV productions, he directed soap operas such as *Sabor da Paixão* (2002/03), *Um Só Coração* (2004), and *Eterna Magia* (2007). About Antunes, who often criticizes professionals that sell themselves to TV, Cruz states, “He says stupid things against TV because he is biased. But TV is the only relevant cultural manifestation in this country” (Mathe 82; my translation). Although Cruz still has his own theater company (Globe-SP), which prepares new actors specifically to act in Shakespearean productions, he has only co-directed one production in more than a decade, *Os Dois Cavalheiros de Verona* (2007). His main professional activity today is undoubtedly related to his television work.

Indeed, it is almost impossible to talk about Cruz's 1992 production of *Macbeth* without delving into television. After all, *Macbeth* was a huge success with the public, not so much because of the public's disposition to appreciate Shakespeare, but because of the “Global” cast (*elenco global*, referring to Globo TV). Antonio Fagundes was in the height of his TV fame, due to his then recent role in the soap opera *O Dono do Mundo*. Vera Fischer had recently appeared on the cover of gossip magazines because of her divorce. A former Miss Brasil and *pornochanchada*¹⁸ actress in the 1970s, Fischer was not really considered an acting talent before *Macbeth*. She starred in the soap opera *Mandala* in 1987/88, where she met Felipe Camargo, an actor who played her son. Several scandals followed after their real-life marriage. She was run over by a car in 1989, and in 1991 Camargo,

¹⁷ All subsequent citations of secondary sources originally in Portuguese have been free-translated by me.

¹⁸ *Pornochanchada* is a genre in Brazilian cinema that no longer exists. Due to the military dictatorship (1964-1985), the exhibition of porn films was forbidden in Brazil. At the same time, movie theaters had to fulfill a quota of Brazilian films shown each year. The solution was this mixture of softcore porn and comedy, which was born in the 1970s in São Paulo. Extremely popular, it revealed several actors and directors. Its end coincided with that of the dictatorship and censorship: when hardcore porn was allowed to invade the theaters, there was no use for *pornochanchada*.

bleeding from his stomach, had to go to the hospital, after a fight with Fischer. She was 40 when she played Lady Macbeth. Both Fischer and Fagundes were the most famous stars at the time of the production. Fábio Cintra, musical director of *Macbeth*, remembers that the situation was “ridiculous,” with hysterical fans literally flocking to them, making the actors very uncomfortable: “Fagundes hated that” (my translation).¹⁹

In May 1991, nine months before *Macbeth* opened in Campinas, Gilberto Braga’s soap opera *O Dono do Mundo* started, with Antonio Fagundes as its protagonist and villain, the plastic surgeon Felipe Barreto. Right in the beginning, Barreto makes a bet with a friend that he will be the first to sleep with Malu Mader’s character, a kind-hearted virgin about to get married to one of Barreto’s employees. He wins the bet, his employee kills himself... and the public absolutely despises the woman, not the villain! Unable to dislike Fagundes, people switch channels. And the author has to change his story. Now Mader’s character will suffer, and Fagundes will play a “reformed villain,” one who regrets his terrible deeds. However, for the final episode, aired in January 1992, just when *Macbeth* started its run, Braga had his revenge. He makes Fagundes marry a rich young woman and, on the altar, quips “She’s a virgin!” to the same man of his initial bet, blinking to the public.

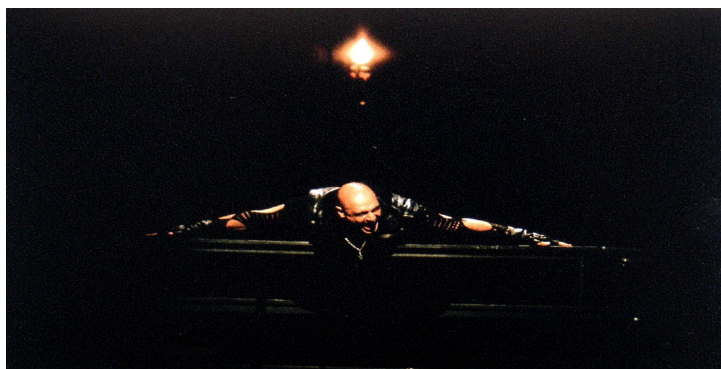


Fig. 23. Antonio Fagundes in Cruz's production

For *Macbeth*, Fagundes shaved his head so he would not be identified with his TV character. As

¹⁹ I interviewed the musical director of *Macbeth* Fábio Cintra in São Paulo on July 13, 2007. Whenever Cintra's name appears, I am referring to this interview.

he declared in an interview, “with my dark circles and my baldness, it will be hard for my fans to continue to associate my image to that of Felipe Barreto, the incorrigible Casanova. In spite of their frustration, I think I will be able to relax a bit and even get rid of my hearthrob fame, which bothers me a little” (Barbieri; my translation). With his bald head, Fagundes managed to resemble Captain Kurtz, as played by Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now* (1979)—another general gone homicidal.

Cruz’s production cost about US\$ 300,000 or Cr\$ 350 million, in the currency of the time in a Brazil of galloping inflation. Fábio Cintra discloses that, as preparation for the production, the whole cast and crew watched Roman Polanski's and Orson Welles' *Macbeth*, as well as Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*. The production was five years in the making, and then problems with the stage caused it to open in Campinas, as opposed to São Paulo. In league with the Scottish Play's curse, Vera Fischer was ill until two weeks before its opening. *Macbeth* arrived in São Paulo in March 1992, two months after it had opened in Campinas, and after running in Belo Horizonte and Santos. It really only “clashed” against Antunes' version, *Trono de Sangue*, in May. The only tape of the production available was recorded at Teatro Arthur Rubinstein in June 92, by TV Cultura.

It was not a lavish production in any way. Costumes were relatively simple, and scenery basically consisted of a large beige cloth that sometimes served as a tent and rug, and sometimes resembled a crown and a country. It is in the middle of that cloth that Fagundes' *Macbeth* finds the crown which he puts on his head. In one of *Macbeth*'s monologues, the cloth takes a shape that makes us think of the map of Brazil. The production clearly had political intentions, as manifested by Fagundes, who was one of the artists most closely identified with PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores), having appeared in many of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's commercials in the 1989 presidential elections. Fagundes wrote in the program:

Nothing new under the sun: absolute power corrupts absolutely. Are all these murders a rhetorical figure? In a way aren't we all dead by recognizing our citizenship going to the gutter? Or by the indifference making us literally swim

in it—in this open sewer which Brazilian society has become? Is it a rhetorical figure that three children are murdered every day? How about hunger? Unemployment? Sickness? Corruption? We only have the consolation that power changes hands here without spilling blood (*their* blood, at least, is not spilt). [...] We live Shakespearean days. As in Shakespeare, the people are practically absent from our history, the power to govern is decided by a dagger, by a pen, determined by a consensus between the elites, maybe due to hidden forces. As in Shakespeare, the people watch impassively the clash of titans that take turns to govern. These people who are always suffering, always full of hope, always fooled. [...] In reality, England did not have at the time [when the play was staged for James I] so many problems as we do today. The staging of this production of *Macbeth* intends to achieve something similar to Shakespeare's victory: to awaken the public. (3; my translation)



Fig. 24. The map of Brazil

Fagundes signed this very political manifesto with the date of January 23, 1992. Fernando Collor de Mello had just defeated Lula in the end of 1989, the first presidential election in Brazil in 29 years. The election itself was a scandal. The right-wing candidate Collor, who belonged to an insignificant party, basically won by a small margin due to three reasons: first, for hiring Lula's ex-girlfriend, Miriam Cordeiro, to appear on TV saying that Lula was a racist and had insisted that she have an abortion; second, one day before the second turn election date, (supermarket owner) Abilio Diniz's kidnappers were captured—though none of them was Brazilian, they were exhibited to the

cameras wearing PT shirts; and third, because of how Globo edited the last presidential debate, clearly favoring Collor. Those three reasons were somewhat connected to the influence of television (which, at the time, meant Rede Globo). Thus, when Cruz claims TV is the only important cultural manifestation in the country, he might not be exaggerating. At least Globo's influence and power at the time cannot be overlooked.

In 1990, after the failure of Sarney's Plano Cruzado, inflation reached 80% a month, or more than one thousand percent a year. On the same day of Collor's inauguration, in March 1990, Collor did exactly what he said Lula would do if he were elected: his government froze all the financial assets of the population. People could not take their money from the bank, in what became known as “confisco da poupança”. Collor's Plan blocked 80% of all the economic assets in the country, but inflation did not falter. So much so that, in 1993, it reached 2,490% in one single year (compare that to the 4,7% rate of 2008). It is true that, as Fagundes denounced it, people did nothing. Aside from a few scattered cases of suicide from businessmen and retired people, there were no revolts.

Violence in Brazil had been escalating for several years.²⁰ In 1989, Chico Mendes was killed in Pará. In Rio de Janeiro, in the first five months of 1992, a total of 167 children living on the streets were murdered. All this culminated in the Carandiru massacre in October. With its nine cellblocks, Carandiru, built in 1956 in São Paulo, was the biggest prison in the country. In 1990, 7.000 inmates lived there, in decrepit conditions. On October 2nd, 1992, the military police, suppressing a rebellion, invaded Cellblock 9, killed 111 prisoners, and wounded another 130, firing a total of 515 rounds, which proves that most prisoners were executed at close range (Langewiesche 167). Even more shocking than the massacre itself was the population's opinion that those prisoners deserved to die. “Haiti,” a 1993

²⁰ The situation in the world was also very violent. In 1991 the First Gulf War happened, a “videogame war” that lasted only forty days. In April 1992 it was time for disturbances in Los Angeles, because of the video in which white policemen beat a black man, Rodney King. A predominantly white jury absolved the policemen, causing blacks and latinos to protest. About sixty people died during these disturbances.

song by Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, describes the reaction to the Carandiru massacre: “o silêncio sorridente de São Paulo diante da chacina” [“São Paulo's smiling silence regarding the massacre”].²¹

Although the Carandiru massacre occurred months after *Macbeth* opened in São Paulo, the situation was not unprecedented. In February 5, 1989, right after Brazil's new Constitution had been promulgated, expanding human rights, eighteen prisoners died suffocated in a cell in São Paulo. There had been a rebellion and, as punishment, fifty prisoners were beaten and locked up in a tiny, unventilated room. Nor was Carandiru alone in the history of mankind. The same year that Roman Polanski released his *Macbeth*, in 1971, 32 prisoners and 11 prison guards were killed by the police in Attica, a prison in New York State. It was the same story all over again, with its compulsion to repeat: prisoners rebelled in a penitentiary and the military police was sent in violently to repress the rebellion. The difference was that, in the case of Attica, this became an example of something that should not be repeated. John Lennon gave a concert in honor of the dead prisoners' wives, and, in *Dog Day Afternoon*, Al Pacino incites the crowd to shout “Attica! Attica!” at threatening policemen.

If we search for only one parallel between the public reaction to Attica and that of the population of São Paulo to Carandiru, we need look no further than Colonel Ubiratan Guimarães' career. The colonel began his career in 1964, the same year that the military dictatorship was implemented in Brazil. He was the one who ordered the military invasion to Cellblock 9. Only nine years later, in 2001, he was condemned to 632 years of prison, but he appealed and was absolved. The man responsible for the largest prison massacre in Brazilian history never spent one day incarcerated. On the contrary, he was elected State representative (*deputado estadual*) in 2002 (for Paulo Maluf's party, PPB, currently PP), and was going to be reelected in 2006. His number? 11.111, an easy number to remind his voters of his main feat in life. In September 2006, he was killed in his apartment, with

²¹ Conditions in Brazilian prisons did not get any better after the Carandiru massacre. So much so that the P.C.C. (Primeiro Comando da Capital, or the First Command of the Capital) was created in 1993.

one single shot in his belly, supposedly shot by his lover. He was buried a hero (Santa Cruz C1-C3).

However, the most significant disturbances in 1992 all concerned Collor's presidency. There had been several accusations of corruption since his election, especially involving his campaign treasurer, P. C. Farias. Fagundes certainly had motives to call the scene in Brazil “an open sewer.” But it was in May of 1992, with the interviews that the president's brother Pedro Collor gave to the press, that the situation erupted. President Collor made the huge political mistake of asking the people to wear green and yellow (the colors of the Brazilian flag) on a given Sunday to defend his government. What happened was that the population decided to wear black. In August the first demonstrations in favor of Collor's impeachment occurred. Ironically, these were also influenced by Rede Globo. Globo was airing *Anos Rebeldes*, a popular miniseries that dealt with the military dictatorship and somewhat romanticized youngsters who fought against it. It is impossible to know Globo's intentions, but in any case Claudia Abreu's character, the revolutionary rebel Heloísa who is killed by the military police, became an icon. She inspired young people in 1992 to stand up for what was right. It is my opinion that, without the existence of *Anos Rebeldes*, the pro-impeachment demonstrations, composed mostly of young people, would never have happened (one proof is that the soundtrack adopted by the demonstrators was “Alegria, Alegria,” by Caetano Veloso, which opened the miniseries). Arguably, without the pro-impeachment demonstrations, Collor could have finished his term. Because of popular pressure—the kind Fagundes had wanted to ignite with *Macbeth*—in October 1992 Congress voted the process that opened Collor's possible impeachment. Amidst accusations that each congressman who decided in favor of Collor received 100,000 dollars, the population followed closely the open voting in Congress. People watched this historical date on big public screens in many of Brazil's largest cities. Finally, Congress forced Collor to be replaced by his vice-president, Itamar Franco. On December 28, 1992, Collor renounced before Congress decided to approve his impeachment, but he lost his political

rights anyway.²² Not that the country was paying much attention by then. On the same day, actress Daniela Perez was found dead, killed by one of her soap opera's co-stars and his girlfriend. Once again, TV dictated what Brazilians should react against.



Fig. 25. Duncan's reign in Cruz's production

As we can see, 1992 was a decisive year for the country “almost afraid to know itself.” For Fagundes, his *Macbeth* (because it *was* his, as the producer and star, as much as it was Cruz's) not only made a statement about the situation in Brazil, but also wanted to serve as a wake-up call. However, neither Walderez Cardoso Gomes, responsible for the translation, nor Cruz, the director, tried to be as political as Fagundes. Gomes emphasized the choice of the play for its agility and economy of characters and subplots (5). Cruz explained in the program: “Living in a new time of insomnia, in this production we risk total dispossession, flexibility, faith in words said with simplicity, the same way the Elizabethans dreamed the theater. And, obviously, we count on the complicity of the public. Therefore, listen to our images, look at our words: once upon a time...” (4; my translation). In other words, their intentions were very different from Fagundes'. That was strange, since both of them, together, had

²² Collor was elected senator for the state of Alagoas in 2006, as soon as he recovered his political rights, proving that many people choose to forget.

designed Projeto Milk Shakespeare, with the aim of staging Shakespeare's plays and proving the plays were not elitist. Initially their idea was to stage five texts and show the productions one week after the other.

One unique aspect of Cruz's (and Fagundes') *Macbeth* was in how it concentrated several characters in the Porter. Not only does the Porter deliver the whole comic relief monolog, uncut, from Act 2, Scene 3, but he also adds an interpolation: “*Não se esqueçam do Porteiro, hein? Pelo amor de Deus!*” [“Don't forget the Porter, huh? For the love of God!”]²³. This “for the love of God” is followed by a begging gesture. Even if we wanted, it would be difficult to forget him, for he is omnipresent in this production, and because he is played by Stênio Garcia. Garcia had not performed in São Paulo since 1972. He returned with *Macbeth* and, in October of 1992, played in *Richard III*. He plays all messengers, for instance, and works like a chorus figure. This is an interesting choice, especially considering Fagundes' and Garcia's connection off stage. They have both starred in the TV miniseries *Carga Pesada* for ages, portraying truck driver buddies. Thus, due to this connection, each of the characters Garcia interprets in *Macbeth* seems to be closer to the tyrant than he would be in the playtext, or in any other production.



Fig. 26. Stênio Garcia as the Porter

It is also Garcia as the Porter who utters the most relevant words said by the witches. In what

²³ I will provide back translations of all subsequent interpolated matter.

was by far the most harshly criticized part of this production, the witches were substituted by three teenagers from the samba school Vai Vai. They only appear in the beginning, have no lines, move on their hind legs and by jumping. They wear thongs, use tribal motifs painted on their bodies, make wild sounds, and carry sticks. There does seem to be a racist subtext, especially because they are the only black people in the production, not to mention that Banquo looks at them and says they do not look human (“*Seres estranhos... nem parecem humanos!*”²⁴). At best, we can make an effort to see this erratic choice as a homage to Orson Welles' voodoo *Macbeth*, as Cristiane Barbieri believes.



Fig. 27. The “witches” in Cruz's production

In general, the critics were not amused. For Jairo Arco e Flexa, *Macbeth* “is a careful production, but that was not blessed by the gods of the stage. It is a cold spectacle, which does not transmit any kind of emotion to the public” (97; my translation). The *Jornal do Brasil* critic said:

Ulysses Cruz mistook spectacle with spectacularity [...] That which grants spectacularity to his *Macbeth* are the special effects—martial arts with bamboos serving as battering rams, and a formally conventional composition—and the absence of a conception of the tragedy. [...] The production is an adaptation that becomes confusing and, in certain scenes, incomprehensible (the witches'

²⁴ “What are these / So wither'd and so wild in their attire, / That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth, / And yet are on't?” (1.3.40-2). All subsequent citations of the playtext in Portuguese translation will be annotated to the corresponding passage in the original.

apparition and the death of Macduff's son and wife, for instance). [...] The public that flocks the theater at Marginal de Pinheiros watches everything in silent respect, in a passive reaction. (Luiz; my translation)

Alberto Guzik from *Jornal da Tarde* blamed Cruz for simplifying the playtext, but also saw some positive aspects:

Macbeth, as directed by Ulysses Cruz, is a Brechtian exercise. The distant, dispassionate staging does not touch the audience. But it takes the public to a disturbing reflexion about power. [...] The spectacle could be improved if scenes that are merely ornamental were removed, like the duel of the extras that cross the stage during the decisive fight between Macbeth and McDuff [sic]. In spite of that, and of several secondary actors that do not deliver [...], *Macbeth* earns respect for its qualities. And signals a change of trajectory in Ulysses Cruz's career, who seems to be looking for a more vigorous theater, less dependent on spectacular special effects. ("Macbeth"; my translation)

Cruz's *Macbeth* was a success commercially, albeit not critically. Antunes Filho's *Trono de Sangue* would be the one to win the hearts and minds of critics.



Fig. 28. Antunes' three witches in *Trono de Sangue*

5.1 Antunes Filho's *Trono de Sangue*

Antunes was 61 years old when he directed *Trono de Sangue*, staged at Sesc-Anchieta, SP. He sounds provocative, as always: “Those who think they know theater, but don't know anything, will hate the spectacle. It has nothing to do with them” (Guzik “Mais um”; my translation). Antonio Fagundes had said that Antunes’ decision to stage *Macbeth* in the same year was “at least ungraceful.” Antunes did not attack him: “Even though I am against actors who sell themselves to TV, I have the greatest respect for Fagundes. He is at Globo, but he also takes his theater seriously. He didn't understand that staging *Macbeth* was not a matter of financial compromise for me, but rather an internal need to study, to dive in a universe of violence, a necessary continuation of my previous work” (Guzik “Mais um”; my translation).

Antunes' previous productions had been two in which he used, as in *Trono*, principles from Quantic Mechanics (Milaré 269). In fact, *Trono* was the conclusion to a trilogy about evil that started with *Os Sete Gatinhos/Paraíso Zona Norte* (1990) and continued with *Chapéuzinho Vermelho/Nova Velha Estória* (1991). Samantha Monteiro, who played Lady Macbeth, had been an extra in *Paraíso* and *Chapéuzinho Vermelho* in *Nova Velha Estória*. She was only 19 when she played Lady Macbeth. In 2000, she was execrated by the artistic class for advertising right-wing candidate Maluf on TV. She was never forgiven, and her career vanished.

Antunes is widely considered a major name in contemporary Brazilian theater, together with Zé Celso (Milaré 230). He staged *A Megera Domada*, *Ricardo III*, *Romeu e Julieta*, and *Júlio César*. However, his 1965 production of *Júlio César* was not only the lowest point in his career but also the greatest failure in São Paulo theater in the 1960s (Milaré 189). It was in 1978, when *Macunaíma* became a landmark, one of the most relevant moments in Brazilian theater (Milaré 258), that Antunes became an icon. In that same year he founded CPT (Centro de Pesquisa Teatral), which is known for its scenic ability (Milaré 27).



Fig. 29. Samantha Monteiro and Luis Melo in *Trono de Sangue*

The director's dislike for television is notorious. Two months before *Trono* opened, Antunes gave *Veja* a polemic interview, criticizing television actors who sell themselves. When Luis Melo, the star of *Trono* and of the theater company CPT, who had been working with Antunes for more than a decade—and who was, according to the director, “the best Brazilian actor today” (Guzik “Mais um”; my translation)—left the company to be part of Globo's soap operas, Antunes could not forgive him. His remarks that he could not understand why actors had the need to buy blenders became famous. In December 2002, ten years after *Trono* and *Macbeth* “competed,” Antunes sent his former assistant Ulysses Cruz a Christmas card with one single line: “Stop doing TV, man!” (Do Vale; my translation).

Therefore, Antunes is a star in his own right, and it is coherent that theater critics with a strong disdain for TV would love him. They also seem to enjoy interviewing him, for there is a guarantee he will always say something exotic. During the press interviews to promote *Trono de Sangue*, Antunes declared: “I am at this moment with the mission of making a classic in Brazil. I think we can achieve

this within our sensibility, without *macumba*²⁵ or other regionalist things” (Bragato). He also saw himself as “a moral reserve” and “a man against the cultural curve. [...] Since I am a transgressor, I want to rescue tradition with this spectacle” (Mendes). In another interview, he defended the concept of “Shakespeare our contemporary”:

If I don't make Shakespeare my contemporary, I'm lost. Do I reek of naphthalene, of chloroform? If Shakespeare is not a contemporary Brazilian playwright, I don't want to stage him. I watch classical theater and it's a drag. It's something that seems like a cultural obligation to watch. It has that which Sérgio Cardoso used to do, ‘see oo gaato miiia, o caão teráa seu diiia, aaaa’ [prolonging the vowels]. That's not musicality. I leave the theater wanting to throw up. I leave with nausea and boredom. (Sá; my translation)

It is rather strange that this revolutionary director saw Shakespeare not only as his contemporary but also as deserving of a text-oriented production. In an interview with Edgar Olímpio de Souza, Antunes stated that, for him, theater is the art of the actor: “Unlike many directors who prioritize image and visual impact in their productions, Antunes goes for the language” (“Antunes” 2; my translation). And, as much as one critic said that Antunes' *Trono* was politicized (“Antunes politicizes his *Macbeth*. He wants it to be a discussion of the democratic heritage, interrupted by the dictatorship, by the brutality of what happened and by the siege imposed by ignorance” (Bragato; my translation), his declarations to the press seemed *apolitical*, especially compared to Fagundes' manifesto: “I have some compassion for Macbeth, as much as I do for all weak men, just as I pity my own weaknesses. Deep down, we are all Macbeths. The important point is knowing how to deal with the Macbeth that is inside you, with your ambition, with your desire, with your inferiority complex and your arrogance. This is the human drama” (Mendes; my translation).

In some cases, depending on how one looks at it, Antunes appeared to be more than apolitical—could he have been indirectly defending Collor? He told *IstoÉ*, “This character didn't know how to

²⁵ *Macumba* is a negative term given to *candomblé* or *umbanda*, the cults brought to Brazil by African slaves. Due to religious syncretism, several deities were adapted to Catholicism, and vice-versa. Many white, middle-class people have a strong bias against macumba, associating it with animal sacrifices, superstitions, and black magic. This is also connected to racial prejudice.

control his own ambition and because of that he fell from grace. Like him, we need to learn to control our instincts as puppies of the dictatorship” (60; my translation)²⁶. He could be talking about Collor's ambitions, or he could also be referring to “Fora Collor” (“Out with Collor”) movements that, in May of 1992, were already strong. In another interview, he made it more explicit: “We can't act like animals; there is a code of man and that's what I wish to discuss with the public through this production. We can't be primitive, we have to know how to deal with democracy, how to control our emotional impulses. We must be careful. [...] only culture can teach man how to restrain himself. Without it, he is an animal” (Guimarães; my translation). Again, deciphering what he says is a matter of interpretation. He could be saying that Collor, like all presidents, had to control his primitive urge of turning into a tyrant, or that Brazilians should contain their emotional impulses of overthrowing a president they did not like.



Fig. 30. The blood-red stage in Antunes' production. Lying down, the “bloody soldier”

²⁶ *Filhotes da ditadura* (puppies of the dictatorship) is a term coined by Leonel Brizola, then governor of Rio de Janeiro, in the 1980s. It is used to define politicians who benefited from the military dictatorship. Collor was one such politician, since he started his political career in the governist party Arena, and was then nominated—not elected—mayor of Maceió in 1979.

Not that critics really cared. They were more enthusiastic about Antunes' barefoot actors stepping on a blood-red floor than anything else. *Jornal da Tarde* critic Alberto Guzik defined *Trono de Sangue* as an “electrifying spectacle,” and saw touches of butô Kazuo Óno and of Tadeusz Kantor’s post-expressionist theater. But he makes the mistake of assuming the ghost at the banquet is Duncan’s, not Banquo’s (“Eletrizante”). Arco e Flexa considers *Trono de Sangue* “a jewel that cannot be missed, one of the greatest moments of Brazilian theater in the last years” (96; my translation). For Olímpio de Souza, “The staging is vigorous in every sense of the word. It has uninterrupted action, expressive acting, a memorable scenography, scenes with a lot of impact. [...] The public identifies itself in what it sees” (“Antunes” 2). Marcos Bragato boasts, “The cast is harmonious in this monumental version. Antunes reclaims tragic theater and the public gets breathless. I had forgotten that theater could catch people through the purification of the soul. [...] This is a pathetic and grandiose theater, next to a religious trance and not very far from the cavernous reality of power and of a routine haunted by violence” (my translation).

The only dissenting voice was Jefferson Del Rios’, critic for the *Estado de S. Paulo*, who called Antunes' production “conventional”. According to him,

Macbeth is not an instant of creative fulguration. The text resists the youth and the inexperience of the protagonists, who try to provoke an idea of malefic depth through vocal ravishment. [...] Putting characters to move leaning against the walls, that is, displacing them from the center of the stage, is a conceptually interesting project ('centrifugal theater'), but of low dramatic results. [...] [In this production] there are interrupted chases, broken walks in Japanese rhythm, but the great sentiments struggle to acquire verbal weight. [...] The dark lighting does not create a feeling of oppression, but of visual annoyance. [...] This is a rustic and almost conventional *Macbeth* with an identifiable signature that we may either enjoy or not. It has personality. (my translation)

Antunes was aware that he would face comparisons between his production and that of Ulysses Cruz. He claims he did not know that the first production of the Milk Shakespeare Project would be *Macbeth*. “I was upset at first, but during rehearsal I noticed that I could not go back, I had arrived at a

point of no return” (Olímpio de Souza “Sangue” 1; my translation). He said he even liked the comparisons: “If the comparison happens at a high level, that's good; what matters is the existence of the discussion and not the work” (Olímpio de Souza “Sangue” 1). However, in the same interview in which he says “There is no competition, nothing like what people are saying,” he adds that his adaptation is “free, but responsible, without putting *candomblé*²⁷ in the witches scene,” in an allusion to what was most severely criticized in Cruz’s *Macbeth* (Mendes). Fábio Cintra claims there was no rivalry between the two productions, because their conception was totally different. Cruz’s had more of a cinematographic approach and, according to him, “It was the newspapers that made up this rivalry” (my translation).

They sure did. In the middle of the *IstoÉ* unsigned article there is a box titled “*Macbeth e McDonald’s: Diferenças entre as montagens de Antunes e a de Cruz*” (“Differences between Antunes’ and Cruz’s productions”), stating the following:

RHYTHM: the scenes in *Trono de Sangue* occur in an uninterrupted flux. In Cruz’ *Macbeth* the resource of the blackout is used to separate several situations. INTERPRETATION: Antunes’ actors use gestures and movements that grant the text more expressivity. The cast led by Antônio Fagundes and Vera Fischer, on the other hand, is only concerned about delivering their lines correctly. NARRATOR: in *Trono de Sangue* there is none. In the other *Macbeth*, there is a kind of jester, played by Stênio Garcia, who summarizes and comments on the action. COSTUMES: in Antunes’ version, they are recycled and inspired by clothing from various cultures. In Cruz’s production, they are traditional: Lady Macbeth looks like the Wicked Queen in *Snow White* (61; my translation).

²⁷ *Candomblé* is the same as *macumba* (see footnote 25).

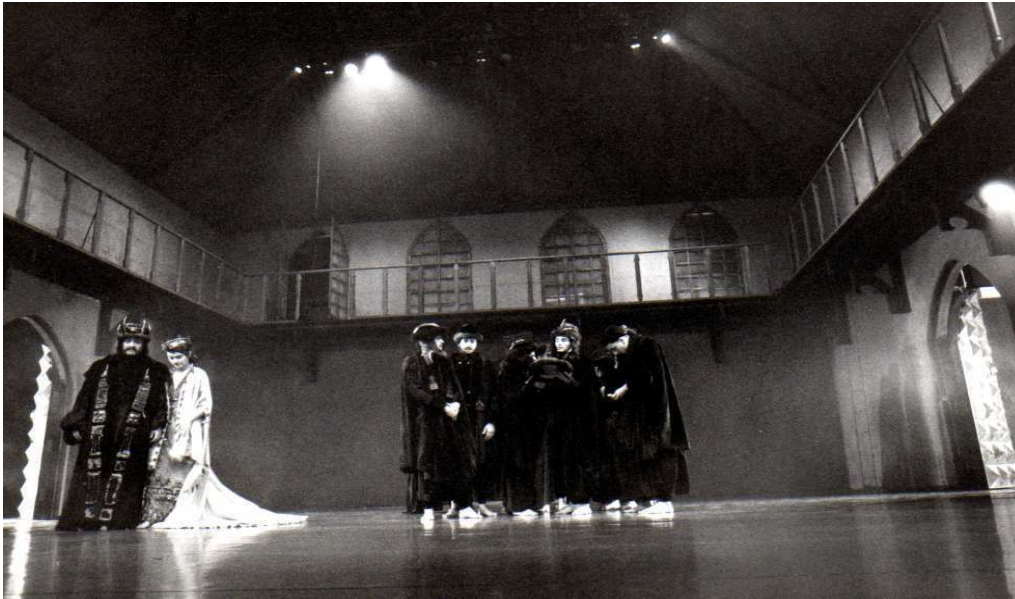


Fig. 31. A view of the scenery in Antunes' *Trono de Sangue*

As much as one critic alerted that comparisons between the two *Macbeths* should not be made because the productions were “radically diverse in style and content” (Guzik “Eletrizante”), comparisons abounded, and critics obviously preferred Antunes' production to all the others, including Cruz's *Macbeth*, Tolentino's *A Megera Domada*, and Rosset's *Sonho de uma Noite de Verão*: “[*Trono* is] the kind of spectacle that redeems a season marked by strictly commercial successes and almost devoid of dense and disturbing productions. *Trono de Sangue* should not be missed” (Olimpio de Souza “Antunes” 2; my translation).

In a way, what is revealed in a few of these reviews is some loathing of the Brazilian theater (except that of Antunes’). It is difficult to imagine the introduction in a British or American review saying that those who go to the theater once a year need wait no longer (as in *Veja*’s), or that “serious” Brazilian theater consists of actors shouting, spectators pretending to care and understand what is happening on stage, while checking their watches, and giving a standing ovation once the torture session is over (*IstoÉ* 60).



Fig. 32. Duncan (standing) and the bloody soldier (with sword) in the beginning of Cruz's *Macbeth*

As part of this “torture session” for the *IstoÉ* critic, Cruz's *Macbeth* opens with a white cloth covering the stage, and all of a sudden we can see movement underneath it. Those are the “witches” with no lines. Then the “bloody soldier” appears. In Antunes' production, the red stage is invaded by soldiers running, scared, from one end to the other, leaning on the walls. The first line is “*Quem é aquele homem ensanguentado?*”²⁸ After the first part of his speech, the “bloody man” is surrounded by the others, who celebrate his speech by yelling. As Harry Berger Jr. points out, the soldier who tells Duncan what has happened “clearly appreciates the theatrical possibilities of his role” (74). He is so enthusiastic in his narration that he “contributes to the overkill. He approves the violence” (Berger 77). And his energy is contagious—he influences even Duncan who, of course, should be a bit scared of this narrated violence, for it can turn against him. After all, if violence is nothing new or familiar, only something that can be repressed, Duncan—if he is the wise king the playtext promotes him to be—should know that drawing a line between state violence and violence against the state is difficult.

²⁸ “What bloody man is that?” (1.2.1).



Fig. 33. Lady Macbeth bows to the king in *Trono de Sangue*

Is Duncan a wise, saintly king in the two Brazilian productions? To be sure, in neither does the character stand out as much as in Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth*, with the ludicrous white robe and beard. In Antunes' production he barely registers. Played by Valter C. Portella (who also plays the nurse, a nobleman, a soldier, and one of Banquo's murderers), Duncan is older than the others, and that is about all we can say about this king. In Cruz's production, however, he is played by a famous actor from Globo TV, Paulo Goulart. Although Goulart is not given much to do in the role, his Duncan is not so saintly. He seems proud and pompous, and both Macbeth and Banquo speak to him in a bureaucratic and suspicious tone. When Duncan calls Lady Macbeth "*Formosa hospedeira!*"²⁹ he does not use a paternal voice, but that of a man trying to seduce. This Duncan's intentions may not be so honorable after all.

²⁹ "Fair and noble hostess" (1.6.24). Cruz's production eliminates *noble* and leaves only *fair*.



Fig. 34. Lady Macbeth and Duncan in Cruz's *Macbeth*

Not that we get to know the king, because he is soon killed. R. A. Foakes affirms that “killing Duncan is the ultimate murder, for in a play that celebrates a warrior culture, and begins and ends in battle, he is an anomaly, saintly, meek, and virtuous” (151). Foakes seems to forget that it is not only the playtext that celebrates warrior culture—Duncan does too, as we can see by his enthusiasm when hearing the “bloody man's” narration. In fact, Duncan depends on the deadly force of his soldiers to kill off the rebels and keep him in his place, the throne. Not to mention, of course, that Duncan is as much a part of that culture as Macbeth. As Huston Diehl points out, “the audience of *Macbeth* is encouraged to see beyond the literal and subjective, to remember what Duncan, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth forget. [...] The audience watches with horror as the well-meaning Duncan sees in the world around him only surfaces and appearances” (193). In other words, the king deserves to be criticized, instead of only painted as kind and virtuous, for not noticing and even encouraging the danger that surrounds him. There is a phrase in Spanish for this: *Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos*.

Even though the scene concerning Duncan's murder occurs off stage, as it does in the playtext, they vary in the two Brazilian productions. Just as productions must decide if Banquo's ghost will be visible to the audience, they also have to take a stand about the dagger. In the playtext, Macbeth asks “Is this a dagger which I see before me?” (2.1.33). In Antunes' production, this line is eliminated. There is no dagger, either real or imaginary, and Macbeth apparently enters Duncan's chamber empty-handed, after hearing a bell and saying, “*Não escutes. Teu destino começa no céu ou no inferno com essas badaladas.*”³⁰ In Cruz's production, the dagger not only is physically present, but Macbeth licks it as well, as he adds, “*No cabo da lâmina, gosto de sangue.*”³¹ The recorded version uses the trick of the dagger appearing and disappearing before his (and our) eyes, but on stage the dagger was always present, according to Fábio Cintra. We can also notice the difference in the translations: the text used in Cruz's production seems more colloquial. In this scene, Macbeth says, “*Já vou. Está feito. Me chamam. Duncan: não escute! Este é um chamado que vai levá-lo para o céu... ou para o inferno!*”³²



Fig. 35. Macbeth (Luis Melo) and the turning wall that leads to Duncan's chamber in *Trono de Sangue*

³⁰ “Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell, / That summons thee to heaven or to hell” (2.1.63-4).

³¹ “I see thee still; / And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood” (1.2.45-6).

³² 2.1.63-4.

In Antunes' production, a technical device gives room to some interpretations. Macbeth sits on a bench next to a wall, and that wall turns by itself, presumably taking him to Duncan. Since he does not move or even activate the turning wall, this device makes him more passive, as if he were merely a pawn of fate. He is a doomed character, driven by occult forces that take him to his destiny. When he returns—also by means of the turning wall—Lady Macbeth is already on stage. He has very bloody hands (“*mãos de carnicheiro*”³³), and the dagger, which was absent in the previous scene, has yet to appear. This solves the playtext's crux of having to explain why Lady Macbeth does not mention the bloody daggers while looking at Macbeth the whole time. It is only when he stands up and leaves his seat that Lady Macbeth and the audience notice the daggers, strategically placed next to him on the bench. She is outraged that he has brought the daggers with him. Since he refuses to go back, she tells him that “*Um morto e dois adormecidos são figuras inanimadas como um desenho qualquer.*”³⁴ She then sits on the same bench of the turning wall, holding the daggers upwards, near her waist, making the phallic connotation even more evident. This connects her action to what she begs spirits to do—unsex her, or, in this case, “*Tornai-me homem!*”³⁵. And it may also further associate the action of killing Duncan with the act of castration, which is why Harold Bloom says the scene is performed offstage in the first place (Shakespeare 530).

³³ “[T]hese hangman's hands” (2.2.25).

³⁴ “The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures” (2.2.50-1).

³⁵ “Unsex me here” (1.5.41).



Fig. 36. Lady Macbeth prepares to return the daggers through the turning wall in *Trono de Sangue*

In Cruz's production, as soon as Macbeth returns after killing Duncan, he drops the bloody dagger (only one). Lady Macbeth sees it and keeps staring at it on the floor. Since he does not want to go back, she says, strongly, "*Homem fraco! Dê-me os punhais.*"³⁶ Now two bloody daggers appear, and she holds them with her arms open, as when she asked the spirits to unsex her. If it is true that Macbeth becomes a man after killing Duncan, as James L. Calderwood claims (89), in Fagundes' and Fischer's interpretation that is not the case. He might later turn out to be less childlike, less dependent on his wife, but not now. Fagundes' Macbeth shrinks as Fischer's Lady stands very erect. Later, while she is in the next room, Macbeth asks, "*De quem são essas mãos? Estão me arrancando os olhos!*"³⁷ In this view that joins humiliation by a woman to pulling out a man's eyes; Freud's explanation to "The Sand-Man" that losing one's eyes really means castration finally makes sense.

It is interesting how the translation can give some lines more or less force. For instance, in Cruz's production, Lady Macbeth exclaims, after being told of Duncan's murder, "*Que desgraça! Em*

³⁶ "Infirm of purpose! Give me the daggers" (2.2.50).

³⁷ "What hands are here? Hah! they pluck out mine eyes" (2.2.56).

nossa casa?”³⁸, to which Banquo replies “*Seria doloroso em qualquer lugar, senhora.*”³⁹ However, in Antunes' production the line becomes “*Em meu castelo?*” [“In my castle?”], and Banquo does not say “Too cruel anywhere” (2.3.88). Certainly the word *casa* has a more personal significance, a more *heimliche* feeling, than *castelo*.



Fig. 37. Macbeth enthusiastically narrates the crime scene in *Trono de Sangue*

In Antunes' production, when Macbeth starts explaining to the men why he killed Duncan's servants, the light changes, making him very white. He narrates enthusiastically, like the bloody man in the beginning: “*Aqui estava Duncan, o nosso rei caído, a pele branca como prata, rendada pelo sangue vermelho, com suas feridas abertas, expostas à devastadora ruína. Ali os assassinos, empapados na cor do seu crime. Os punhais acusadoramente manchados de sangue.*”⁴⁰ The light that

³⁸ “What, in our house?” (2.3.87).

³⁹ “Too cruel any where” (2.3.88).

⁴⁰ “Here lay Duncan, / His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood, / And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature / For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murtherers, / Steep'd in the colors of their trade, their daggers / Unmannerly breech'd

makes Macbeth white seems to say that he is the same color as the dead king, implying that, by murdering Duncan, Macbeth has in fact killed himself. In this version, he will be a ghostly figure from now onwards, getting crazier and crazier by the minute.

In both productions Lady Macbeth makes quite a scene to try to divert attention from Macbeth, who is being criticized for killing Duncan's guards. She seems dishonest in both, for she is way too melodramatic. In Cruz's production, she starts screaming and then she runs, leaving the stage, but only a few of the men go after her. In Antunes', first she shouts "*Leve-me daqui!*"⁴¹, and then she faints. All the men carry her off stage. Thus, in this production her diversion is more successful than in Cruz's.

Even though, as Francis Barker says, "there is no grace in self-appointment" (89), and that is precisely what Macbeth does in the playtext and in both Brazilian productions (especially in Cruz's, for he literally crowns himself), Duncan's murder is almost justifiable in the context of the warrior culture. How else would Macbeth become king, if Duncan had already named Malcolm his heir? In a world that uses violence to gain, maintain and perpetuate power, Macbeth does not seem to be so different from Duncan. However, when he is already king, he has no real reason to kill Banquo and Fleance. If he believes the witches, and he does, Banquo will not be king, and Fleance is still too young, although in both Brazilian productions he is a young adult, not a boy, unlike in Nunn's *Macbeth*. One possible explanation for the tyrant's decision to eliminate Banquo and Fleance is that he is jealous of the line of kings that will be generated by his friend. He has the "evil eye" for Banquo's success in reproduction.

In Cruz's production there is some fierce competition between Banquo and the protagonist. Since the beginning, when Macbeth receives the title of Thane of Cawdor, Banquo looks at him with suspicion, anger and what appears to be envy. They meet again in Macbeth's castle, before Duncan's murder, and what should be a friendly talk before they go to sleep almost turns out to be a confrontation. They face each other, competitively. Freud remarks that "anyone who possesses

with gore" (2.3.111-15).

⁴¹ "Help me hence, ho!" (2.2.118).

something precious, but fragile, is afraid of the envy of others, to the extent that he projects on them the envy he would have felt in their place” (146-7). The evil eye is an important part of the uncanny. In Cruz's production, power is something fragile. So much so that the crown is found on the floor, amidst the debris, and kings have to crown themselves. Immediately after Macbeth becomes king, before killing Banquo, he admits to himself: “*Meu Deus! Reinara assim não vale a pena!*” [“My God! Reigning like this is not worth it!”], which is much more politically explicit than the playtext's “To be thus is nothing” (3.1.47). It seems hard for him to understand that no one would envy his tyranny, if it makes him neurotic and paranoid. Fleance, in his only scene with him, turns away and leaves, avoiding the tyrant. It is possible to interpret, in this production, that Fleance is also trying to avoid power. We do not know if Banquo has told him of the witches' prophecy. But, if he has, why should we assume that Fleance would be happy?



Fig. 38. One of the confrontations between Banquo and Macbeth in Cruz's production

If, in this production, Banquo is envious of Macbeth, and Macbeth is envious of Banquo, then the protagonist's command to kill Banquo and son is again made justifiable. Philip Armstrong ponders that in the playtext Banquo, when still alive, “represents all those gazes that keep Macbeth subject even

in his position as king, thereby undermining his regime of ‘bare-faced power’” (Regime 188). In Cruz's production, much more than in Antunes', Banquo's gazes undermine Macbeth's rule, and that could be an answer to why the tyrant orders his death. According to Fábio Cintra, the action in Banquo's murder scene tries to resemble that of a Hollywood movie. As soon as Banquo enters the stage, he suspects something—he probably knows Macbeth is scheming against him—and stops Fleance. Thus, Fleance escapes without joining the fight. The only word Banquo shouts is “*Traição!*”⁴² He valiantly fights against three men, with sticks. Finally, Banquo falls, and one of the men stabs him. In the video, after that there is a fade out, followed by the reappearance of the three murderers, with one of them asking, “*Quem foi que apagou a luz?*”⁴³ and another replying: “*Fui eu. Não está bom?*”⁴⁴



Fig. 39. Banquo (on the floor) is attacked in Cruz's *Macbeth*

It is a strange coincidence (and maybe proof of cinema's popularity?) that both Cruz's and Antunes' productions insist on saying they have cinematic intentions. Antunes explained in an

⁴² “O, treachery!” (3.3.16).

⁴³ “Who did strike out the light?” (3.3.18).

⁴⁴ “Was't not the way?” (3.3.18).

interview why his production has no blackouts and is not divided into acts: “I wanted to have perpetual motion, to make a kind of little cinema in which not one photograph can be dark” (*IstoÉ* 61; my translation). The scene of Banquo's murder occurs in a very dark stage, with bluish light. One man takes a lamp, and there is no mysterious third assassin, only two. Fleance carries a torch, and Banquo is quickly dominated: he is attacked from behind with a blow to his head. There is no trail of blood as the murderers drag him offstage. What the two productions (and the playtext) have in common is suggesting that killing a king's rival and disposing of his body may be the easiest thing in the world.



Fig. 40. Banquo is killed in *Trono de Sangue*

Or it might be, rather, if the rival's ghost did not insist on appearing at an inconvenient moment, such as when the royal couple is entertaining guests. While in Cruz's production the banquet table is empty, and it actually serves as a kind of platform for Macbeth to talk to one of the murderers without calling his guests' attention, in Antunes' version it is lavishly produced, with food and candles covering the whole table. When Cruz's Macbeth complains to the murderer that his face (and arm) is blood-

stained, he adds, “*Melhor em seu rosto que nas veias dele.*”⁴⁵ In Antunes, the translation opts for “*Assenta melhor no seu rosto do que nas veias dele,*”⁴⁶ and he laughs. In Cruz's production the dialogue between king and murderer is more direct, staccato-like. Macbeth asks, “*Liquidado?*”⁴⁷, and the killer replies, “*Pela garganta.*”⁴⁸ When the murderer informs Macbeth of Fleance's escape, the tyrant says, “*Os acessos estão me voltando de novo,*”⁴⁹ but he relaxes after the killer tells him that Banquo is “safely” dead, “*no fundo de uma vala com vinte cortes mortais na cabeça.*”⁵⁰

Antunes' Macbeth seems even more disturbed, mixing pathos and laughter throughout the scene. He kneels down to see the murderer's face, who is curved to the floor, bowing. When the murderer notifies him of his failure in eliminating Fleance, Macbeth grabs the man's face with his two hands, making the murderer gasp in horror. As in Polanski's film, in which the killers are fatally dispatched after doing the king the favor of killing Banquo, in Antunes' production there is also the suggestion that the murderers will not survive. As Macbeth dismisses the murderer, he sarcastically quips, “*E que os anjos o acompanhem*” [“May the angels go with you”]⁵¹, waving and laughing. Immediately afterwards, three masked men (apparently the same who will soon kill Macduff's family) run in the murderer's direction, obeying Macbeth's command.

⁴⁵ “'Tis better thee without than he within” (3.4.13).

⁴⁶ 3.4.13.

⁴⁷ “Is he dispath'd?” (3.4.14).

⁴⁸ “My lord, his throat is cut” (3.4.15).

⁴⁹ “Then comes my fit again” (3.4.20).

⁵⁰ “Safe in a ditch he bides, / With twenty trenched gashes on his head” (3.4.25-6).

⁵¹ In the playtext, however, the line reads “Get thee gone; to-morrow / We'll hear ourselves again” (3.4.30).



Fig. 41. Banquo's ghost at the banquet in *Trono de Sangue*

For Freud, some things that might be considered uncanny in real life would not be so in fiction, and he mentions Banquo's ghost as an example, because we accept that he is “fully entitled to exist” (156). But do we really? Not even Macbeth thinks Banquo's ghost is entitled to exist. How differently each of the productions show (or not) the ghost demonstrates that this entitlement varies greatly. G. St. John Stott claims that what we see on stage *has* to be a ghost, not “a damned spirit or even a demonic simulacrum” (336). At the same time, for him, “What we see on stage is not a ‘real’ ghost [...] but an actor representing a fictional character” (336)⁵². In general, in the playtext as well as in the productions, Macbeth is not only scared of Banquo's ghost, but also frustrated and upset because his guests at the banquet refuse to see the same image he sees. Armstrong has yet another interpretation. According to him, Macbeth's hysterical reaction is “not to the ghost as a sight, but to the ghost’s sight; not to what it looks like to him, but to how it looks at him [...]. For in that look he perceives all the accusing eyes around the table pointed at him, an array of perspectives framing him into the very picture of guilt”

⁵² When I think of this in relation to Antunes' production, I cannot help but remember the director's condemnation of method actors. In his characteristic verve, Antunes cracked to an interviewer how actors should not aim to reincarnate the character: “An actor who is possessed by a character is not an actor, but a spiritualist” (Milaré 146; my translation).

(Regime 189).



Fig. 42. A close of Banquo's ghost in *Trono de Sangue*

Indeed, the ghost, with his presence, accuses Macbeth of doing what he has done. But he does not need to accuse Macbeth only through his gaze. In Antunes' production, the ghost accuses Macbeth by using his mouth, not his eyes. If Ernst T. W. Hoffman's notion of the uncanny in "The Sand-Man" is closely related with the eyes, in Antunes' *Macbeth* it is all about the mouth, the open, despairing, dark mouth (and not only Banquo's, but other characters' as well, as we shall soon see). This Banquo is a very noisy ghost, who makes ghastly sounds and has his mouth perpetually open. In the middle of the big banquet table, Banquo's head pops out from under the table. His head is green, with a stain that has to be blood on the right side of his head. A gong sound is made every time he appears and disappears. This very phantasmagoric image makes Macbeth seem right when he says, "*Isso se torna mais perturbador que qualquer assassinato violento que se cometa.*"⁵³

⁵³ "This is more strange / Than such a murder is" (3.4.81).



Fig. 43. The banquet scene in Cruz's *Macbeth*. On the back, Banquo's naked ghost

In Cruz's production, Banquo's ghost appears behind the table, on top, so only Macbeth (and the audience) see him. Though this ghost is naked, the light only captures him from the waist up. The way this scene is played in the video is a little different than it was on stage. On stage, according to Fábio Cintra, the musical effect echoed a kind of talking cricket, representing Macbeth's conscience. Before Macbeth spoke this sound would show up. Also, the actor playing Banquo would be naked inside a tube, with blood on his face. In the video, he has no blood. Cintra adds that in a couple of scenes the Porter would also appear in the same tube, creating a parallel between him and Banquo. In both cases, lines such as “*Não volte para mim essa cabeça ensanguentada!*”⁵⁴, “*As sepulturas estão devolvendo os mortos que enterramos. Então nossos túmulos serão os ventres dos abutres?*”⁵⁵ and “*Fora da minha vista, sombra terrível!*”⁵⁶ remain. Curiously, Banquo's ghost raises his arms and head to the sky, as if he were going to heaven. As soon as he disappears, Macbeth says, “*Agora... que ele sumiu... sou um*

⁵⁴ “Never shake / Thy gory locks at me” (3.4.49).

⁵⁵ “If charnel-houses and our graves must send / Those that we bury back, our monuments / Shall be the maws of kites” (3.4.70-1).

⁵⁶ “Hence, horrible shadow!” (3.4.105).

homem... de novo."⁵⁷ This is quite ironic, considering his collapse. When the guests leave, it is time for Lady Macbeth to crumble. The Porter, who acts like a choir, directs himself to the public when saying, "*Que uma benção caia sobre o nosso país, que vive sobre o peso da maldição!*"⁵⁸ The men surrounding him in the background all make noises with their mouths, a constant act in Cruz's *Macbeth*.



Fig. 44. Another image of the banquet scene in Cruz's *Macbeth*, with Lady Macbeth in the middle

In neither of the Brazilian productions *Macbeth* has a seizure or an epileptic attack during Banquo's apparition, though the "strange infirmity" (3.4.85) is mentioned in both. In Antunes' production, *Macbeth* says, laughing, "*Estranha doença, essa minha. Mas quem me conhece bem sabe que isso não é nada.*"⁵⁹ After his first vision, he shouts the interpolation "*Já estou bem!*" ["I'm well already!"], as if he were drunk, evoking laughter. He runs upstairs to the balcony as his wife takes their guests outside. It is interesting that she tells them to leave while Banquo's head is still there on the deserted table, whimpering. The music during this scene is a typical regal soundtrack, pompous, which

⁵⁷ [Banquo's ghost] "being gone, / I am a man again" (3.4.106).

⁵⁸ "[T]hat a swift blessing / May soon return to this our suffering country / Under a hand accurs'd!" (3.6.47-8).

⁵⁹ "I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing / To those that know me" (3.4.85).

is ironic since Macbeth has not been behaving like a monarch should. In the same way that Banquo's ghastly sounds and Macbeth's complaints drown the inadequate soundtrack, Banquo's presence stains what should have been a glorious night for the Macbeths.

The whole sequence with Banquo's ghost is also key to revealing how Lady Macbeth is constructed in each production and when she starts to go mad, since in the playtext this is her last appearance before her farewell, in the sleepwalking scene. In Antunes' production she is quite impassive during the whole scene. She is a fragile figure, always slightly curved, a bit stumped, and very frightened (everyone in this production is scared, leaning on walls, watching their backs). Strangely enough, the banquet scene in Antunes' production is a duet between Macbeth and the ghost, leaving little room for any other character. We can know more about Lady Macbeth from other moments. For instance, the “I have given suck” speech (1.7.54) is still there, but not the one in which she says that she would have killed Duncan himself if it were not for the fatherly figure he represents (2.2.12). The relevant line “But I shame to wear a heart so white” (2.2.61) is also cut. By removing this line, and also the one in which she asks of Lady Macduff's whereabouts (5.1.41), Antunes makes his Lady Macbeth less remorseful.



Fig. 45. Lady Macbeth (Vera Fischer) in the beginning of Cruz's production, and later, as the Wicked Queen (Fig. 46)

In Cruz's production, Lady Macbeth says about Banquo and Fleance, scheming, "*Mas a vida deles, que é breve, também não será eterna.*"⁶⁰ Macbeth answers, with a knowing look: "*É o que consola a gente,*"⁶¹ though he also pleads her: "*Conserve a sua inocência, meu amor.*"⁶² When, in the banquet, Macbeth "laments" Banquo's absence, Lady Macbeth cringes. She is smart enough to know what is going on. One point is clear: she is one person in the beginning of the banquet, and another at the end. It is not her husband's lack of attention or even his madness that makes her collapse. Rather, it is her sudden recognition that she cannot unite her two personae. Her tone changes while she is trying to convince Macbeth to go back to the table. It is when she talks about Banquo's ghost ("*Isso nada mais é que uma alucinação criada pelo medo. É como aquele punhal no ar, apontado para Duncan*"⁶³) that she remembers the dead king. Her voice thickens and softens, alternatively, as if she were two people in one—one possessed, dark, dressed as the Wicked Queen in *Snow White*, and the other, before she helped to kill Duncan, more innocent and more vulnerable, as her costumes reveals. In Cruz's production, Lady Macbeth is her own double.

When she tells her husband that they should go to sleep, in the playtext he says, "Come, we'll to sleep" (3.4.141). But in Cruz's production, Macbeth answers, "*Vá, vá dormir, então*" ["Go, go sleep, then"], creating more distance between the couple. She is already rubbing her hands, trying to remove the blood, and he has killed sleep. They will not maintain their sanity much longer. In Antunes' production this line is removed, although the couple leaves the room together, with Lady Macbeth's hand on her husband's back.

In Cruz's production, during the banquet scene, Macbeth says "*Essa ideia é tão aterradora que eu temo não ter coragem para executá-la.*"⁶⁴ He does not specify which idea he is talking about, but we

⁶⁰ "But in them nature's copy's not eterne" (3.2.38).

⁶¹ "There's comfort yet, they are assailable" (3.2.39).

⁶² "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck" (3.2.43).

⁶³ "This is the very painting of your fear; / This is the air-drawn dagger which you said / Led you to Duncan" (3.4.60-1).

⁶⁴ "Strange things I have in head, that will to hand, / Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd" (3.4.138-9).

can only imagine he is referring to the murder of Macduff's family. This anticipation is not in the playtext. As Stanley Wells points out, it is now that Macbeth “becomes a mass murderer—no wonder the play has continued to seem relevant to the twentieth century—committing his worst crimes with none of the awareness of evil that he had felt in murdering Duncan” (296). If he still has some guilt after killing Banquo, he will not shed tears for his even more innocent victims, like women and children, since now he has gained experience and is no longer “young in deed” (3.4.142). After giving his new plans more thought, he announces: “*Preciso pôr em prática logo os meus pensamentos, assaltando o castelo de Macduff, e passando a fio de espada toda a sua descendência.*”⁶⁵ Victor Kiernan explains why the massacre in 4.2 is important: “like Banquo’s death earlier, [this massacre] is needed to lend vivid reality to our general impression of a country under the harrow” (133).

Although in Cruz's production it is obvious that a country is being savaged, the scene containing the murder of Macduff's whole family is not on the tape, and there are no photographs. Fábio Cintra alleges that the scene was too dark to be filmed. On the stage, this scene was performed quickly and with no dialogue, showing only a silhouette of Lady Macduff, carrying a baby, as several men of the cast surround her. We see only shadows and hear sounds of birds of prey. As soon as Lady Macduff is engulfed, the scene fades out to the difficult scene between Macduff and Malcolm at the camp. We then see “*Siward, o melhor guerreiro da cristandade*”⁶⁶ (who is lent by the English king to fight in Malcolm's favor), preparing to fight against Macbeth. At one point, Macduff murmurs, “*Só porque Macbeth não tem filhos*” [“That's because Macbeth has no children”]. Here, the line “he has no children” (4.3.215), which constitutes a crux for directors, since it could refer to Malcolm as well, is assumed to be Macbeth's. And it matches Bloom's interpretation: “[M]urder increasingly becomes Macbeth's mode of sexual expression. Unable to beget children, Macbeth slaughters them”

⁶⁵ “The castle of Macduff I will surprise, / Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword / His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line” (4.1.150-4).

⁶⁶ “Gracious England hath / Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men; An older and a better soldier none / That Christendom gives out” (4.3.190-2).

(Shakespeare 529).



Fig. 47. Macbeth's face is juxtaposed on Macduff, in the video of Cruz's production

In the video, the montage that introduces this camp scene creates a *déjà vu* effect, for it is almost identical to how Macduff approaches the camera in Nunn's TV film. Interestingly enough, Cruz's video shows a dissolve from Macbeth's second encounter with the witches (actually, only one witch, the Porter) to Macduff at the camp. Macbeth's image is juxtaposed to that of Macduff's. It is telling that, in the only instant that Malcolm and Macduff talk to each other, Macbeth's body is mixed with Macduff's. The juxtaposition makes it clear that Macduff is Macbeth's double, and that soon he will be the next Macbeth to Malcolm's Duncan: a warrior for hire who may become too ambitious himself.

In any case, Macbeth slaughters children more explicitly in Antunes' production than in Cruz's, and some critics praised Antunes for his onstage ferocity: "The deaths do not contain any poetry: Lady Macduff (Ondina de Castilho) and her son (Jaime Queiroz) spit out blood, Banquo (Hélio Cícero) is slain and vomits the red liquid, the general's and his wife's hands are smeared with blood" (Olimpio de

Souza “Antunes” 2; my translation). Antunes knew that these onstage deaths were efficient, for he told another interviewer: “All those deaths, the blood, the evil, scare those who are naive and make those who are cynical convulse with nervous laughter” (Sá; my translation).



Fig. 48. The murderers on the left, Lady Macduff and son on the right, in Antunes' production

In *Trono de Sangue* Lady Macduff, dressed in black, like a nun, is visibly pregnant. The boy by her side is not witty, but afraid. When she tells her son about his father being a traitor, and about the custom of hanging traitors, he cries “*Eu não queria, eu não queria*” [“I didn't want that, I didn't want that”], and hides his face on her belly. She consoles him by saying “*Pobre menino*” [“Poor boy”].⁶⁷ Someone comes to warn them of the danger, but she explains that she has nowhere to run. Then four men, wearing socks on their faces, come in through the left gate. Lady Macduff and her son try to open the gate on the opposite side of the stage. As is common in this production, one group of people is on one side, the antagonist group on the other, with a huge red stage separating them. The men run to the victims and surround them. We cannot see anything, only hear the screams. Lady Macduff is able to

⁶⁷ In the playtext the line is “Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!”, related to his witty speech (4.2.64).

break the circle, and leaves running and shouting, with her hands on her belly. The men go after her, one of them carrying the boy's corpse.



Fig. 49. Lady Macduff, hands on her belly, tries to escape; the murderers, one of them already carrying her son's corpse, go after her, in *Trono de Sangue*

Both productions avoid the artificiality crux that occurs when the boy has to say “He has killed me, mother” (4.2.85). In Antunes' production, the boy shouts “*É mentira!*”⁶⁸, but does not go to the murderers. They come to him, engulf mother and son, and the next time we see the boy it is only as a corpse, being carried by one of the murderers. It is relevant that, in a production without acts, a corpse should be removed right away. Mariko Ichikawa says, “If an onstage corpse should walk off, the role/actor balance would break down and the imaginary world would be shattered: the corpse should therefore be either borne out as if to another fictional place that is supposed to exist behind the stage or it should simply be hidden in order to prevent it becoming a visual distraction” (212-3). The body of Macduff's son would indeed be a distraction for the following scene, which is Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking torment.

While in Cruz's production Lady Macbeth's scene takes place in front of several men, in

⁶⁸ “Thou li'st” (4.2.82).

Antunes' it is a private moment. Although a doctor and nurse (played by a man) watch her from the balcony, they only comment when she has already left. She leaves leaning on the walls, with her mouth open, reminding us of Banquo's mouth. Also, her screams are the same as Lady Macduff's in the previous scene. As Diehl points out, "Although she can wash away the physical blood, Lady Macbeth cannot, we discover, erase the *image* of the blood from her memory. [...] The [sleepwalking] scene is dramatically effective in part because the audience does not see, cannot see, the blood. [...] she sees what no one else can see. [...] Images of the external world become internalized and drive her mad" (196-7). It is interesting, however, that she does not really see those images. Except for the spectacle of the dead king, she is not present when Lady Macduff and her son are killed, nor does she watch Banquo's murder. We, as the audience, see much more of these murders than she does, and yet the fantasy of these offstage stabbings impresses her more than it does us. Like Macbeth in the banquet scene, his wife also has the uncanny ability of seeing what no one else can see.



Fig. 50. In *Trono de Sangue*, Lady Macbeth's scream resembles that of Banquo's ghost

That she echoes Lady Macduff is an obvious choice, but it is uncommon for a Lady Macbeth to resemble Banquo's ghost. Heather Dubrow says *Macbeth* "is all about whether one can securely bury

one's dead—that is, whether one can negotiate the consequences of loss in ways that discourage the repetition of it, notably in the form of ghostly visitations, and that protect the living” (178). Of course Macbeth does not want to discourage the repetition of hired men murdering enemies of the state (in fact, he orders the massacre of Macduff's family right after the scene with Banquo's ghost); he just wants to discourage the repetition of ghosts appearing. But ghosts keep appearing. In the next scene, Lady Macbeth could be seen as Lady Macduff's ghost, sleepwalking before she dies. If she is Lady Macbeth's double, that interpretation is viable. On the other hand, we have yet another double—that of Macduff's, who could be Macbeth's counterpart. In the last scene, Macbeth will tell him that he has too much of his blood already, and tries to avoid him. In a way, Macduff's very presence serves to revenge the murder of his family. He is as exhausted and unmotivated to go on living as Macbeth. He is his family's living ghost, sleepwalking through life.

As Calderwood demonstrates, when Macbeth orders the murder of Macduff's family, he “kills off Macduff's immortal part, his distinctively human meaning, all that would memorialize his existence. [...] Yet Macduff is immortal in another sense, having survived death by virtue of an unnatural birth. And because he is immortal in this manner, he will strip away Macbeth's immortality and leave him a hacked and headless body” (98). Yes, but not before Macbeth has transformed himself into a figuratively headless body, deserted by his soldiers, and, even more importantly, into a soulless body, unable to feel pain when informed of his wife's death, unable to feel remorse, and unable to be concerned about his own death. No doubt, as Cruz's Macbeth complains earlier, “*Reinar assim não vale a pena*” [“Reigning like this is not worth it”].



Fig. 51. The Porter (Stênio Garcia) and Macbeth (Fagundes) in Act 5

In Cruz's production, all of Macbeth's interactions with the soldiers, messenger, doctor, and Seyton in the last scenes are substituted by the Porter. As I said earlier in this chapter, because of the TV link between Fagundes and Stênio Garcia, having Garcia play so many different characters emphasizes the bond between Macbeth and those characters. Also, since Garcia plays them all as if they were part of the drunk Porter, none of them can be really taken seriously. Macbeth, who in the playtext is cruel to all of his subordinates, in Cruz's production will not have any effect on the Porter. For instance, when the Porter announces the arrival of the enemy troops by saying "*São dez mil...*"⁶⁹, and Macbeth asks, "*Gansos, imbecil?*"⁷⁰, the Porter is laughing first. He only becomes more serious when he notes that the queen is dead, and he has a flicker of fright as Macbeth tells him that he will be hanged if he lies about the forest coming to the castle. But other than that, this Porter is not in a position to be humiliated by Macbeth.

⁶⁹ "There is ten thousand—" (5.3.13).

⁷⁰ "Geese, villain?" (5.3.13).



Fig. 52. The Porter/Seyton and Macbeth in the last act of *Trono de Sangue*

The situation is different in Antunes' production. Seyton is also played by the Porter, who wears a jester hat. Although the Porter scene in 2.3 is heavily edited in this production, he appears before in a strange pantomime during the feast to honor Duncan. He brings a bucket to the empty stage, sits in the middle, and eats a chicken thigh with his hands.⁷¹ Now, in the end of the play, he serves as Macbeth's sidekick—quite literally, in fact. The king strangles the Porter's neck, shouts at him, and then pokes him, jokingly, laughing. When Macbeth says “*Poderia ter sido mais tarde,*”⁷² about Lady Macbeth's death, he stands up and kicks the Porter. The relationship between Macbeth and his subordinates is significant because a person who is in control of his emotions would not treat others so disrespectfully. Luis Melo's Macbeth is clearly insane at this point. He shows no grief for his wife's death and he laughs, in the famous “Tomorrow” speech, when he says that life is “*História contada por um idiota, cheia de ruídos e ardor, significando nada*”⁷³ (in Cruz's version, this is translated to “*A existência, uma desesperada história contada por um louco, cheia de som e de fúria, significando nada*”). When he is told that the forest is coming, he makes a despairing face, with his mouth open, echoing Banquo and

⁷¹ I believe this pantomime has little reason to exist beyond being a self-reference to Antunes' greatest hit, *Macunaima* (1978), in which a young black man, “the hero without character,” also has a few grotesque eating scenes.

⁷² “She should have died hereafter” (5.5.16).

⁷³ “[Life] is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing” (5.5.26-7).

Lady Macbeth, repeating the mouth-as-accusing-horror motif which is predominant in this version.



Fig. 53. Macbeth echoes Banquo's and Lady Macbeth's scream in Trono de Sangue

In Cruz's *Macbeth*, men enter the stage carrying bamboo poles. Then they drop them, as in a game of “Pega-Varetas” (Pick-Up Sticks). Siward appears alone to fight against Macbeth, both using bamboos. They engage in a fight that, according to Cintra, could not be so agile due to Fagundes' lack of physical conditioning. Macbeth defeats Siward by hitting him with a stick, and a few drops of blood splatter across Siward's face. Macbeth touches the young soldier's dead face, and then looks at his own hand, now bloody again, and sneers. He leaves the stage temporarily, so more of Deborah Colker's choreography can take place.⁷⁴ Macduff appears and says, “*Eu não quero lutar com pobres mercenários! Eu quero lutar com Macbeth!*”⁷⁵ The soldier who appears to inform Macduff of Siward's death seems anxious to narrate some great epic battle, as the one the “bloody man” tells Duncan in the beginning, about Macbeth's feats.

⁷⁴ There are several instances in Cruz's production when men occupy the stage to do some choreography with bamboo sticks or resembling martial arts like Tai Chi Chuan. These moments were choreographed by renown Brazilian dancer Deborah Colker.

⁷⁵ “I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms / Are hir'd to beat their staves; either thou, Macbeth, / Or else my sword with an unbattered edge / I sheathe again undeeded” (5.7.16-8).



Fig. 54. Macduff commands the invasion to Macbeth's castle in Cruz's production

A tug of war ensues between Macduff's army and the few soldiers in the castle. Macbeth interrupts it, laughing, and shouts to Macduff, "*Vá embora, Macduff. Minha alma está saturada pelo sangue dos seus.*"⁷⁶ Now they fight with swords, not bamboo poles. After Macduff disarms him and makes him fall, he strikes him twice, though there is no blood. Finally, he points his sword above Macbeth's head, as the scene fades out (in the video, the scene freezes and dissolves to men entering). As the men collect the bamboo poles from the stage, Macduff crosses carrying his sword on one hand and Macbeth's head on the other. He lifts the bloody package and says, "*Eis aqui a cabeça do tirano! A pátria está salva! Viva o rei!*"⁷⁷ Nobody cheers. On the contrary, all look down, and Malcolm is not even present. Macduff leaves, taking the head, and Malcolm comes in, carrying a crown. In his speech, he claims, "*Não passará muito tempo sem que eu retribua a afeição de todos. Barões, parentes, sejam condes a partir de hoje.*"⁷⁸ These are his first words as the new king, buying favors. He also talks of the need to "*julgar os terríveis ministros deste carrasco.*"⁷⁹ Even though there is a reference to "cruel ministers" in the playtext (5.9.34), it was impossible, in 1992, to hear this without associating the word

⁷⁶ "[G]et thee back, my soul is too much charg'd / With blood of thine already" (5.8.5).

⁷⁷ "Behold where stands / Th' usurper's cursed head: the time is free" (5.9.20), followed by "Hail, King of Scotland!" (5.9.25).

⁷⁸ "We shall not spend a large expense of time / Before we reckon with your several loves, / And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen, / Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland / In such an honor nam'd" (5.9.26-30).

⁷⁹ "Producing forth the cruel ministers / Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen" (5.9.34).

“ministros” to Collor's Minister of Economy, Zélia Cardoso de Mello, who had been responsible, in March 1990, for the Plano Collor that involved the freezing of people's bank accounts.

Zélia was indeed the most famous among all of Collor's ministers, and probably the most disliked. Her arrogant yet confused appearance on TV in 1990 trying to explain the “*confisco da poupança*” [freezing of the savings] was still fresh in people's minds in 1992, although she had left the government in May 1991, one year after Collor's inauguration. Like Lady Macbeth, her “reign of terror” was short-lived. It is a pity that Zélia was the only female Minister of Economy in the history of Brazil, and she was a failure. Others of Collor's “cruel ministers” made headlines. Zélia had an affair with Minister of Justice Bernardo Cabral, who was married. This was quite a scandal, and he had to resign. She only survived a few more months in the government. Gossip about those ministers' lives, especially about Zélia, was so widespread, that in 1991 an *authorized* biography by Fernando Sabino titled *Zélia, Uma Paixão* (“Zélia, A Passion”) became a national bestseller. But, as Macbeth reflects when named Thane of Cawdor, “The greatest is behind” (1.3.117, which actually means *to come*). Brazilians would soon be more taken by scandals generated by Collor himself than by any of his ministers.



Fig. 55. In Cruz's production, Macduff holds Macbeth's head and shouts “Viva o rei!”; nobody responds

The last images in Cruz's production are reminiscent of Nunn's 1976 classic. Again, the men

watching him sketch no reaction at all. The difference is that, in Cruz's version, Malcolm crowns himself. Judging by the others' gloomy features, there really is no grace in self-appointment. In the tape, the last image is that of Malcolm holding a crown above his head, with a close up of the crown. This is similar to the final image in Nunn's video, where the crown is held in the same frame as Macduff's bloody daggers. However, Macduff's absence in the new king's coronation is equally significant. After all, if the uncanny is nothing new or unfamiliar, only something that has been repressed, the threat represented by Macbeth's double, Macduff, is at this moment barely contained. How long will Malcolm be able to contain Macduff from killing him to become king, in this strange compulsion to repeat?



Fig. 56. Malcolm crowns himself at the end of Cruz's *Macbeth*

In Antunes' production, these final scenes are far from similar. First, the Porter as Seyton tries to close one of the gates, but it is knocked down by the enemy soldiers, and plenty of smoke takes over the stage. The dialogue between Macbeth and Macduff starts with Macbeth on the balcony, while Macduff is on the ground floor. It is only when Macbeth descends, using a rope, that the combat starts, but we do not see it, for they leave the stage through the left gate. We only hear the sound of swords. The soldiers go to the door to watch, further blocking our view. When the fight is over, Macduff enters and crosses the stage, dignified. Soldiers pull with a long rope a wounded and bloody Macbeth. When

the soldiers leave through the other side of the stage, the dead body with the rope struggles, kicking and tossing, as if he were not quite dead yet, as heavy rock music takes over the soundtrack.



Fig. 57. Macbeth's body is pulled (the long rope crosses the stage) in the final scene of *Trono de Sangue*.

This is a corpse that refuses to stay dead, as well as being heavy and hard to pull, quite a burden. At the same time, since both Malcolm and Macduff are absent from this final moment, there does not seem to be a perpetuation of the king/warrior dynamic (and strange compulsion to repeat). But there is no restitution of monarchy either. In Cruz's production, as Malcolm crowns himself, the soldiers do not celebrate. In Antunes', there is not even a king crowning himself, only a dead butcher on stage, “dancing” to music that does not belong to the time or language of the plot. The rock music simultaneously works as a disturbance and makes the production contemporary to the 1992 Brazilian public.



Fig. 58. The very last scene in *Trono de Sangue*: Macbeth refuses to die

The final image in Antunes' production is also uncanny because it conveys both fear of the dead and uncertainty about death itself. As Ernst Jentsch says, “Among all the psychological uncertainties that can become an original cause of the uncanny feeling, there is one in particular that is able to develop a fairly regular, powerful and very general effect: namely, *doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate*” (11, original emphasis). This is not a Macbeth to be exhibited in public squares, but a corpse that still struggles after its death. Macbeth returns from the dead not necessarily to haunt Malcolm and Macduff (since there is no one on stage now), but *us*. He postpones the epileptic attack (“*doença estranha*”)⁸⁰ that he should have had during the banquet scene to only instants before he dies—if he dies at all.

But an epileptic attack, even if it occurs before dying, also seems to suggest more than one personality, one side that cannot be kept under control, almost a double of oneself, like Vera Fischer's Lady Macbeth, who suddenly realizes she is her own double and cannot deal with the discovery. As Hélène Cixous observes, the double “absorbs the unrealized eventualities of our destiny which the

⁸⁰ “I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing / To those that know me” (3.4.85).

imagination refuses to let go” (540). Collor's desperate attempt to try to remain in power after his brother gave an interview talking of the corruption in the government looked somewhat like an epileptic fit, if not a swan's song. By watching Antunes' last image of a Macbeth clinging to a rope, unwilling to die, several Brazilian spectators in 1992 might have thought of Collor's thirst for power, even though his impeachment was still months away.

And, just as Macduff is Macbeth's double and Lady Macduff is Lady Macbeth's double, Brazil, especially in 1992, could be seen as a double of eleventh century Scotland. After 21 years of military dictatorship, democracy was still something recent and fragile to a whole generation of Brazilians in the early 1990s. It was common, in the 1989 presidential elections, to hear that if Lula won, the military would not allow him to become president and we would undergo another coup d'état. In fact, in every election that Lula ran, the talk of dictatorship resurfaced. Even in 2002 there were rumors that PT would not be able to govern, if Regina Duarte's “I am afraid” speech as part of José Serra's campaign is any indication.⁸¹ How many years of democracy does Brazil need to go through before the threat of dictatorship is buried forever? *Can* it be buried forever, or merely suppressed, contained, as the uncanny ghost of something very familiar that keeps coming back? As Foakes says of Macbeth, “The visual image of red blood, real or imagined, recurs throughout the play as the ineradicable stain of violence” (149). But, as Brazilians well know, stains of violence do not need to be necessarily red.

⁸¹ In the 2002 elections between Lula and José Serra (PSDB), the famous Brazilian actress Regina Duarte declared on TV during the campaign that she was afraid of what would happen to Brazil if Lula were elected president. She was accused of political terrorism for suggesting that Lula's victory would bring chaos to the country. This was the fourth consecutive time Lula ran for president, and this time he won, with 61% of the votes. His victory became known as “hope defeating fear.” He was reelected in 2006 with the same percentage of votes.

CHAPTER 6

“THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD / ARE BUT AS PICTURES”⁸²: AN ANALYSIS OF TWO
FILMIC RENDERINGS OF *MACBETH*

Shakespeare and cinema have always been strongly connected, ever since the invention of the moving picture. The first film based on a bard's play dates back to 1899 and, since then, there have been hundreds of Shakespearean adaptations to the screen (Rothwell, History 299). For Douglas Brode, the bard's plays, “filled with murders, sexual transgression, ghosts, and witches, have more in common with the latest blockbusters than anything on the art-house circuit. [...] Shakespeare was the bravura crowd pleaser, the Elizabethan predecessor to Cecil B. DeMille and Steven Spielberg, not to William Wyler or Merchant-Ivory” (5). Nevertheless, with the changes that American cinema undertook and dictated to the rest of the world at the end of the 1970s, after the introduction of the blockbuster and the film event, cinema has become more and more juvenile, and Shakespeare, with few exceptions—Baz Luhrman's *Romeo+Juliet* being one of them—is usually aimed at a more mature and sophisticated audience.

Stanley Kauffman maintains that the main problem of Shakespeare on the screen is “the conflict between a work that lives in its language and a medium that tries to do without language as much as it can” (qtd. in Brode 8). To solve this conflict, starting in the 1990s, a number of adaptations let go of the language and kept just the plot. Among them are not only William Reilly's *Men of Respect*, based on *Macbeth*, but also *A Thousand Acres* (1997, based on the novel by Jane Smiley, which is itself based on *King Lear*), *10 Things I Hate about You* (1999, based on *The Taming of the Shrew*), *Let the Devil Wear Black* (1999, based on *Hamlet*) and *O* (2001, based on *Othello*). Although these films are largely ignored by the academy that deals with Shakespearean adaptations to the screen, they are still

⁸² *Macbeth*, 2.2.50-51.

Shakespeare, albeit appropriations; that is, they decide what they want to borrow and to discard from the bard. It is strange, however, that every single book on Shakespeare on film includes an analysis of Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* and *Throne of Blood*, which use no more of the bard's Renaissance English than does *Men of Respect*, and which ignore most, if not all, of the other appropriations. But Kurosawa himself is an exception in this world of adaptations dominated by Shakespeare in his original English. Kurosawa is included because he is an iconic filmmaker, part of an arthouse tradition. But for whom is he iconic? Not for the teenagers who flock the movie theater to watch *Transformers*.

6.1 Other Filmic Renderings of *Macbeth*

Of the hundreds of Shakespearean versions to the screen, about thirty have been based on *Macbeth*, the first dating back to 1908 (eight of those are not in English), plus ten made-for-TV versions, the first from 1949. For Daniel Rosenthal, the Scottish Play is the one “that reads most like a film script,” and he cites the captain's narration of Macbeth's conquests as ready to be made into a “pre-credits battle sequence” (70). The flow of the murders is so intense that it can make a very lively spectacle: “Bursts of supernatural or violent action occur at more frequent intervals than shoot-outs in *Die Hard* or *Lethal Weapon*” (Rosenthal 70). However, it is still Shakespeare, and the average moviegoer nowadays is a teenager who associates the bard with literature classes, and who has problems in understanding English written 400 years ago, as Al Pacino demonstrates in his *Looking for Richard*.

This has not stopped directors from trying to update *Macbeth*, sometimes even getting rid of the original language in which it was written. The first to adapt Shakespeare to a contemporary audience was Ken Hughes, in 1955, with his British *Joe Macbeth*, which transforms thanes into gangsters. One of the posters for the film, in typical 1950s fashion, reads, “The gun-blazing story of gangland's no.1 killer!”; another says, “A man lusting for power... A woman hot with ambition... and not a moral

between them!” The three witches become one—a flower vendor who reads tarot cards not only to Joe (Paul Douglas), but also to Lily Macbeth (Ruth Roman). Her prophecies, however, are quite naive—she just predicts someone will die at their house, something not too hard to guess, considering these people are gangsters, and that a flock of birds will fly by immediately after. The king-figure is killed at a lake, after Lily tells her husband, “The knife knows where to go... just follow it,” but she has to retrieve it. It is also she who finds the corpses of Macduff’s (here Lenny’s) wife and son, who are killed *in spite of* Joe’s orders. He only wanted to kidnap them. Finally, Joe accidentally shoots his wife, and is gunned down by Lenny, who announces that “this is the end of the line.”

There are a few similarities between the 1955 film and *Men of Respect*, such as using the language of the time the films were made, having Banquo being called *Banky*, and expanding the ambitious character of Lady Macbeth. Other than that, they are completely different movies, so much so that nobody calls *Men of Respect* a remake of *Joe Macbeth*.

I would like to explain why I have included *Men of Respect* (1991) in the scope of this dissertation, instead of “important” films like Orson Welles’ *Macbeth* (1948) and Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (1957). Virtually everyone who studies film adaptation of Shakespeare’s plays writes about these movies (and about Polanski’s too), but almost no one mentions *Men of Respect*. Although I admire the canonical films, Welles’ looks a bit dated, more like filmed theater than any of the others. Polanski’s has to be included because it is considered one of the most, if not *the* most, graphically violent Shakespearean adaptation brought to the screen. Moreover, there is some unity regarding the dates: Polanski’s and Trevor Nunn’s productions are from the 1970s, and Antunes Filho’s, Ulysses Cruz’s, and Reilly’s, from the early 1990s. This unity is suitable to investigate the political and social context of each time, in a dissertation that already deals with five productions. I will, however, briefly address other major filmic readings of *Macbeth*.

Welles’ *Macbeth* (1948) is the second feature-length talking film based on Shakespeare’s play.

The first was made one year earlier at Northwestern University by David Bradley (Rothwell History 73-4). While Rothwell considers Welles' *Macbeth* "patchwork" (48) and says it "oscillates between the sublime and the ridiculous" (76), several critics and scholars have changed their minds over the years. The film was certainly not well-received when it was released in the US in 1948. Most people complained of the quality of the sound and of the unintelligible Scottish accents, an attempt to replicate Scottish dialects. In fact, Welles and his cast had to redub the film to diminish the accent. However, the film is the work of a canonical director, and his key marks—the highly original camera angles, the shadows—can be seen throughout the production, which, by the way, incorporated several points of his famous 1936 voodoo *Macbeth* for the stage. Here the witches are more prominent (they return at the end of the film), fate plays a larger role, and, overall, Welles' protagonist seems more superstitious than the one in Polanski's production. Wendy Harper affirms: "Polanski selects character, Welles fate, and their differing cinematic treatments reflect their choices. Whereas Polanski's imagery is realistic, Welles's is surrealistic. The former director focuses on the natural, the latter stresses the supernatural" (73). Welles replaces Rosse and other characters with a Holy Father, who contrasts the witches' pagan religions.

As regards Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, I believe some of the impact is lost because Macduff's character is eradicated. There are no prophecies involving men not born of women, only forests moving, but, more importantly, this *Macbeth* is less cruel for not ordering the slaying of women and children. For a movie with such a title, there is very little blood. Only one witch (a male) is present, and he is a true spirit, capable of vanishing into thin air. Duncan is said to have killed his predecessor. *Macbeth* himself kills Banquo's murderer (for not having succeeded in killing Fleance, who is a young man, not a boy), on screen—but no blood is shown—and the violence is somehow lessened by the black and white photography. Banquo's ghost appears during the banquet, white and angelical. It is Lady *Macbeth* who pushes her husband to kill Banquo and his son, for she is pregnant, expecting an

heir (the baby dies, stillborn). In her sleepwalking scene, she is sitting down, compulsively washing her hands, and the one watching is Macbeth, who tries to interfere. She does not kill herself. Macbeth is betrayed by his own men, who kill him with arrows (so they can surrender), creating a spectacular porcupine effect. In the end, we see the same piece of wood that we saw in the beginning—a sign resembling a tombstone, in which the words “The site of Cobweb Castle” are inscribed.

Throne is highly influential, and several critics still believe what J. Blumenthal said in 1965: this is the only work “that has ever completely succeeded in transforming a play of Shakespeare’s into a film” (qtd. in Rothwell History 194). Many of the *Macbeth* versions that came later and that are appropriations, rather than adaptations,⁸³ of Shakespearean plays, copy *Throne of Blood*’s substitution of the whole “Tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow” speech (5.5.19-28) by a single word. In *Throne*, it is “Fool!” In *Men of Respect*, it is the protagonist looking at himself in the mirror and yelling “Idiot!”

There are several recent adaptations and appropriations of *Macbeth*. One appropriation is *Scotland, PA* (2001), an independent film by Billy Morrissette, which takes the action to a small town in Pennsylvania. It begins well, with a cook and his wife, a waitress, killing their boss so they can keep the restaurant. But it soon loses momentum and puts too much emphasis on the detective (Christopher Walken) investigating the crime. No prophecies happen, and the murders are scarce. The film just shows two people going insane, ultimately having little to do with Shakespeare’s play. In a similar vein, in 2005 the BBC produced a TV episode called *Joe Macbeth*, as part of its *Shakespeare Re-Told* project. Scottish actor James McAvoy (a star later in *Atonement* and *Wanted*) plays a top chef in a fancy

⁸³ Aimara da Cunha Resende makes this distinction between adaptation and appropriation: “An adaptation is the use of the source text without modification of the main ideas or of the text as a whole, without cuts and/or additions that would interfere in these ideas and ideologically give the text another meaning and object entirely different from the original. *Adaptation* then implies the creation of *mise-en-scène* with changes in location, language transposition aiming at a better understanding of the word-play by the nonnative audience, and swift topical allusions for audience involvement. An appropriation, on the other hand, takes hold of the source text for one’s ideological purpose (often sociopolitical), making it one’s own and transforming it, practically, into another text, not only with minor changes, but thoroughly dressed in new clothes, made up so as to plunge the audience into another universe, full of implications regarding contemporary life and world” (30). Thus, according to Resende’s cogent definitions, Welles’ and Polanski’s *Macbeths* are adaptations, while Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* and Reilly’s *Men of Respect*, among others, are appropriations.

restaurant. Most of the action that mimics the playtext's main plot line takes place in a kitchen.

The most recent appropriation of the playtext appears to be a 2007 comedy called *Never Say Macbeth*, directed by Christopher J. Prouty. Its tagline reads, “The curse of *Macbeth* . . . It brings fire! Death! Boring first dates!” Another production is the 2005 *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth*, by Joey Zimmerman, based on Tom Stoppard's two one-act plays. *Cahoot's Macbeth* is about a staging of the play in a living room in Communist Czechoslovakia, when public performances of *Macbeth* were forbidden. There is also a 26-minute animated production of *Macbeth* by Nikolai Serebryakov, as part of the series *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* (1992).

A British made-for-TV 1998 adaptation of *Macbeth* by Michael Bogdanov, with Sean Pertwee and Greta Scacchi in the lead roles, also exists. It keeps Shakespeare's language but mixes World War I with a *Mad Max* apocalyptic scenario, with the witches as bag ladies (who literally disappear in the air), and soldiers dressed in war outfits. Macbeth and Banquo ride motorcycles, not horses, and the rhythm moves along pretty fast. Duncan's murder occurs offstage, but his body appears afterwards. The scene at the banquet is especially good, with Macbeth having a fit, holding and firing a gun, walking all over the table, and genuinely scaring his guests while talking to a visible Banquo. In the Macduff massacre, there are two children having dinner, and when two henchmen show up, one of them throws some food at the hoodlum. Then the scene fades off, so there is no on-screen violence. Macbeth is also seen with a machine gun, Rambo-style. The last scene between Macduff and Macbeth starts as a fist fight, then has one character holding a gun to the other's head. Finally, after Macduff has defeated Macbeth in the fight, he shoots him (off screen). His body is ditched in a dump with other bodies, and the three witches collect what they can. What impressed me the most about this production is how people who might need help are left unattended. The “bloody man” in the beginning is ignored after he has finished praising Macbeth's heroic acts, nobody “looks to the lady” when Lady Macbeth faints or pretends to faint in 2.3, and, in her most famous speech in the nightwalking scene, neither doctor nor

nurse put her to bed. This society, even if it is not in Scotland circa eleventh century, cares very little for its citizens.

For those who find Polanski's *Macbeth* exploitative sexually, I would recommend watching the Australian 2006 *Macbeth*, directed by Geoffrey Wright, with Sam Worthington and Victoria Hill. There Lady Macbeth appears naked as frequently as possible (when convincing her husband to kill Duncan, in the sleepwalking scene, in her death), and the witches are represented as young teenagers using school uniforms who are not only naked by their second apparition, but also have sex with Macbeth while narrating the prophecies to him. This adaptation updates the time and costumes to drug-related Mafia but leaves the language intact. It might even be bloodier than Polanski's. Duncan's murder happens on-screen, though he is covered by a white sheet while Macbeth stabs him repeatedly; Banquo is killed while riding his motorcycle. The massacre of Macduff's family is the most violent: the kid is shot (we do not see it), but the Lady is strangled to death by a man with a chain. The man seems to be having some kind of sexual satisfaction as he kills her. By Macbeth's murder at the end, the film has grown very, very tired.

There is also a hard-to-find 1997 *Macbeth* directed by Jeremy Freeston, with Jason Connery (Sean Connery's son). This adaptation seems to be of mild importance only because it constitutes the first Scottish film version of the "Scottish play."

6.2 The Context of Polanski's *Macbeth*

Some of the political aspects of the 1970s have already been discussed in Chapter 4, when I write about Nunn's 1976 production. There was Attica in 1971, but before that there were the political and social events of the 1960s: the murders of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the riots of 1967/8, the Vietnam War. But the truth is that few calamities involving a small group of people came close to the murder of Polanski's wife, Sharon Tate, and four of her friends at the director's mansion on

August 9th, 1969. Actor and writer Buck Henry claims, referring to Hollywood at the time, “it was the defining event of our time. It affected everybody's work, it affected the way people thought about other people” (qtd. in Biskind 79). According to Peter Biskind,

The great irony, of course, was that the murders happened a brief two years after the Summer of Love, a week before Woodstock, the celebration of all that was supposed to be best about the '60s. It was as if, at the moment of ripeness, the dark blossoms of decay were already unfolding. Psychedelics were on their way out, acid had been laced with speed to make a paranoia-inducing drug called STP. [...] Hollywood was getting ready to take a fast ride down the cocaine highway. There was a sense of closure, that an era was over, that people had gotten away with a lot for a while and, for the more apocalyptically minded, that the Grim Reaper was going to cut them all down. “It was the end of the '60s,” says [production designer Richard] Sylbert. “All over town you could hear the toilets flushing.” (79)

Like Macbeth in the killings he orders, Manson did not actively participate in the murders, though he acted as mastermind. The media, especially the American media, treated the case (during the four months of investigation while Manson had not yet been discovered) as if the victims and Polanski were the perpetrators of such violence, and as if Polanski himself (who was in London starting pre-production for *Day of the Dolphin*) was to blame, because of the movies he had made, especially *Rosemary's Baby* in 1968. Newspapers and magazines all but printed that, if the director's oeuvre up to that point had included only, say, romantic comedies with happily-ever-after endings, the real-life murders would never have occurred. However, the Manson followers did not even know who their victims were, did not know that Polanski lived there, and were not inspired by any of his films. The director tried to evade this carnival by turning to Shakespeare.⁸⁴ He thought that, by dealing with an iconic author, critics and audience would not mix the violence in his personal life with that in his films.

⁸⁴ This was before Polanski was accused of raping a minor in 1977 and being considered an American fugitive. In 2002, when he got his only Academy Award for Best Director for *The Pianist*, he did not attend. He can be arrested on the spot if he enters the US or Britain, which has extradition agreements with the American courts. Due to the 2008 documentary *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, in February 2009 Polanski asked that his prosecution be dismissed. The documentary indicates that, while Polanski is beloved (“desired”) in France and other parts of Europe, in the US he is a fugitive (“wanted”).

No such luck. Polanski mentions in his autobiography: “Most American critics assumed that I'd used the film for some cathartic purpose. In fact, I'd chosen to make *Macbeth* because I thought that Shakespeare, at least, would preserve my motives from suspicion. After the Manson murders it was clear that whatever the kind of film I'd come out with next would have been treated the same way. If I'd make a comedy, the charge would have been one of callousness” (339-40).

Polanski acknowledges that the murder of his wife not only deeply affected his life, but also his immediate career: “The effect of the Manson killings had been to redouble my influx of ghoulish scripts, all of which I turned down” (331). He had always wanted to direct a film based on a Shakespeare play, and he thought neither Welles' nor Kurosawa's productions had made *Macbeth* justice. When he told his agent of his intentions to film *Macbeth*, his agent replied, “What are you doing to me?” (331). Polanski asked theater critic Kenneth Tynan to be his partner in crime, and they set up to write a screenplay before they had any financial backing. No studio wanted to finance it, so Polanski went to Playboy Productions, which agreed to pay 60% of the total 2.5 million dollars that the film ended up costing (Rosenthal 78). However, the association of a classic author with Hugh Hefner was nicknamed *Shakespeare porn*, and, as Polanski admits, “the American press made it clear that Playboy's sponsoring of *Macbeth* was a piece of unpardonable impudence” (339).

Bernice W. Kliman sees a correlation between elevating *Macbeth* in stature, often by emphasizing the poetry in his words, and diminishing the violence in the story (120). In several stage productions of the nineteenth century, she says, all murders, including those of Banquo and Macduff's son, were moved offstage. “So much was the violence suppressed that Bradley, writing around 1900, could say that *Macbeth*, like *Hamlet*, is notable for the 'absence of the spectacle of extreme underserved suffering’” (120). Polanski's film certainly does not diminish the violence, but it cuts down on the poetry. Still according to Kliman, the “diminution of poetry serves [Polanski's] purpose of denying to *Macbeth* the status of a poet” (128). However, as Kliman attests, Polanski could have made the bloodshed much

more shocking, if he so wanted: “Although Polanski rubs our noses in violence, the film continually exhibits a curious restraint. [...] He retreats from the spectacle” (121). Kliman maintains that one of the reasons Polanski does not unleash violence is because he counts “on our own imagination to fill the gaps he leaves.” She interprets this restraint as follows: “All right, he seems to say, you cringe from the violence I show you, but do not you yourself have those same violent images in your mind? Aren't you quite able to imagine what I hint at?” (122). We are fully capable of filling the gaps and imagining violence, as in the example of Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* I discuss in Chapter 1. Polanski seems to know that he can rely on our minds to come up with anything more gruesome than he dares to show.

Nevertheless, though not as bloody as it could have been, Polanski's *Macbeth* is undeniably a violent movie. Evidently, it was far from being the only violent picture of 1971. This was the year that *Dirty Harry*, *Straw Dogs*, and *A Clockwork Orange* were released, and only a few years after *The Wild Bunch* and *Bonnie and Clyde*. In less than half a decade, *Taxi Driver* and *Death Wish* would follow. Polanski was intrigued that the critics only seemed to have eyes for the violence in his film: “*Macbeth* contained only a small fraction of the gore that characterized any Sam Peckinpah movie, but the violence was realistic. *Macbeth* is a violent play, and I've never believed in cop-outs” (339). Apparently, Tynan wanted the scenes to be less bloody, to which the director rejoined, mentioning the Manson murders: “You didn't see my house last summer. I know about bleeding” (qtd. in Williams 145). On the other hand, perhaps even more influential than the killings was the work of Polish intellectual Jan Kott, who published *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* in 1964. For Kott, “a production of *Macbeth* not evoking a picture of the world flooded with blood would inevitably be false” (86). Per Serritslev Petersen accuses critics of complaining about the bloodshed in Polanski's film while trying to ignore that Shakespeare's playtext is extremely violent itself: “Most American critics were acutely displeased by what they regarded as Polanski's sacrilegious treatment of Shakespeare's classic play

[...]. Roger Ebert found Polanski's characters (*not* Shakespeare's [...]) 'anti-intellectual, witless and driven by deep, shameful wells of lust and violence'" (47).

American critics, especially, were appalled by the violence. One critic blamed Polanski for "turn[ing] us into voyeurs of a killing spree that makes Manson and his friends pale in comparison" (qtd. in Petersen 47). Another critic could not forgive the director: "How do we account for this man who apparently has decided to make us pay for the tragic murder of his wife and friends by demonically bathing us in vomituous film horror?" (qtd. in Petersen 48). *Newsweek* did not like the film either: "All that is good here seems but a pretext for close-ups of knives throwing geysers of blood" (qtd. In Rosenthal 78). Even Pauline Kael, who was usually the first to disagree with unanimous opinions, felt the hysteria was justifiable: "One sees the Manson murders in this *Macbeth* because the director has put them there" (qtd. in Petersen 48). The complaints from American critics were such that it was as if they were echoing Duncan's first line and pointing their finger at Polanski to ask, "What bloody man is *that*?"

In truth, there are twelve people killed on-screen in Polanski's *Macbeth* (Duncan's guards are killed off-screen, just as Lady Macduff and her servant who is raped; Lady Macbeth appears dead on the ground). While this is an insignificant body count compared to, say, a Sylvester Stallone picture (or, at the time, a Peckinpah film), it is still high for a film based on Shakespeare. According to Stephen M. Buhler, this is so because the film "tries to translate the richness of Shakespeare's words more directly into images and techniques. The imagery of this play's language is oppressively violent and Polanski cinematically matches that violence" (84).

Perhaps just as efficient as his images are the sounds he creates. As Paul Rathburn points out, "Polanski causes dread (i.e., the fear of what one is about see) and builds units of tension in *Macbeth* partially through his way of counterpointing what is seen versus what is only heard—off screen" (1). Indeed, the violence becomes omnipresent because of the noises. Even when a murder is not shown, as

in the case of the traitor who is executed (we only see his feet hanging), the sound is responsible for revealing what the camera is hiding. It is because of the masterful sound effects that the 1971 film becomes what Normand Berlin calls “a parade of horrors” (294). Rathburn adds, “Polanski heightens expectations, keeps us off balance, manipulates our responses. Add his technique with the ‘noises off’ referred to above and we have his formula for an effective—perhaps brilliant—horror film” (1).



Fig. 59. Macbeth's young couple in Polanski's film (and Duncan in the middle)

However, American critics were busy pointing flaws. Polanski was criticized for casting young and good looking actors, and for hiring Tynan, as if the presence of a critic would prove that the director was unfamiliar with Shakespeare's universe. Buhler claims that Polanski “knew exactly what he was doing with the playtext as well as with the filmic medium” (84). As for the first argument, Polanski justified his choice of young actors by saying that “Warriors didn’t live to be old men” (qtd. in Jorgens 171). For Deanne Williams, the fact that the two main actors are young makes sense and relates to the feeling of the late 1960s, “Never trust anyone over thirty” (148). He also sees an “uncanny resemblance” between Jon Finch, Polanski’s protagonist, and Mick Jagger (147). To my mind, Finch looks more like Malcolm Macdowell in *A Clockwork Orange*.

Both Jagger and Macdowell, nevertheless, are important figures of the time, and, as we have

seen, Polanski's film is certainly a product of the early 1970s. Bryan Reynolds affirms that Macbeth's visions in the witches' coven in Polanski's film resemble an acid or LSD trip (157). Rosenthal describes it as a "bad trip" with "special effects-laden hallucinations, including a baby being 'untimely ripped' from a womb" (78). As Jack Jorgens claims, Polanski's *Macbeth* "is so 'contemporary' a work [...], with its cynicism, political assassinations, warfare, reign of terror, and reverberations of the Manson murders, that it goes to the opposite extreme from all those 'respectful' stage performances of the play featuring blustering readings of famous speeches by middle-aged actors" (161). For Williams, "Polanski's *Macbeth* reflects a series of sixties preoccupations—medievalism, folk music, hippies, the occult, B-movie horror flicks—that expressed and responded to a widespread sense of disorientation and disruption, not only in the aftermath of the Second World War, but also in response to the polarized mendacities of the fifties" (157).

6.3 The Context of Reilly's *Men of Respect*

The late 1960s and early 1970s were times of turmoil, but the end of the 1980s, albeit more peaceful, also meant change. As Michael Ryan and Douglas Keller observe, "If 1971 signaled the onset of that edgy rightist tone that would characterize the conservative movements of the late seventies and early eighties, 1986-87 signaled the end of conservative hegemony. Ronald Reagan finally began to lose power" (263). Traditional conservatism was giving way to new conservatist forms that would spawn once George W. Bush took power. In the late 1980s, the Iran-Contras scandal occupied headlines and started to erode Reagan's basis. The largest political scandal in the US in the 1980s involved money from weapon sales in Iran being used to sponsor the Contras in Nicaragua. It is difficult to look back and remember the late 1980s as Reagan's ruin, for in 2004, with his death, he was so successfully canonized that he became the icon of the American right, and his two terms were rewritten as Paradise on Earth. If his popularity dropped enormously because of the Iran-Contras affair,

it recovered when the Berlin Wall was torn down, in 1989. Two years later, it was time for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Reagan was considered one of the architects of these reforms, together with Mikhail Gorbachev, and he was able to elect his successor, George Bush. Bush then ordered the invasion of Panama in 1989 and attacked Iraq in January 1991, in the First Persian Gulf War.

Like the early 1970s, the late 1980s and early 1990s were also marked by violent movies. In 1989, Spike Lee released his controversial *Do the Right Thing*. In 1990, there were two important gangster films: Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas*, and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part III*. In 1991, the same year that *Men of Respect* opened, other films included *Terminator 2*, *Boys n' the Hood* (the first mainstream film about gang violence in American ghettos), and *The Silence of the Lambs*. Tarantino would make his influential film debut one year later, with *Reservoir Dogs*, which introduced a new, more stylized kind of violence (coincidentally, there were rumors that Tarantino was scripting a version of *Macbeth* in 1995 [Rosenthal 80]). In any case, it is almost indisputable that the 1990s were marked by Tarantino, who, though not very prolific—he made only three pictures in one decade (aside from *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Jackie Brown*, not counting a segment in the mediocre *Four Rooms*)—was very influential in the way violence was portrayed. R. A. Foakes spots a connection between Tarantino and Shakespeare, for he calls *Titus Andronicus* “Shakespeare's Tarantino play,” in the sense that the playtext “is disconnected from any moral centre and so appears gratuitous and designed to shock” (57). Although I disagree with Foakes that Tarantino's films use gratuitous violence, the filmmaker does include characters that do not seem to have a motive to perpetuate violence. Mr. Blonde, the thief in *Reservoir Dogs* who cuts off the policeman's ear for the sole purpose of enjoying torturing cops, is a case in point.

As an independent picture, *Men of Respect* did not have the fate of other non-Hollywood movies that struck gold, like *Reservoir Dogs* itself and *Sex, Lies, and Videotapes* (1989). It was not distributed nationally, and it grossed only \$140,000 (Rosenthal 80). But just because the film made no

money does not necessarily mean that it was not seen. Ryan and Keller explain that films that are less successful at the box office have more re-runs on cable TV than successful films, since “blockbusters must be kept off the market in order to maintain their scarcity and value.” That way, “lesser films arguably acquire a greater ability to influence audiences by virtue of saturation showing on TV” (214).



Fig. 60. The young couple in *Men of Respect*

Men of Respect was the only film that Reilly directed, and one of the two that he scripted (the other was Alan Rudolph's *Mortal Thoughts*, a thriller with Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, also from 1991). Reilly, who in 1976 had acted in an off Broadway production of *Macbeth*, convinced several cult actors such as John Turturro, Peter Boyle, Dennis Farina and Rod Steiger to waive their fees so they could make this low-budget movie. Most critics disliked the results; a common theme among them being that it was unintentionally funny. For instance, Roger Ebert wrote:

The screenplay has some nice dialogue, of which my favorite is when a mobster is talking about a colleague who has just been killed: “He’s history. Tomorrow, he’ll be geography.” That got a laugh, and so did another scene, after the hero is told that he will not die until the stars fall from the sky. Then there is a fireworks exhibition, and one of the hero’s sidekicks says, “Jeez! It looks just like stars, fallin’ from the sky!” The problem is that this movie is not intended as a comedy. (16)

Ebert still tried to end his review on a positive note: “A lot of work went into it, and some good things

are here and there. But the underlying inspiration for the film is a very, very bad idea” (16). For Rosenthal, Reilly's “attempt to tap Macbeth's key philosophical question (does fate or free will drive the action?) goes no deeper than Mike's last words: 'Shit happens',” and Reilly's insistence to maintain supernatural elements make *Men of Respect* “unintentionally hilarious” (80). He exaggerates: “by lavishly updating virtually every detail from Shakespeare, [Reilly] digs himself and his formidable cast into a very deep hole. A movie that wants to be taken seriously ends up providing the most risible chunks of modernized Shakespeare in screen history” (80).

The *Washington Post* critics were not any kinder. Joe Brown complained that “this movie's most serious flaw is its very seriousness. Lacking the grim wit of a *GoodFellas*, it becomes unintentionally funny when it attempts dire tragedy,” though he concedes that “there's some fun in the transformation of the Big Scenes” (7). His colleague, Rita Kemply, was not as respectful. For her, the film “begins with the usual shootout over a spaghetti dinner and proceeds pro forma through the regulation drips and splatters of the godfather genre. Mamma mia, it's such a mess—they ought have called it 'Out, Out, Damned Tomato Sauce'” (11).

Janet Maslin, the *New York Times* critic, was an exception to the avalanche of negative reviews.

For her,

Men of Respect is hard to beat when it comes to eccentricity, weird inventiveness and sheer verve. [...] It's a *Macbeth* with a distinct sense of humor, although the essential seriousness of the venture is never compromised by Mr. Reilly's playful streak. [...] Mr. Reilly's direction is muted and somber, but the film manages to be quietly outrageous all the same. From the witch's modern-sounding advice to Mike Battaglia (“You only have to be yourself”), to the satin-lined attache case in which the murder weapon is presented, to the theatrically bad weather (“Hell of a downpour out there tonight”), this ingenious mobster *Macbeth* knows its territory, both new and old. (21)

The very few scholars who tackle *Men of Respect* also try to find positive aspects. Robert Willson considers *Men of Respect* “fresh Shakespeare,” that is, “the plays and characters transported

from their traditional nexuses to new and unexpected locations on the cultural landscape” (34). He also welcomes the demystification of the text: “demystification occurs because of the translation of Shakespeare’s verse into New York street idiom” (35). As Brode says, “In its favor, [*Men of Respect*] depicted Mafia rituals more accurately than any previous movie including Francis Ford Coppola’s *Godfather* and Martin Scorsese’s *Goodfellas*; however, it lacked the cinematic storytelling skills those major filmmakers provide” (193). He dislikes John Turturro’s acting in this film, and I must agree with him. Normally an excellent character actor, Turturro, who is a constant face in several quirky movies made by Spike Lee and the Coen brothers, gives an over-the-top performance in *Men of Respect*. As Brown rambles, “It takes a wild stretch to imagine anyone swearing loyalty to Turturro’s grimacing Godfather; swinging wildly between glowering and Goofy-ness, his descent into sweaty paranoia is to laugh” (7). Turturro’s bad acting is in itself curious, for he had just come from making another gangster film in which he excelled, *Miller’s Crossing*. On the other hand, his acting is not much worse than Al Pacino’s in a gangster film that seems to inspire *Men of Respect*, Brian De Palma’s *Scarface* (1983).

In real life, Turturro has been married to his *Men of Respect* co-star, Katherine Borowitz, since 1985. It is a mystery why they accepted to cut their salary in order to make a film whose screenplay left much to be desired. The answer may have some connection to Rothwell’s opinion, who calls the independent Shakespeare films “perhaps less ‘transgressive’ than ‘quixotic’” (215).

Indeed, *Men of Respect* has few transgressive qualities. After the prologue, which says “There is nothing but what has a violent end and a violent beginning,” it starts with a shoot-out in a crowded restaurant, filmed in gory slow motion. There are some twists in comparison to Shakespeare’s playtext: first, the mafiosi’s organization seems to be in worst shape than Duncan’s kingdom. The Padrino’s empire is about to fall; his *consiglieri* are already advising him to retire and move to Florida, and nobody has any idea about what is going on. Mike Battaglia/Macbeth is a low-ranking officer in this mob, and he goes to the diner to kill the Padrino’s rivals because he wants to, not because someone

sends him. He manages to shoot five people in the restaurant, single-handedly, without any help from Banquo, who is called Bankie here. In the end of the scene, it is Battaglia's hitman, Sal, and not Bankie, who saves his life by shooting a bodyguard who is aiming at the hero. This is the most violent scene in the picture, and it is quite bloody, since it is in slow motion, with blood spouting out.



Fig. 61. Bloodbath at a diner in the beginning of *Men of Respect*

Strangely, it is Sal who narrates the action at the diner to the Padrino and other mobsters. That is, he is the “bloody man,” although he seems much more tired than wounded. One wonders why Reilly would have someone narrate action that we have just seen. In the playtext, and in Polanski's movie, this happens offstage and off-camera, so there is a reason for the narration. I think Reilly's intentions for showing us the narration is to demonstrate the enthusiasm of the man telling the story.



Fig. 62. Sal, the bloody man in *Men of Respect*, narrates his story

Sal informs the other wise guys, “What a piece of work this guy is.”⁸⁵ [...] Battaglia grabs [the Greek] by the throat, spits in his face, cursing him for the two-face that he is. All hell breaks loose. I mean, we covered him from the window and he is shooting up the place. I mean, leads flying around there like freaking confetti and he doesn’t take a scratch. [...] I mean, blood’s running like Hershey’s over there. Oh Christ, I can’t do it justice. You had to be there.” Aside from the non-inspired imagery (“blood's running like Hershey's”), Reilly seems to have included this repetitive passage to let us know that narration lies. After all, we have just seen that Battaglia has not spat on the Greek's face. Besides, Sal's narration appears to be more fascinating than what is actually shown us in slow motion. That the narration lies is an interesting theme, but it is not carried out in the movie. In fact, on a first viewing, the spectator might not even be able to notice Sal's inconsistency.



Fig. 63. Polanski's bloody man

In Polanski's *Macbeth*, the bloody man is bloody indeed, one of his eyes closed, his whole face red, and his audience interacts with him much more than the perplexed mobsters interact with their not-so-bloody man. The thanes and other soldiers laugh when he mentions that Macbeth cut a soldier from “the nave to th' chops,” and also when he answers Duncan's question whether Macbeth was dismayed with the arrival of new enemy soldiers by saying, sardonically, “Yes, as sparrows eagles; or the hare the lion” (1.2.22). In Polanski's warrior society, violence is a joke to be laughed at. And it is everywhere, in

⁸⁵ This is an allusion to Hamlet's prose line “What a piece of work is a man” (*Hamlet* 2.2.311).

every frame, in every soundtrack. One early scene that is not in the playtext includes a soldier pillaging dead enemies covering a battlefield. When one man moves, the soldier hits him with a flail or spiked ball, a medieval weapon of extreme cruelty. We see red stains covering the man's inert body at every hit. This man using a flail looks a bit like Macbeth, and a bit like Banquo, though he is neither since we see Duncan galloping past him.



Fig. 64. Man uses a flail against a defenseless soldier in *Macbeth*

Picking an actor that resembles Macbeth and Banquo to attack a wounded soldier who presents no resistance is in tandem with Polanski's view in his film, that violence does not start, nor will it end, with Macbeth. As Foakes reminds us, the Macbeth in the playtext, judging from the bloody man's description of him, is a person who creates "Strange images of death": "Here in the early scenes Macbeth is represented in ways that might justify Malcolm later calling him a 'butcher' (5.9.35), a fighter so habituated to carnage that he is not troubled by the horror of the killings he has carried out" (150). It is a symptom of an ailed society that the King and his troupe, when hearing the bloody man's narrative, cheer him on and praise Macbeth, instead of recoiling in horror. In Polanski's film the enthusiastic reaction from the listeners is much more evident than in *Men of Respect*.

Ironically, however, none of the strange images of death that Macbeth helps create haunt him, but the thought of killing a king makes for a “horrid image”. In Polanski's film, when Macbeth starts thinking (before receiving any pressure from his wife) about killing Duncan, he says to himself, “Stars, hide your fires / Let not light see my black and deep desires” (1.4.50-1). At the same time he delivers these lines, he observes a man hanging. This, of course, emphasizes the parallel between Macbeth and traitors of the king, foreshadowing that Macbeth's fate might be the same as the man's being hanged, if he acts on his “black and deep desires.” But, as we will soon learn, his deep desires—his appetite for violence—will not be satiated by murdering Duncan. Just the same, this is an uncanny moment for Macbeth. Although he does not equate violence at war with the violence of killing a king (the former can even earn some popularity points, as Polanski demonstrates in a scene where the soldiers shout Macbeth's name), violence is certainly not something unfamiliar for this warrior. It is just being repressed—for now. On the other hand, if Macbeth consciously needs to repress the “horrid” thought, it is because the thought has already come out into the open.



Fig. 65. An active King Duncan in Polanski's film

In Polanski's *Macbeth* Duncan is somewhat more active than other productions usually show. The king is seen riding a horse, walking, and dancing with Lady Macbeth. Nicholas Selby was 46 when

he played the part in the movie, and the Macbeth couple was in their late twenties. As I said above, it was common criticism at the time of the film's release that the Macbeths were too young. However, the movie is set in eleventh-century Scotland, not in Renaissance England or in the United States during the 1970s. People's life expectancy in the Middle Ages was much lower than today. Most of the other actors in the film (Banquo, Rosse) are close to Macbeth's age. Fleance and Macduff's son are boys, not teenagers. And Duncan, though older, is far from being the white-bearded, fragile senior citizen from Nunn's production.

Polanski's Duncan is not saintly or pious, but, for some reason, is not a king Macbeth wishes to kill. The general ignores his wife's insistence, turns his back to her, goes back to the banquet while she speaks, and it is she who has to follow him. He seems determined to forget the “terrible feat” (1.7.80)—until, that is, Malcolm puts his cup in front of him, demanding to be served, and says, sarcastically, “Hail, Thane of Cawdor.” Kliman interprets his line as “putting Macbeth in his place” (136). Macbeth is so upset by Malcolm's arrogance that he seems to make up his mind to kill Duncan (Malcolm's father, no less) at that very moment. So much so that his next line to Lady Macbeth is “If we should fail?” From then onwards, he appears to be quite resolute—until he arrives at Duncan's chamber.

Before he gets there, though, the Macbeths watch from their window as Duncan is put to bed by his servants, as if his chamber were a stage on which another protagonist will soon intrude. Fantasy and reality are blurred when Macbeth sees an imaginary, shining dagger. Brode thinks that Polanski's decision to show the “dagger of the mind” is a mistake: “In a film that otherwise plays as a realistic costume epic rather than a fairy tale, the decision violates the director's overall attitude” (188). It is true that the film aims for authenticity. In some moments, it is so real that, when Duncan hugs Macbeth, dust springs from his clothes. Thus, the appearance of a dagger that we can see, rather than only imagine, does seem anachronistic and out of place. On the other hand, this is a turning point for the character, and the most difficult decision he has yet to make. It is then that the reality of his life (that he

will never be king, for Malcolm has been chosen, and that he will be a hired hand to ward off the new ruler's traitors) becomes entangled with fantasy (that of becoming a king himself), so it seems appropriate that something as strange as a flying dagger marks his confusion. Foakes believes that “[t]he sudden appearance of blood on the visionary dagger strengthens his resolve” (152).



Fig. 66. A dagger takes Macbeth to Duncan's room

Another blurring of reality and fantasy, creating the effect of liminality, of something being on the edge, is that, when Macbeth opens the door to Duncan's room, he sees the guards drunk, asleep, and even the wine they drank looks like blood on the floor. He kicks one of them, apparently, to check if they are indeed asleep, but he might as well be checking if they are still alive. The next time we see them is when they briefly wake up, confused and covered in blood, and the film does not actually show their death. We do see them dead, in a scene that recalls this first moment of them asleep on the floor, when Lady Macbeth sees them dead and dismembered, which causes her to faint.

Brode maintains that Polanski makes “the graphic (and ritualistic) killing of Duncan the film’s centerpiece” (190). In the playtext, and in most productions, such as Nunn's and Cruz's, Macbeth stops at the door to Duncan's chamber. In Polanski's movie, he opens that door. According to Berlin,

“Macbeth’s savage slaughter of Duncan sets the tone for the rest of the film. Whereas Shakespeare brilliantly evokes the murder without showing it on stage, presenting the haunting and nervous reactions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Polanski takes full advantage of his medium to *show* us the murder” (293). The contempt Macbeth demonstrates for the king's guards, whom he kicks, is not repeated once he is alone, facing Duncan. He touches the king's naked torso with one of the daggers he collected from the guard (not with the imaginary dagger that pointed to Duncan's door). And here he experiences hesitancy, which for him is nothing new, but for us, spectators, this is a novel idea. After all, most productions respect Shakespeare's decision of having Duncan's murder happen offstage. We are not used to watching Macbeth kill the king. Now we see Duncan waking up and, for some seconds, we share his perplexity at seeing *another* man on whom he “built an absolute trust” (1.4.13) betraying him. Polanski suggests that, if Duncan had not awaked and seen Macbeth, the general might not have murdered him (*Men of Respect* echoes this scene, since the Padrino also wakes up). For Ernst Jentsch, albeit not for Freud, the uncanny involves not being able to decide—which is precisely what Macbeth feels when he is at Duncan's chamber.



Fig. 67. Macbeth (we only see his dagger) has doubts about killing Duncan

After Duncan recognizes him, Macbeth stabs him about nine times, a “choreography” that some critics have associated with Sharon Tate's murder (Petersen 43). Duncan does not die right away. Rather, he falls from his bed onto the floor and, in the process, drops his crown, which was at his feet.

As he lies wheezing, with blood on his chest, Macbeth again approaches him and cuts his throat. The camera, however, does not show this. Instead, we hear a gushing sound of a throat being slit, and we see Macbeth's sleeve redden. To demonstrate the king's death, the camera focuses the king's crown when it stops moving. The image then cuts to Lady Macbeth.⁸⁶



Fig. 68. Macbeth finishes off the king

Since Duncan's murder is visually shown, Polanski understands that there is no need to linger on the couple's nervousness, and the scene between them is heavily edited. It is worth mentioning, though, that Lady Macbeth appears shaken when she sees the bloody daggers that Macbeth has brought. Her delivery of “My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white” (2.2.61)⁸⁷ cannot hide her insincerity. While she is framing the guards, Macbeth is shown taking water from a well, with a bucket. The water becomes red as he washes his hands. When he finishes, as he prepares to throw out the water, the camera shows a muddy floor, and it reflects his face. Only then does he cover that reflection with the red water from the bucket, literally drowning himself in blood.

⁸⁶ Randal Robinson points out that “three sections of the film [...] are almost entirely Polanski’s creations: those in which Duncan confronts the original Cawdor, Macbeth murders Duncan, and Macbeth dreams of Fleance. Though differing in style, these pieces have much in common. In each one, a male with a sword, dagger, or arrow sits or stands above a man who lies on his back, and the man on his back is particularly vulnerable in his throat or neck. [...] Finally, each episode leads into a shot or a sequence where a woman or women appear” (106).

⁸⁷ In Polanski's film, the word *scorn* is used instead of *shame*: “I scorn to wear a heart so white.”



Fig. 69. Macbeth's reflexion on the mud as it is covered by blood

In *Men of Respect*, Padrino Charlie D'Amico surely is no sanctified King Duncan. Not for Battaglia's wife, anyway. Ruthie says to her husband: “I’ve stepped in shit on the street cleaner than Charlie D’Amico. [...] Charlie respects the fat end of a bat, the sharp end of a stick. Charlie respects what he fears—and that ain’t you.” She says this looking down at him, who is naked, and questioning his masculinity. The Padrino does not treat Battaglia with dignity, even though he ponders, in his speech, that Battaglia “never causes any ruckuss.” When the Padrino tells the group to support his sons, whom he has just nominated next in line, he adds that, if someone does not, he will send Battaglia after them. Thus, basically, Battaglia is a muscle man, and will remain that way while the Padrino is alive. When Battaglia receives him at the entrance to his restaurant, the camera shows the two men hugging at a distance. Then they walk through a dark place between the gate and the garden, in what seems to be a tunnel. The camera moves to the other side of the tunnel, where there is light, to reveal Ruthie. It looks as if all the men have to pass through a womb, but at least there is light, in the form of a ruthless woman, at the end of the tunnel.



Fig. 70. A long corridor gives way to Battaglia's house

The dagger that Macbeth/Battaglia sees before him is a bit of blood dripping from the ceiling. While Ruthie watches from afar, looking like Morticia Adams in this scene, Battaglia goes inside the Padrino's chamber. Like Polanski's Macbeth, Battaglia too hesitates before killing his Duncan, and only does so after the Padrino opens his eyes, recognizing him, and asking “Mikey?” The camera focuses Battaglia while he stabs Charlie, so the action occurs off screen. When the camera does move to Charlie, it only frames his face, with a few droplets of blood. Although Battaglia is wearing black gloves, his shirt gets stained under the sweater. Afterwards, when he encounters his wife, the hand-held camera follows Battaglia's words, “I can't stop shaking,” and goes from him to Ruthie, who has now red hands, after having returned to incriminate Charlie's thugs. “I got blood on me, too,” she tells him. “I'm not crying about it. It's that prick's blood. I should dye my hair with it. Now, get that off. The rain ain't washing it clean. [...] Water.... And it's all gone.” She even manages to sleep a little.



Fig. 71. Battaglia has doubts about killing the Padrino in *Men of Respect*

Here, the hell's Porter is a janitor with an attitude and very limited screen time. Instead of insistent knocking, it is a doorbell that rings. Similar to what happens in many Mafia movies, the Don's headquarters operate inside an Italian restaurant. Macduff, who is called Duffy and is Irish in *Men of Respect*, goes in to wake up the Padrino, while Battaglia and a man stand outside, talking about the rough night. The man tells him about an earthquake that shook the city the previous night, and prophesies that the end of the world is coming, when everybody will die. Duffy comes out of the guesthouse shouting “They hit him! They hit Charlie!”, calling everyone. Ruthie does not really participate in this scene. She is present, but she watches everything from a distance, looking down from a balcony. And she does not faint.

It is quite ludicrous that the two bodyguards awake with the screaming (Ruthie had put sleeping powder in their coffee), and show up with blood and holding a dagger. Battaglia shoots them in front of all the men, in spite of Mal's (Malcolm's) protests to take them alive. Bankie tries to stop him. One of them dies on the spot, but the other, lying down, looks at Battaglia and his wife, framed on the same image, before he dies. We see a reaction shot from Bankie, who notices that exchange. Duffy criticizes Battaglia by asking him, “Pretty quick on the draw, aren’t you, Mikey?”, while Mal is almost hysterical

that he will not be able to question his father's bodyguards. According to Rosenthal, Charlie's "murder sets off a spiral of violence faithfully copied from *Macbeth*, although disappointingly directed in routine, low-budget style" (80).



Fig. 72. Battaglia shoots the Padrino's bodyguards

In Polanski's film, Scotland is such a corrupt society that the thanes seem more than physically strong and war-like—they are murderers themselves. Rosse is the best example. In this movie in which forty percent of Shakespeare's lines are cut (Rothwell, *Privileging* 50), after all the alterations Rosse becomes the most abominable of characters, even more abominable, perhaps, than Macbeth himself. Here Rosse helps to defeat Cawdor, supports Macbeth, not only supervises but takes part in Banquo's murder (he becomes the mysterious third murderer), disposes of the two murderers, bribes a servant to open the gates to Macduff's castle, then betrays Macbeth because the king prefers Seyton, informs Macduff of his family massacre, pretending to be upset about something he himself has caused, and finally removes the crown from Macbeth's severed head and gives it to Malcolm. As Rothwell puts it, John Stride's Rosse "is the quintessence of the smirking sociopath" (*Privileging* 52), an "embodiment of evil" as significant as Iago, Edmund, and Aaron the Moor (54). Kliman, however, does not see Rosse

as a Iago because the thane is ticked by ambition, not by mere evil (127). Brode adds, “On the eve of Watergate, Polanski turned Ross [sic] into a minor Machiavelli, a political animal who remains uncommitted to any cause and survives by joining whichever side appears likely to win” (191). Rosenthal explains that Polanski and Tynan got the idea of making Rosse such a malevolent character from an obscure Victorian essay (79). This characterization works, sometimes obscuring much of Macbeth's evil.

Rosse is the one who, when first meeting Macbeth, helps him to his horse. In the scene in which Macbeth is crowned the new king, Polanski makes Macbeth stand on a stone, and three or four men elevate him. One is Rosse, the other is Banquo. Rosse is the one who shouts “Hail, King of Scotland!”, and as soon as he does so, Banquo stares him down, until Rosse stops smiling.



Fig. 73. Banquo and Rosse “elevate” Macbeth

Banquo is suspicious of Macbeth from the start. When Duncan names Malcolm his heir, Banquo observes Macbeth closely. He is surprised about the king's murder, and his reply—“Too cruel any where”—to Lady Macbeth's “What, in our house?” is a putdown. There is also an interesting camera movement before the thanes and guests head to Duncan's chamber to see the dead king. Macbeth explains that he repents having killed the guards, which causes Macduff to look at Banquo, who looks at Lady Macbeth, who looks at Rosse. Only then does Macduff interrupt the complicity

caused by this suspicion by asking Macbeth, “Wherefore did you so?” As they enter Duncan's room, we hear women screaming, just as we will hear later, when Macduff's castle is attacked.⁸⁸ Banquo is key in telling the thanes to calm down. However, he is not at all happy when Macbeth is crowned.

It is intriguing that, in Polanski's film, when Macbeth says “Here's our chief guest” (3. 1.11), followed by Lady Macbeth's “If he had been forgotten, / It had been as a gap in our great feast,” they are not referring to Banquo, but to a bear. Berlin points out that, when Macbeth says “bear-like I must fight the course” in the Shakespearean text (5.7.2), he is making a reference to a gruesome sport, that of bearbaiting, in which a bear, tied to a stake, is attacked by several dogs. Polanski shows bits and pieces of this “sport” in his film, thus making a poetic part visual (297). After Banquo is killed and the murderers themselves are disposed of, “the bloody carcasses of the bear and dogs are dragged before our eyes. This brutal scene not only counterpoints the violence in the human sphere; it also projects Polanski's view that a king's fate, like that of the chained bear, is to be attacked and ultimately destroyed by bloodthirsty underlings. The bear represents King Duncan brought down by Macbeth” (Shaw 211). I think it is quite obvious that the bear represents Banquo, because of “Here's our chief guest” earlier, associating the bear with Banquo, and also because the bloody bear comes after Banquo is killed. It may also represent the carnage that takes place under Macbeth's reign of terror, and how easy it is to get rid of corpses (but not of ghosts).



Fig. 74. A dead bear is dragged in Polanski's *Macbeth*

⁸⁸ The guards' crime scene at Duncan's chamber foreshadows two other violent scenes. First, the massacre at Macduff's castle, where, as is the case here, women's screaming start before we actually see any violent image. The second scene is Lady Macbeth's death. One of the guards is positioned in a similar way to which her body will be positioned after her fall.

If we judge from Macbeth's lines in the playtext (3.1.103), he intends to reward the men for murdering Banquo, not kill them. Yet in Polanski's film (and in Antunes' production), we see Macbeth arranging to have them killed. We follow them to the watery dungeon in which they are thrown. Rosse is conveniently there, ready to push the younger man. The older man is eager to please the King, but the younger man (his son?) is clearly uncomfortable and hesitant. Their clumsy moves in killing Banquo—letting Fleance escape, allowing time for Banquo to shoot (with an arrow) Rosse's horse, so that no one will be able to go after the boy—demonstrate their lack of expertise. They are so unskilled, and so uncommitted and reluctant, that it makes sense for Macbeth to send a third man (Rosse) to supervise the scene. Also, it makes Fleance's flight much more realistic than in other productions. For Kliman, the two men are powerless in rejecting a king's offer, and “one of Polanski's quirks is to make his audience sympathise with these murderers” (125). Indeed, these men, whose only use in the story is to kill an enemy of the king and to be killed shortly after, are victims of a society in which violence is rewarded if one is a noble, like Rosse. But the poor are disposable. If we compare these two destitute murderers (who are bullied by the king) with the others that kill and rape women and children in Macduff's castle, all the while having a jolly good time, these two earn our sympathy.



Fig. 75. Banquo is killed by two incompetent murderers in *Macbeth*

In *Men of Respect*, Bankie is not happy to hear when the witches (who are actually a gypsy family of husband, wife and grown-up son, and only the woman “has the gift”) tell him that his son will be Padrino. “Over my dead body,” he replies, and she adds, “As you have said.” Bankie's son, Philly, is some sort of MBA young man who is “good with numbers.” However, Bankie apparently changes his mind overnight about Philly's destiny, because, at Charlie's wake, he proudly introduces his son to the other wise guys. Just as in Polanski's film, where Macbeth dreams that Banquo and Fleance kill him, in *Men of Respect* Battaglia also has a scary nightmare. He dreams that he wakes up in the middle of the night to find Bankie and his son, Philly, having a barbecue in his backyard. They invite him for a hamburger or a hot dog and, as Battaglia relaxes, Bankie holds him while Philly stabs him. Judging by this description, the scene appears to be bloody, but the action does not happen in front of the camera. As Philly is stabbing Battaglia, for instance, the camera is on the victim, not on the murder itself. After Battaglia wakes up from his bad dream, Ruthie urges him to kill Bankie: “He's no friend of yours.”

Battaglia phones Bankie to invite him for a party, and then the conversation definitely reminds us of *Cliff's Notes*—the key words and phrases from *Macbeth* are all there. For example, Battaglia tells him, “I've got a place saved for you at the table,” and Bankie replies, “All right, I'll make an appearance. But do me a favor: don't glue me to a chair, ok? Please.” Battaglia also asks Bankie to pick up some provolone for him at a store, on his way to his house, and insists that he bring Philly. Bankie eats a piece of a sausage that he was supposed to deliver to Battaglia, showing his contempt for the boss. As they leave, when they have just opened the door of the store, shots reach Bankie. The door closes, and he stays outside, an easy target, while Philly is desperate inside the store, at the other side of the door. This scene is slightly reminiscent of *The Godfather*, when Marlon Brando's Don is shot at a fruit stand.



Fig. 76. Bankie is gunned down in front of a store, while his son is behind the door

Keeping up with the *Macbeth* references in *Men of Respect*, the first thing Battaglia hears when he enters his banquet is a mafioso advising him to bet on a race horse, Great Scot. Battaglia wants to kill one of the murderers who failed in his attempt to shoot Philly, Bankie's son, but at least the murderer tells him that Bankie's "a ghost. You can forget about him." Of course, Battaglia does not forget Bankie, at least not so fast. He is a nervous wreck at the banquet, which is actually a party, with people sitting at different tables. He picks up a fight with two wise guys because they are laughing too loud, and he suspects they are talking about him. For Willson, in this banquet scene, "most are openly skeptical of Battaglia's ability to rule" (36). Worried that he is ruining her party, Ruthie orders him to stop drinking. Battaglia is too far out *before* he sees Bankie's ghost. The ghost appears at the entrance, at the same place where Battaglia welcomed the Padrino to his house. Bankie, with a gunshot in his stomach, leaning on the wall, moves through the tunnel. The camera zooms in on Bankie until we have a close up of his face, looking at Battaglia. This is juxtaposed by a close up of Battaglia, who goes to him, in slow motion, but Bankie disappears after one of Battaglia's men blocks his way. Willson says that "the 'ghostly' visit by Como (Banquo) is transformed into Mike's encounter with his own alcohol-induced hallucination" (36). However, Battaglia seems to be more disturbed than drunk or anything

else. Ruthie still tries to find an explanation for his lament that “He was bleeding all over the table.” She says that it is just the Chianti that dripped (the camera does not let us see this).



Fig. 77. Bankie's ghost comes through the tunnel in *Men of Respect*

When he sees Bankie again, he is in the middle of the men, who are looking at him. Bankie points at Battaglia, laughing, and all the men stare at him. Battaglia goes straight to whom he thinks is Bankie, and starts strangling him. Naturally, it is just another Mafioso. Sal justifies that Battaglia is not feeling well, “it's the flu or something.” When one of the men suggests that maybe they should leave, Ruthie does not react well. She wants them to stay, just as Vera Fischer's Lady Macbeth in Cruz's production. Battaglia, now alone with his wife, complains: “Time was, you shot the guy's brains out and he'd die, and that was the end of it. Now it comes back at you.” She insists that he should stop drinking and showcases her reasons: “This thing was to make friends, keep friends. You're gonna push them away.” But her speed in rejecting his offer to go downstairs implies that she might have ideas of power without him, and she returns to the party by herself. She is devastated to find out that everyone has left, and *this* is the beginning of her breakdown.

In Polanski's film, the banquet also marks the beginning of the couple's separation, but Lady

Macbeth is not concerned that the party is a failure, for she has no political ambitions. The banquet starts with Macbeth's receiving a nod from Rosse, indicating that Banquo's murderers have been eliminated. This is a sequence that appears more theatrical than cinematic. As Rathburn explains, "Polanski's repeated use of long takes provides moments in which the blocking is more theatrical than filmic and we see characters interacting rather than as separate screen images. More importantly for this film, the long takes—often nearly silent—build tension" (1). Thus, the first time Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost, we only see its back, framed by the other guests, who sit still, facing Macbeth.



Fig. 78. Banquo's ghost in its second phase, in Polanski's film

In Kliman's description,

The ghost appears once in the scene (not twice as in Shakespeare) but goes through a metamorphosis in cross shots—that is, shots of him interspersed with reaction shots of others. First, the camera catches him from behind, his brown hair grey, his hand grey. As he turns to face the camera, his whole face has the pallor of death. The next shot shows him wounded and bloodied. The next has him confronting and chasing Macbeth in a dream-like sequence. As Macbeth becomes more horrified, Banquo's ghost becomes ghashtlier and ghashtlier, moving huge and wraith-like in slow motion towards the camera, which gives Macbeth's perspective in a low angle shot that magnifies the phantom. (132)

When Macbeth sees the ghost for the first time, he drops his cup, in horror. The image is similar

to that of Duncan's crown circling on the floor before being still, and it also foreshadows one of the film's final scenes, when the tyrant is decapitated. As Banquo's ghost moves toward Macbeth, it is able to corner him next to the chain, the same place in which the bear used to be. Macbeth is not acting “bear-like” in this scene, unless we remember the bear's fate in the bear-baiting attraction. Nevertheless, one detail that calls our attention in this sequence is that the ghost's shape changes four times. First, he appears to be of a grey color, with no blood. Next, his face is losing blood. Then it becomes a spectre, literally disappearing into the air, only to reappear seconds later. Finally, it is holding a bird. And yet, none of the ghost's forms match how we saw Banquo die: he receives an axe-blow on his back, and immediately falls, face-down, in a lake (Robinson notes that, as Macbeth tries to block his vision of Banquo's ghost, he covers his face, echoing Banquo's death (105). The murderer lies to Macbeth when he alleges that Banquo's throat was cut and he received “twenty trenched gashes on his head” (3.4.26). Therefore, as Kliman points out, Banquo's ghost is shown not the way he died, but as the murderer lied about his death, making the image “the very painting of [Macbeth's] fear” (3.40.60) (130).



Fig. 79. Banquo's ghost during Macbeth's hallucination, with an axe in his back

Macbeth only gets to know the truth about how Banquo was actually killed in the most uncanny sequence in Polanski's film, that of his second (and last) consultation with the witches. In his drug-

induced hallucination, Macbeth sees Banquo with an ax on his back. This is not exactly how Banquo was killed, but it gets closer to the truth than the “twenty gashes” version. However, the whole hallucination sequence is fraught with elements of the uncanny, and needs to be addressed.⁸⁹ The idea of the witches itself is uncanny, because Macbeth is not sure if they are women or spirits. Their liminality between two worlds, the physical and the spiritual, creates doubt. Everything in this sequence is supernatural, starting with the prediction of the future and the concretization of the witches' initial prophecy, that Banquo would generate a line of kings. But amidst images of a baby being removed from a womb, of mirrors referring to other mirrors, and of lifeless forms like that of an armor becoming animate, Polanski adds a shot of Macbeth's decapitated head. As Hélène Cixous says, it is the relationship to death which depicts the uncanny in its highest form (542), and this sequence is full of “strange images of death.”



Fig. 80. The naked witches in Polanski's film

Some reviewers missed the point because they were too terrorized looking at the naked witches. In fact, the nudity in Polanski's film is almost as frequently discussed as its violence. However, more than being exploitative, it can be used to distinguish between dominators and those dominated. Naomi

⁸⁹ Since in the playtext the hallucination sequence starts with the witches' preparing a disgusting recipe, *Men of Respect* tries to do the same, by showing the fortune tellers' watching TV and learning how to prepare lamb's head.

Wolf claims that the fact that women are exposed naked in the media is part of a strategy of domination (32). In situations where there are dominators and dominated, it is common for the dominated to wear fewer clothes. Black slaves walked around semi-naked, while their masters wore clothes. The same thing happened in Nazi concentration camps: in spite of the extreme cold in Germany and Poland, prisoners were nude on several occasions. In advertising, it is common for men to appear clothed next to a semi-nude woman. Even in sexual relations involving sadism and masochism, the dominator (or dominatrix) is more clothed than the dominated. This happens so the dominated (in Wolf's argument, the women) can know their place (133), just as Malcolm, by ordering Macbeth to fill his cup, reminds the tyrant of his lower rank.



Fig. 81. A nude Lady Macbeth during her sleepwalking scene

I see the nakedness in Polanski's *Macbeth* as a sign of vulnerability and weakness on the part of those who are dominated. In the playtext, Banquo talks about having “our naked frailties hid, / That suffer in exposure” (2.3.126-7). Polanski explains in his autobiography why he chose to portray Lady Macbeth nude in her sleepwalking scene, “It would render her more vulnerable and human. Quite apart from that, everyone slept naked in her day. The wearing of nightclothes was a social and theatrical convention, not least because women's parts in Shakespeare's were played by young boys” (333). Thus, Lady Macbeth's nakedness is far from suggesting any hint of eroticism. Or maybe I am just saying that

because I am a woman.

Some male critics seem to have a different opinion. For instance, a *Daily Mirror* critic was outraged: “Francesca Annis comes across like a spot-crazy *Playboy* bunny” (qtd. in Polanski 339). Berlin makes the sexist statement that, while it is pleasant to gaze at a nude Lady Macbeth and at some of the young witches, nudity in the old hags is “grotesque” and “offensive” (296). For him, their nudity is part of the film’s *violence*! And he is not alone: E. Pearlman considers the nude witches an image so terrifying as the blood in the playtext (254). To less purist and sexist spectators, the witches' nudity may illustrate a certain bond between these women who were severely persecuted during the Middle Ages (and *Macbeth* takes place in the eleventh century). Lady Macduff's son is also naked before he dies, when he is being bathed by her, something that was also criticized, but which depicts vulnerability and closeness between two people who will soon be dead. Nevertheless, this nakedness is also a sign of the 1970s, when it was not uncommon to have the whole cast nude (as in the various stage productions of the musical *Hair* and *Oh! Calcutta!*, the latter created by Kenneth Tynan himself). Today, with the hysteria of being accused of child pornography, it would be unthinkable for a mainstream film to show a naked boy (women's nudity is liberated, unless they are the star actress). As a matter of fact, when American cable TV airs Polanski's *Macbeth* nowadays, the scene of the boy's bath is edited out.



Fig. 82. Macduff's son takes a bath

The nudity (which was so fiercely criticized by those who considered it blasphemy for Shakespeare to be associated with Hugh Hefner) can also add to the uncanny effect of Polanski's *Macbeth*. Jean-Marie Todd claims that the uncanniness of female genitals relies on the fear of castration (524). For Freud, female genitals are uncanny because they are home to all of us, so in a way they are strangely familiar. If we are to agree with Todd and Freud, then so much nakedness in Polanski's film might have more to do with creating a sense of unease than in exciting—or repulsing—male audiences. And we should not overlook that Duncan's murder, in a way, is also a castration. In Polanski's film, he appears to be naked (at least from his waist up), showing that the director's intent in portraying a nude Lady Macbeth was not gratuitous but merely reflected the custom that people slept without clothes on. When Banquo is awakened in Macbeth's castle, after Duncan is killed, he is naked. And Macbeth is also nude during his nightmare when Banquo and Fleance kill him. In fact, *all* the murders that occur in Polanski's film when someone is asleep find the victims naked.



Fig. 83. Ruthie is fully clothed while Battaglia is naked

Interestingly, in *Men of Respect* it is not Lady Macbeth/Ruthie who appears naked, but rather her husband, Battaglia/Macbeth. In their early scenes together, Battaglia is often undressed when he is near her, and she is fully clothed. This can suggest his vulnerability and the power she has over him,

before he “becomes a man,” that is, gathers enough courage to kill his godfather. The speech asking spirits to unsex Lady Macbeth (1.5.41) is absent here, for it is Battaglia who needs to be “manned.” When Ruthie tells her husband that he is not a man, he is naked and she is not. Immediately after, as to confirm our suspicions that nakedness equals vulnerability, she says about the king/padrino, “You’re going to get him with his pants down”. And this is exactly what happens, quite literally, for the king *is* naked when he is killed. We know he has no clothes on because the prostitute, who leaves before Battaglia enters, is nude in his place.

Before Macduff’s son is “caught with his pants down” in Polanski’s film, scene 2.4 starts with children playing in the courtyard of Macduff’s castle. As Jorgens points out, “The game of blindman’s buff in which a servant lunges after MacDuff’s [sic] children introduces the scene in which soldiers pursue and butcher them” (166). Rosse and the Lady, with her arms crossed, have a quick conversation. When the Lady mentions that even “the poor wren” would defend her offspring against the owl (2.4.9-11), she points with her head to the kids playing off-camera, referring to them as “her young ones.” Rosse looks in that direction and smiles. Little does the Lady know that the owl stands right in front of her. The saddest point is that she trusts Rosse: he is her cousin, and when he lists Macduff’s qualities (15-17) she nods, agreeing with him. While Lady and son are seen holding hands entering the castle, we follow Rosse gesturing to the gatekeeper to leave the gate open, so the murderers can go in.



Fig. 84. The witty son and Duffy (Macduff) in *Men of Respect*

In Reilly's *Men of Respect* there are no Rosse or messengers. In fact, this might be the scene in the film which departs most vividly from the playtext, for Macduff is still in his castle, so to speak. That is, Macbeth is not so cruel and merciless as to order the killing of women and children; his objective is to kill Macduff, and the murder of the rest of the family is a mere side effect. Besides, the means he employs sounds less savage than the invasion Macbeth promotes in the playtext (and much less savage than how this invasion is portrayed in Polanski's film). In *Men of Respect* a little boy plays with cards in front of his house. Two suspicious-looking men appear, asking him where his dad is. At this point we still do not know who those men or what their intentions are. They may well be looking for Macduff (in the film called Duffy) in order to kill him. The boy goes inside and tells his father, who is shaving, about the men. Duffy asks them to wait in the kitchen, and the boy inquires whether it is necessary for them to go to the zoo with two bodyguards. Duffy tries to fool him into thinking that the men are coming along just for fun, but the boy outsmarts him, as we can see in his line "You expect me to believe that?", which is as spunky as the lines Macduff's boy says. Duffy looks at him in admiration while Mrs. Duffy comes down and seems not too happy, as her body language depicts (she puts her hands in her pocket) in seeing that they will have company in such a simple matter as visiting the zoo.

In Polanski's film seventeen lines of the dialogue between mother and son are cut, and the whole messenger role and Lady Macduff's subsequent speech are left out. However, somehow the messenger *is* present, for we can observe on the background two hoodwinked falcons that act as messenger birds. In any case, the Lady and child remain unwarned of the danger. But we are not: not only have we watched Macbeth's order, Rosse's bribe, and the murderers coming in, but now we start hearing off-screen screaming as early as the boy asks "What is a traitor?" The terrified screams continue throughout, though it takes a while for the characters to hear them. Polanski's and Tynan's decision to heavily edit the lines makes sense: after all, who would pay any attention to them with all the yelling in

the background?

While this shouting is going on, however, and while mother and son talk, Lady Macduff is active. She never stops: she picks up clothes on the floor, hangs them, pours water on her son, fixes the bed etc. The camera stays with her all the time, which is unusual, since she is talking to the boy, and the camera could very well cut to him.

In *Men of Respect* the context is different: the boy does not care to find out if his father is a traitor, but rather, if he is a wise guy. His mother, Mrs. Duffy, is much more supportive of her husband than Lady Macduff in either Polanski's film or the playtext, probably because he is still at home, shaving, and not off to England. She answers that "He's your father and he loves you, and that's all you need to know." The witty boy, smiling, replies that "It doesn't answer my question." And she, straightening his shirt and telling him to behave, shows that she, too, can be witty by making a pun, "You're the only wise guy I know." This is as far as the conversation between mother and child goes, for the camera reveals Duffy answering an unwanted phone call, and insisting to "George," the caller, that he is "out of it."



Fig. 85. A thane sent by Macbeth to Macduff's castle breaks familiar objects

Polanski has affirmed that the violence perpetrated in the Macduff castle mimics the Nazi

invasion his own house suffered during World War II (Pearlman 253), but echoes of Sharon Tate's murder are also present, especially in the third part of this sequence, when Lady Macduff leaves her room as she finally hears the shouting. She sees a smiling man coming up the stairs and goes back to the room, trying to protect her child. The man goes in too, followed by another murderer. The first man employs his sword to pick up the vase she used to bathe her child, and smashes it on the floor. He slowly moves to the other side of the room, stopping to look at the messenger birds, and then analyzing the objects on the mantle over the fireplace. Rothwell believes "[t]he film offers no more chilling shot than the spectacle of Ian Hogg [...] as First Thane contemptuously sweeping the ornaments off the terrified Lady Macduff's mantle" (Privileging 54).

Heather Dubrow says, "If the burglar makes the familiar unfamiliar, the home *unheimlich*, by violating and contaminating, he also makes the familiar unfamiliar by forcing reinterpretations of people, events, and categories" (31). This is appropriate when analyzing the massacre of the Macduff family, for the murderers, though not exactly burglars, are nevertheless invaders. As such, they disrupt the household. In Polanski's depiction of the invaders throwing familiar objects on top of the fireplace to the floor, this becomes even more vivid. However, since this is the very first time we see these characters (both family members and the murderers), we cannot reinterpret them. We can only reinterpret Rosse (in Polanski's film, for he fools Lady Macduff and helps the murderers, which places him in a worse light than ever), and, of course, Macbeth, who is directly responsible for the killings.

This whole segment has no dialogue. The thane finally breaks the silence with the question "Where is your husband?" Lady Macduff is still proud and fearless as she answers him. The second murderer, who has not moved over to the other side of the room, stands by the door, so now the Lady and her son are surrounded. The second murderer laughs at the Lady's response, and it is he who accuses Macduff of treason. The camera cuts quickly from the man at the fireplace throwing objects on the floor to the boy's reaction, moving over to the second murderer to kick and hit him. Rathburn

describes it this way:

Throughout the scene thus far the camera—a single camera in a fixed position—has remained intent on the mother’s every move, glancing only twice to the boy and only for brief seconds. We have been watching a solicitous mother, then a woman recognizing another woman’s screams, then a mother near panic with fear for her infants. Her ‘oneness’ with the other woman seems complete when—moments later—discovering her son’s mortal wound, she opens her mouth as if to scream but the only sound is the screaming of the nursemaid. (2)

I would add that this ‘oneness’ between women as victims is also intensified by the cut from this sequence to Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene. It is this 'oneness' as well that brings the two doubles together.



Fig. 86. Macduff's son is killed

Rathburn notes that “three times within 30 seconds Lady Macduff passes directly in front of the camera—momentarily blocking our vision. We are almost as blind as she. We do not know what is happening outside the room” (2). This confusion and our lack of vision make the scene more frightening. When the lady's resolve and pride leaves her, and she starts to feel genuinely scared, she does not even know where to look. Rathburn continues,

Everything is shot from the Lady’s point of view [...]. From *her* perspective we see the boy attack the Murderer at the door. Then follow two unusual cuts. The first cut is from the boy and Murderer at the door, to the First Murderer at the fireplace. Through the Lady’s eyes we see

him smash the boy's toys, shattering the quiet, forcing the Lady to turn to the sound. But the cut is made—for no logical reason—before the sound. We now see the boy stabbed but the mother does not. [...] The off-screen screaming suddenly resumes as mother finds her son's wound, is assaulted, has the boy ripped from her arms. [...] A hand held camera unsteadily follows the Lady's escape from the bedroom, her discovery of her children's nursemaid held down by two knights as her own Porter rapes the screaming girl. A startling cut follows—from the rape scene to the Lady's face shot close up, from below, and lit up by flames—as she gazes downward. We cut, to follow her eyes, to discover the naked little girls covered in blood in their small beds of straw. [...] fade out as the screen becomes a wall of flames. (2)



Fig. 87. Lady Macduff sees her servant getting raped

After the second murderer stabs the boy on the back, at the same time saying “Young fry of treachery!”—we should notice that in this film the boy does not tell her to run away, for escape routes seem useless—the first man sits down on the bed that she had straightened, the second murderer struggles with her, taking the boy from her grasp, throwing him on the floor and grabbing her. All the gestures here indicate she will be raped, for the first man laughs and apparently waits for his turn on the bed; the second murderer tries to subdue her. As she manages to escape, she finally sees what is going on in her castle. Reynolds points out that, in Polanski's reenactment of the Macduff massacre, there are five victims that are shown to us, just as there were five victims in the Manson murders (157).



Fig. 88. Dissolve from Macduff's castle in flames to Lady Macbeth's doctor in Polanski's film

The dissolve in this film involves a doctor, watching through a diamond-shaped window. We are back to Macbeth's castle, as if it were possible to spy on Macduff's castle from there, as if the doctor were watching what happened to Lady Macduff. It is now the sleepwalking scene. By changing the order of the scenes (what comes after the family massacre in the playtext is the long scene between Macduff and Malcolm), Polanski reinforces the bond between the two ladies. This bond has already been established in the framing of the castles' gates, when in the beginning of the film Lady Macbeth receives a letter from her husband. The two ladies, after all, have several characteristics in common, among them that both will suffer horrible deaths.



Fig. 89. Mrs. Duffy and son get tired of waiting at the car

In Reilly's film Mrs. Duffy's and her son's deaths are much more impersonal, almost accidental. When Duffy's conversation over the phone starts taking too long, the movie cuts to his wife and child waiting impatiently in the car. As the boy, sitting on the driver's seat, plays with the window, she complains, "Your father doesn't know how to take a day off." Finally, Mrs. Duffy sighs and instructs her son to move over. They exchange seats, she turns on the engine, and the camera cuts to the house, where we see Duffy saying, "I'm hanging up." A huge explosion intrudes the household and the men fall to the floor.⁹⁰ Duffy is the first to stand up, and he cries "Oh Jesus, no!" as he rushes out. While we hear indistinct cries of Duffy from the outside and the noise of a phone off the hook, the camera pans over the debris on the floor, until it stops at a shattered family picture. It is unnecessary to spell out what has happened to Duffy's wife and son because the camera has already done so for us. But the dissolve in this film is clever: as the image of the family portrait begins to fade, the image of Macbeth/Battaglia staring upfront starts to appear. The camera thus *literally* frames him. This is a relevant touch because we have not seen Battaglia's ordering the murder, only the witches/fortunetellers advising him to be aware of Duffy.



Fig. 90. The dissolve from the family portrait to a close up of Battaglia frames him

⁹⁰ The idea of a wife starting a car that explodes and being killed instead of her husband is reminiscent of *The Godfather*.

Right after the camera frames the mastermind behind the crime, when Lady Macbeth/Ruthie—who probably knows about the murder of Duffy's wife and son, for it has been in the paper under the headline “Bomb kills mother and son”—will appear to be obsessed over dirty linen, Battaglia asks her, “Is this necessary?”, an echo of the boy's question to Duffy. The repetition of this line makes us think of the futility of Macduff's family's death. Are their deaths truly necessary to Macbeth? There is no point to them: they only seem to make Macduff, who was “out of it,” want to seek vengeance against Macbeth.

Violence is certainly not something unfamiliar to the Duffy family. By trying to get out, Duffy wants to repress violence. This is also reminiscent of a line in *The Godfather Part III* that has been parodied to exhaustion by *The Sopranos*, the one in which Michael, the Don, complains, “Every time I think I'm out, they pull me back in.” This dichotomy between in and out, which is also characteristic of the borderline in the uncanny, is the main point in this scene in *Men of Respect*, when Duffy's family is killed. The family is outside the house, expecting Duffy to come out. As their car explodes, smoke and debris invade the house, disrupting everything inside. It is at this point that the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich* converge. The strange but still strangely familiar violence, which is trying to be kept out of the house, comes inside at full force. The outer becomes inner. Thus, Reilly's choice to end that scene focusing on the family portrait of the two victims speaks volumes for the disturbed homes. In real life, whenever a house is invaded by fire or water, what family members regret is not losing money, but memories. And few things symbolize homemade memories as much as family portraits. Macbeth, therefore, is not only the killer of sleep but of dreams as well.

Alas, the last scenes of *Men of Respect* are particularly weak. In spite of Battaglia telling his hoods, “Not a man of woman born can do shit to me,” the situation deteriorates quickly. First, his right-arm, Sal, is killed, and his corpse is abandoned in front of the restaurant. Battaglia's thugs, sensing the

castle is falling, try to run away, but they are all shot. Battaglia goes upstairs to fetch Ruthie so they can escape, but she has killed herself, slitting her throat in the bathtub. A miserable Battaglia asks, “What did you do?!” , shouts at himself in the mirror, hugs her and puts her in bed. Of the five *Macbeths* I have analyzed, Battaglia is the Macbeth that suffers the most from his wife's death. Following the fortune teller's prophecy, fireworks light up the sky, or, as Rosenthal explains: “As the assault on the restaurant begins, fireworks start exploding in the sky blocks away, for no reason other than shameless plot contrivance, and one of Mike's henchmen says: 'You'd think the stars were dropping.' At which point, neither the gunshots, nor Misha Segal's embarrassingly crude score can drown out the noise of Macbeth fans laughing in disbelief” (80). Battaglia shoots four men in a tired fashion and shouts, “Born of women. All of you!”



Fig. 91. Duffy kills Battaglia

Duffy comes in through the same corridor/tunnel as the Padrino and Bankie before him, but now he arrives to determine Battaglia's fate, and not the other way around. They start shooting at each other in a badly choreographed routine. When Battaglia runs out of bullets, he simply throws his gun at Duffy, in a scene that begs to evoke laughter from the public. Duffy tells him that his mother died during childbirth: “The intern ripped that little fucker from her belly! Get my drift, Mikey?” Thus, he is not born of woman, which confirms the fortune teller's prophecy. As Willson claims, “Reilly gives us parody instead of pathos; the genre he chooses cannot sustain the weight of Shakespeare’s metaphysical

material. [...] The film's finale is a pastiche of bad, sometimes lugubrious jokes" (36). Duffy prefers to use his knife, not his gun, to finish off Battaglia. As he stabs him in the stomach, the tyrant's last words are "Shit happens," to which Duffy replies, "Ain't that the truth," and stabs him again, this time in the neck. Willson narrates, "though Duffy's reply strives for profundity, it provoked raucous laughter from the audience at the showing I attended" (36).

The film ends with Bankie's son, Philly, ritually drawing blood, becoming a mafioso himself. While the capos talk about men of respect, the camera focuses him, smiling. We see a close up of his face and we hear the same song that the gypsy (the fortune teller's husband) had sung to Battaglia. This is one of the problems with Reilly's script: it repeats the obvious. Just as we did not need a character to tell us that firecrackers in the sky were equivalent to the stars' falling, we know that the rise of Bankie's son is the beginning of the fulfillment of a prophecy, so the song is unnecessary. There is no hidden meaning or insinuation, as there is with Polanski's ending of Donalbain's meeting the witches, or with Nunn's and Cruz's finales, in which Macduff's bloody sword suggests that the cycle of a henchman that will soon kill the king to become king himself will be repeated. Willson is able to catch a subtext: "Reilly's overstated moral is that none of these mobsters respects either the organization's code of conduct or one another. As a mobster, Macbeth is reduced to a street soldier, caught in a mindless machine whose hierarchy is sustained neither by divine right nor by chivalric code. [...] the plot and main characters are consonant with ideological ends—'Moral principles such as respect and loyalty cannot prosper in a capitalistic society where will undermines all'" (36). That may be so, but the theme of the Mafia being a microcosm of capitalism is older than *The Godfather*.



Fig. 92. Lady Macbeth's corpse in Polanski's film

Polanski's *Macbeth* is certainly more nuanced, especially in its last scenes. Lady Macbeth falls, or throws herself, from the roof, and her body is left there for all to see, barely covered. When it becomes obvious that an army of ten thousand soldiers is arriving to install Malcolm, everybody in Macbeth's castle starts to leave. We see, for instance, one of the thanes responsible for the massacre at Lady Macduff's castle leaving the site. Seyton, the only one of Macbeth's faithful servants, tries to block the gate in order to stop people from escaping. He is killed with a crossbow to the head, shot by one of Macbeth's soldiers. It is strange that this scene has no words. Polanski and Tynan added several scenes that are not in the playtext (for example, Banquo's murderers being sent to a dungeon, and most scenes involving Rosse), but they did not write new dialogue. Without verbal interpolations, the film shows awkward silent moments. It does not seem realistic that Seyton would just stay in the way, without opening his mouth to stop people he knows. Of course, the sound in the film is so vivid that it often compensates for the lack of words. We hear pigs squealing, bells tolling, chickens, women crying, footsteps, noises in general. After Seyton is killed, the camera moves to Lady Macbeth's corpse, her legs exposed.

Once the soldiers arrive, they have no need to invade the castle, since it has been abandoned.

Macduff looks at Lady Macbeth's corpse, and immediately says that his wife's and children's ghosts will haunt him if he is not the one to kill Macbeth, reinforcing the idea that the two Ladies are doubles and that there is a strong connection between them. In this production, no one will dare call Lady Macbeth a “fiend-like queen” (5.9.35), for she seems as much a victim of circumstances in a man's world as Lady Macduff (Foakes believes that Lady Macbeth's resolve to be another person, “unsexed,” ends when she faints after seeing Duncan's crime scene (156).

Siward, whom Malcolm had called a great soldier (and who is proud, for he does not allow any of his soldiers to help him defeat Macbeth), is no match for Macbeth's cynical attitude. Macbeth is now almost a shadow, a man with nothing more to lose. At one point in the fight, he abandons his sword, grabs his dagger, and slays Siward's neck, as he had done with Duncan, but it is more graphic this time. Still holding Siward, Macbeth removes the dead soldier's helmet, looks at his face, and declares, with a tone of compassion: “Thou wast born of woman.” Macbeth then proceeds to attack the soldiers present, who are terrified. He does not even bother using his sword—his dagger will do. He cuts a soldier's face (this is not entirely visible, for the setting is dark), borrows the wounded soldier's axe, and uses it against his stomach. Another soldier tries to use his sword against him, but Macbeth attacks with his axe against the soldier's groin. Curiously, there are no screams or music during this scene, only the sound of metal clattering.



Fig. 93. Macbeth is fatally wounded by Macduff

I must agree with Williams when he points out that these last battle scenes in Polanski's film, especially the ones between Macbeth and Macduff, have “a two-dimensional, interactive, *Monty-Python-and-the-Holy-Grail*-esque quality. [...] the climax occurs only with Macbeth's beheading. The violence is unrepentant, unremarkable, and relentless, precisely because it seems so offhand and everyday” (150). When Macbeth finally duels Macduff, they fight fiercely in the beginning, with swords, but it is not the noble sword fight we are used to seeing in films. It is clumsy, much more *Monty Python*, indeed, than *Excalibur*. They fall, slip, and a sword gets entangled in a knee cap. In the playtext, the only direction offered for Macbeth's and Macduff's battle is “they fight.” According to Berlin, “We can be sure that the Elizabethans enjoyed the battle on their platform stage, and we can be equally sure that whatever happened on that stage could not have matched the shocking violence of Polanski's sequence,” namely Macbeth's on-screen decapitation (296). Macbeth wins the first bout, and has a chance to kill Macduff, but refuses, since he is too full of his blood already. Macbeth's decision to spare Macduff may be seen as Polanski's way “to tip the scales in favor of Macbeth as tragic-existential hero” (Petersen 41).

Once Macbeth learns, however, that Macduff “was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd”

(Macduff is speaking in third person, as if he were a ghost), his attitude changes. Macbeth continues to fight mostly because he does not want to serve Malcolm now, as he did not want to serve him in the banquet in Duncan's honor. He throws his sword into the air and almost hits Rosse. In Petersen words: "When, in the final showdown, Macbeth hurls his battleaxe away in disgust, it glances off Rosse's headpiece, removing it and unmasking the turncoat" (40). But Macduff also changes after his confession. Now he does not even want to fight with a weapon, only with his bare hands. He refuses the soldiers' offers of a sword, and attacks Macbeth empty-handed. In one moment, the usurper loses his crown, but retrieves it and puts it on, exhausted. Macduff kills the tyrant almost by accident: his sword perforates an unbalanced Macbeth through the chest, below the armor, from one arm to the other. Macbeth is able to climb the stairs and Macduff follows him, cutting off his head. The camera shows a close up of Rosse and of Malcolm. Macduff points to the usurper's head, and the camera follows a trail of blood (mimicking the bear's trail of blood) from the stairs to the floor. It is Rosse who takes the crown and, with exactly the same entonation and enthusiasm he demonstrated during Macbeth's crowning, shouts "Hail King of Scotland" to Malcolm.



Fig. 94. Macbeth's decapitated head sees all

We then watch a very uncanny image: the point of view through Macbeth's eyes. The camera sees what his decapitated head sees at ground level. His head, on a pole, is spit on and scorned at. In an

arena, soldiers (maybe the same ones that cheered him early on, before he was king) laugh at the spectacle. Buhler explains: “As Malcolm crowns himself, the frame goes red and Polanski intercuts quick views of the head stuck on a pike with low-angle shots of jeering soldiers. Our point of view, then, is provided by Macbeth’s eyes: we see what they might—or do—even after death” (89). Since it is not possible for a head without a corpse to see, the line that separates reality from fantasy is once again blurred. According to Williams, “Polanski manipulates the tension between the violence and death, which take place at the outer limits of experience, and the mindset and frame of reference of the normal” (150). Without the frame, the inside and the outside mingle, and Polanski’s hand-held camera exacerbates our lack of equilibrium, making us tipsy. That is why Rothwell calls him “a James Joyce with a camera” (History 157), and concludes that “Polanski didn’t need to borrow Shakespeare’s robes when he had so many of his own” (History 160). For Robinson, Macbeth’s head is reminiscent of how he left one of the guards’ head in Duncan’s chamber for all to see: “Macbeth ends his life as a severed head who sees himself a spectacle for all” (105).

Slavoj Žižek talks about the return of the dead as someone returning to collect something symbolic (Looking 133). The return of the dead occurs more than once in Polanski’s *Macbeth*. Banquo returns, obviously, more to haunt his executor than to collect anything—other than Macbeth’s momentary sanity. Other ghosts do not come back, but threaten to do so, as in the cases of Macduff’s family, who will haunt him if he does not kill Macbeth, or even Lady Macbeth, who is compared to her double, the other Lady. But perhaps Macbeth’s decapitated head also uncannily symbolizes this return. Though he is already dead, his head haunts people, who react sneering at it and pretending it has no effect on them. More than being offered as a trophy, Macbeth’s head acts as a cautionary tale.



Fig. 95. An apparently headless knight rides to meet the witches

However, the greatest return of all in Polanski's film is the return of violence. The last scene in the movie, after all, is not the one with the tyrant's head, but that in which Donalbain ends up at the witches' coven. It starts with a man riding a horse. In the first moment, the impression we have is that he is headless, since he is curved and uses a hood. This is a clever touch, because Macbeth has lost his head, and now there is another usurper who will be inspired to take away the “legitimate” king's crown. This time it will not be Macduff, but Donalbain, Malcolm's own brother. For Daniel Rosenthal, Donalbain seems like “a junior Richard III,” deeply envious of his brother, and the message is “Macbeth is dead, but the cycle of violence is about to recommence” (79).⁹¹ Brode thinks the ending is wrong because the play, as he says Shakespeare imagined it, should finish on a positive note, not as a portrait of a hopeless world (192). Shaw also criticizes Polanski's hopelessness: “the stylized treatment of violence creates an exaggerated, darker, and less complex vision of humanity than we find in Shakespeare’s plays” (213). Of course, the idea that the playtext ends in such a positive note as these critics believe is open to debate.

In a way, any production of *Macbeth* that hints that violence does not end with the tyrant's death

⁹¹ Rosenthal's remark sounds a little like ableist prejudice. Donalbain reminds him of Richard III just because he limps? He does not have enough screen time to leave an indelible impression.

and that it might continue through other hands shows a certain lack of hope. In this view, *Men of Respect* offers more hope than Polanski's film, for Reilly's movie ends with Bankie's son being accepted into the Mafia, and it has already been prophesied by the fortune teller that he would become Padrino. Thus, fate is just following its natural course. But in Polanski's *Macbeth*, fate is violence. And the violence in his film, more than in other productions, is intertwined with the uncanny. As Jorgens claims, Polanski "strives to make the inner outer" (170). What is hidden in men's heads, the "black and deep desires," is let out into the open with full force. By making the inner outer, Polanski opens the gates of hell to the uncanny.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

“The violence of *Macbeth*,” Harold Bloom believes, “doubtless impresses us more than it did the drama’s contemporary audiences. Many if not most of those who attended *Macbeth* also joined the large crowds who thronged public executions in London, including drawings-and-quarterings as well as more civilized beheadings” (Shakespeare 529). I am not so sure about his affirmation regarding an audience's response to violence then and now. Even with all the bear baiting and public hangings in seventeenth-century England, today, with cinema, DVD, TV and now the internet, which can be found inside the home, we are exposed to thousands of images on a daily basis, and many of these images are extremely violent. Thankfully, most of us can go through our whole lives without witnessing a real murder, but it is nearly impossible, with all the technology available, to hide from produced images of murder. We may not have public hangings in most of the world, but we do have TV, which offers the equivalent to public hangings every single day. Violence as spectacle has never been so popular, and we see both fantasy and reality being made into spectacle. Surely the images of the airplanes hitting the World Trade Center building are as engraved in our minds as any bear baiting in an Elizabethan's. Not to mention that video games today make participating in the violence seem much more real than what Elizabethans had available: they could poke bears or cast stones; we can put on a mask and special gloves and pretend to kill virtual people. In the *Friday the 13th* movie franchise, we watch a man with a hockey mask (so any spectator can be the face behind that mask) slaughter dozens of clueless youngsters. The camera adopts his point of view so we can pretend we are doing the killings ourselves. It *seems* real.

Violence in society has certainly changed, from Elizabethan England to the twenty-first century.

Today we have weapons of mass destruction, and the mode of targeting one person at a time is something of the past. Poison gas and machine guns are much more effective than the manual labor that involves killing with swords. Mentioning terrorism, R. A. Foakes says: “The problem of violence, especially as represented in random or pointless murders, is more acute now than in Shakespeare's time, not least because of technological advances in methods of killings” (212). The figure of the serial killer, for instance, a constant plot device for a myriad of books and films, is something quite recent, and its success and fascination, Foakes submits, derive from its violence's being unmotivated (214). And yet, even if the kinds and methods of violence have changed, the problem of violence continues to plague us. It is strange, in a way, that with all the technology available and breakthroughs in science, our capacity (and will) to maim and destroy seems much larger than that of solving our problems.

Our potential for destruction was strong in the period described by *Macbeth* (the eleventh century), in the period Shakespeare penned the playtext (1606), in 1817, when Ernst Hoffman wrote “The Sand-Man,” one century later, when Freud came up with the concept of the uncanny, and in the period when the five productions I have analyzed take place (the twentieth century). It does not really matter whether it is Scotland, England, Germany, US, or Brazil—the potential for violence transgresses time and place. As Frank Kermode points out, “When Macbeth asks the Sisters, ‘what are you?’ (1.3.47), their reply is to tell him what he *will* be” (203). What we are reflects not only what we will be, but also *where* we are. The same happens with the productions analyzed. Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* deals with a difficult time in the 1970s, when many violent films came out and when the director himself was experiencing a traumatic moment in his personal life. Although it is nearly impossible to discuss his *Macbeth* without mentioning Sharon Tate's murder, Polanski's film is an important adaptation that stands on its own. In 1976, Trevor Nunn directed for the Royal Shakespeare Company what is still considered one of the best theatrical renderings of *Macbeth* ever made. The mood for changes was already starting to give way to the conservative backlash that would take over the world in

the 1980s. This backlash also affected Brazil, which, in its first presidential elections since the end of its dictatorship, elected Fernando Collor de Mello. It is no coincidence that in 1992, when the country was deeply dissatisfied with his rule, two productions of *Macbeth* were staged simultaneously, Antunes Filho's *Trono de Sangue* and Ulysses Cruz's *Macbeth*. In spite of being doubles, they are quite different in their conceptions. At that same time, or a bit earlier, William Reilly released his filmic appropriation, *Men of Respect*. The way violence was treated by cinema was beginning to be influenced by Quentin Tarantino, especially by his breakthrough film, *Reservoir Dogs*, which contains an uncanny scene of torture.

As I have described in Chapter 3 and throughout my dissertation, some characteristics of the uncanny involve doubles, the compulsion to repeat, the evil eye, the gaze, the death drive, *déjà-vu*, ghosts, dolls and automatons, the blurring between fantasy and reality, liminality, epilepsy and madness. Most, if not all, of these traits, are part of *Macbeth* the playtext and also of the five productions I have analyzed. However, some of these traits are not necessarily related to violence. Several points which are uncanny, though not really violent, happen in the playtext and in the productions. For instance, the witches' premonitions, Macduff's not being born of women, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, a forest that moves, are uncanny without being violent acts. But they all lead to violence one way or the other: the witches' premonitions give Macbeth fresh ideas; it is only because Macduff was "untimely ripp'd" (5.8.15) that he can defeat his nemesis; Lady Macbeth's somnambulism is both the result of violence (guilt for helping to kill Duncan) and the cause for her suicide; Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane will combat the tyrant, although at the cost of more soldiers' lives.

But nothing links the uncanny to death as much as violence. One of the most uncanny descriptions in the playtext is about the king's horses going wild and eating each other on the night Duncan is murdered (2.4.14-8). Most productions leave out this dialogue between Rosse and an Old Man, probably because it reinforces the fantasy that murdering Duncan was something unnatural. Or

maybe because it is such a strong image that it becomes too hard for us to conceive of it. Our imaginations may lack the background knowledge of what cannibalism among horses could be like.

Philip Armstrong explains that, when Banquo's ghost appears, Macbeth gets more upset at “how it looks at him” rather than “what it looks like to him” (Regime 189). Maybe the same happens with a violent scene on stage and on screen. It is not so much the spectacle itself that we react to, but how it looks at us. This somehow reflects our gaze. Looking at a violent image tells us something about ourselves. By watching the torture scene in *Reservoir Dogs* and filling in the blanks by imagining everything that is left out (for the camera literally faces a wall), this spectacle is telling us that we have enough violent material in our heads to fill the void. We close our eyes during that gruesome scene, but we cannot shut out the images of violence that are part of our consciousness. But where do these images come from? How many torture scenes in which ears are cut have we witnessed in our lives? How many murders? It is uncanny that the ghost of violence is so present within us. As Huston Diehl ponders about Lady Macbeth, “Images of the external world become internalized and drive her mad” (197). We may have images of this external world internalized in us, though they are not making us mad. Not yet, that is.

In the playtext, the violence that Macbeth perpetuates in the name of the king, through battles against opponents, to keep the monarch in power, is not shown, only (vividly) described and praised. The three theatrical productions I have analyzed decide to follow the playtext and keep this violence occluded, letting it happen off stage. In Polanski's *Macbeth*, although we do not have many of those images, we do hear horrible sounds of warfare, and we see the aftermath: a beach populated with cadavers, and a man ransacking one soldier and, when discovering he is not quite dead yet, hitting him with a flail. In Reilly's *Men of Respect*, we see the scenes at a diner in slow motion. However, a diner is not a battlefield. On the contrary, it is a homely place where people socialize and eat (a familiar spot), and there *is* something uncanny about Mafia films' obsession with food. *Goodfellas* takes place in a

restaurant; in *The Godfather*, Michael kills his father's enemy in a diner. The scene in *Men of Respect* inspires dread because several rounds of bullets are shot amidst innocent bystanders (women, for instance, who normally have no place in the battlefield). But it is impossible to regard this scene as violence sanctioned by the state. After all, Battaglia is a mobster member killing for his Padrino. Moreover, this is Battaglia's initiative, without his boss' permission.

This may well be why *Men of Respect* differs so much from the other productions I have analyzed—even more than its being an appropriation or neglecting the original text, the fact is that Battaglia, unlike Macbeth, is not committing such a terrible crime by killing his Padrino. The Padrino's authority does not have legitimacy, the Mafia being a criminal organization. He is not the ruler of Scotland, but of a criminal group. True, because no other world is shown in the film (no police, no government), his seems the only possible alternative. But Shakespeare's intention of making us sorry for the demise of a saintly king—which Nunn's production exaggerates—is no longer here. Does it really make a difference which thug is in charge of an organization that sells drugs and exploits small local businesses in exchange for “protection”? This can be Reilly's way of telling us that Duncan might not be so deserving of his position in the playtext either. As in Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, these rulers rise to power by killing one another.

Maybe if Macbeth's “strange images of death” (1.3.97), which are legendary in the battlefield, were shown to us, on stage and on screen, rather than talked about by a third and fourth party (since Rosse also narrates), they could provoke the same repulsion in the spectator as the violence committed against Duncan, Banquo or Macduff's family. Even if our imagination can create a more horrifying image when we hear an enthusiastic narrator talk about Macbeth's cutting a soldier from “the nave to th' chops” (1.2.22)—perhaps even more horrifying than anything a visual medium can show—, it is still violence legitimized by the State against anonymous soldiers. It cannot have the same value as the violence committed against someone we know, such as characters with names, titles, and a past.

Strangely, Lady Macduff and her children are also people we know nothing about. But we condemn the violence against them, for it is meaningless and cowardly, against a woman and child who have nowhere to go. Even as a form of violence against Macduff it is useless.

One point is for sure: every one of the bloody men in all five productions enjoys telling his audience about Macbeth's prowess in battle. They are not only glorifying Macbeth, of course, but also violence itself—which is their own trade as soldiers. It is ironic that the audience that least appreciates the bloody man's narrative is the one which should be more used to violence. In *Men of Respect*, the members of the Mafia react gloomily and unexcitedly to the man's narrative. In Nunn's production it is also quite contained, maybe because Duncan is too much of a saint to applaud the violence. In Cruz's production, the narrator is indeed very excited, although only Duncan appears to celebrate Macbeth's victory. In Antunes' *Trono de Sangue*, the soldiers cheer as the man narrates, and engulf him when he is through: violence unites them. In Polanski's film, the men hearing the soldier's adventures laugh. Violence is so acceptable that it even becomes amusing.

Interestingly, in *Men of Respect* we see the same scene in two different forms: first, as depicted by a camera; second, as narrated by a wounded man. Although it does seem redundant for the movie to repeat the scene, it offers us the sole example of comparing the same instance of violence, on screen and off. The scene is undoubtedly more vivid when it occurs on screen, maybe because we see it first, maybe because the bloody man's audience is so unresponsive, or maybe because the sentences used in the narration are weak (“blood running like Hershey's”). Even though the scenes in the diner are in no way well made (the slow motion allows us to observe some over-the-top performances), they set the tone for the rest of the film. No other moment in *Men of Respect* will be as violent as these opening scenes.

As discussed in the Introduction, Shakespeare would not dare show a king's murder on stage, especially in a play that could be staged for a king. Nevertheless, Duncan's murder is, at least for

Macbeth, the worst crime he commits. After this “initiation”—if we do not count the several men Macbeth has killed on battle—he is ready to do anything. The other murders pale by comparison and, until the final scenes, Macbeth does not use his hands again. Now he has henchmen who commit the violence for him, just as Duncan had Macbeth and Banquo. He has no remorse either, having spent it all on Duncan. However, to the spectator, is Duncan's murder the most shocking of Macbeth's crimes? The answer depends on each spectator, surely. But the fact that the murder occurs off stage tends to make it less memorable than the others that follow. Only in Polanski's and Reilly's films is the king executed in front of us—in the 1971 movie even more than in *Men of Respect*, for the camera does not shy away from the action. I think it is safe to say that Duncan's assassination in Polanski's film is the one we will not forget, at least considering the five productions I have analyzed. Not only because it is graphically violent, but also because it depicts several details that can only be hinted at through the dialogue. For instance, Duncan's confusion at seeing *another* “gentleman on whom [he] built an absolute trust” (1.4.13) betray him, and Macbeth's hesitation and near dismissal of the whole idea, add to the plot. It gives a deeper meaning to the connection between the two men, and to why Macbeth will never sleep again after killing his father-figure.

Our sadness for the murder of a king also depends on how the king is portrayed, naturally. In Nunn's production we have the ridiculous saintly king, wearing a garment that stands out from the rest of the cast. In Antunes', the king is always on stage with so many other actors that he merely registers. In Cruz's *Macbeth*, the king is played by Paulo Goullart as pompous, full of himself, and coy with Lady Macbeth. In Reilly's, he is a Mafia capo who sleeps with prostitutes and is not worth respect, according to Lady Macbeth (he is so worthless that her line suggesting she would kill him herself if he did not resemble her father is left out). In Polanski's, Duncan is a clueless man who is not good at reading his interlocutors, with a son so obnoxious that it can almost be said that Malcolm makes Macbeth decide to kill the king. It is curious that in none of these productions Duncan is really portrayed as a wise man.

In keeping with the playtext's instructions, all productions of *Macbeth*, except Polanski's and Reilly's, have Duncan's murder occur off stage. In Antunes' *Trono de Sangue*, fate plays an important role. Although there is no dagger leading Macbeth to the king's chambers, all the usurper has to do is sit on a bench next to a turning wall, and destiny will take him (and, later, Lady Macbeth) there. Only in *Men of Respect* does the camera show Macbeth/Battaglia killing the king's guards (he shoots them as they wake up from their drug-induced sleep). In Polanski's we see the aftermath of Macbeth's rage—the guards' heads and blood scattered around the room—but his actions are off stage. No matter: the result is enough to make Lady Macbeth faint. And there is no question that her fainting is sincere in this production. The violence her husband produces, which she could only imagine earlier, now clearly appalls her. Her response to the images she sees is fainting, an uncanny act, for it blurs the boundaries between life and death, between being awake and asleep—like somnambulism.

In the playtext, after Duncan's murder, the violence that follows is indicated to take place in front of an audience. All the five analyzed productions follow the instructions in the scene in which Banquo is murdered. In Nunn's production, Banquo falls to the ground and is stabbed by two men (the mysterious third man is Seyton). When they turn him around, we see the blood. This is the last time we can look at Banquo, since his ghost does not appear at the banquet. In both the Brazilian productions, the scene is quite fast and dark. In Cruz's, Banquo manages to fight against three men, using sticks, but when he falls, one of them stabs him. In Antunes', Banquo is attacked from behind with a blow to his head, and removed off stage by two (not three) assassins. In Reilly's film, Bankie is leaving a store with his son where he went to buy sausages for his boss, Battaglia, when he receives multiple shots.

Once again, Polanski's creation for this scene is the most effective, mostly because he reinforces the violence by making it uncanny. Banquo's demise, after his initial reaction, is fast. He kills Rosse's horse so he will not be able to go after Fleance. While he does that, he is hit with an axe-blow on his back, and falls face-down in the lake. However, one of the murderers tells Macbeth that Banquo's throat

was slit and that he was a victim of “twenty gashes on his head” (3.4.26). Since his narration contradicts the images, we know he is lying.⁹² It is possible that after the murderers strike Banquo with an axe, they remove him from the lake and slash his head and cut his throat. But that is highly unlikely, considering that Banquo is already dead and that these amateur murderers would probably be disgusted with such a display of unnecessary violence. But when Banquo's ghost appears at the banquet, he is bleeding from head wounds. Banquo will, in fact, be several different ghosts (one greenish, one with a bird of prey on his shoulder), but his first apparition is indeed that of a man whose head has been injured. Later, during Macbeth's hallucination at the witches' coven, we will again see Banquo, with his head clear but with an axe to his back. Polanski's choice of conflicting images to explain how Banquo is killed confounds us. We do not know whom to trust, and uncertainty, if not in Freud's book but in Jentsch's, is a trait of the uncanny. Moreover, by adding the most supernatural touch (Macbeth was not present during Banquo's murder, so how does he know about his friend's axe-blow?) in an otherwise realistic production, Polanski makes this moment uncanny. And the uncanny has the power of making violence more striking.

The 1971 *Macbeth* is also that rare production, together with Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, to expose how disposable lower class people are. Of the five productions I have analyzed, only in Polanski's are Banquo's murderers killed. In Antunes' there is a suggestion that they will be murdered. But in Polanski's the scene continues after the playtext ends, in an interpolation without dialogue. Rosse and other guards escort the two hapless murderers on their way out. Instead of leaving through the main gate, they are taken to an underground chamber, where they are thrown into a watery dungeon. Killing them is an attempt at not tracing the violence that leads to Banquo's death. But ending

⁹² Although it is not altogether clear, this also seems to be the case in Antunes' production. It is similar to Polanski's scene: a murderer strikes Banquo from behind, and we do not see any wound in his face, nor do we see the assassin cutting his throat. But when Macbeth asks him how he cut Banquo's throat, the murderer makes a gesture that was not present earlier. He may be lying too. Then, when the ghost appears at the banquet, its face is bloody. But it is also green and it shows no resemblance to Banquo's face when he was alive.

that trace is impossible. It is like the trail of blood left by the bear's corpse as it is dragged through the castle, the stain of historical violence that, according to Francis Barker, cannot be erased (205).

Banquo's ghost, which is also representative of violence, cannot be erased either. Even after Freud's discovery of the unconscious, most productions have decided to maintain a physical ghost of Banquo that can be seen by the audience. Nunn's is an exception. Sitting on the crates in the center of the stage, the guests watch as Macbeth has an epileptic attack. Banquo's ghost, like the dagger that led Macbeth to Duncan, is only imaginary. And yet Ian McKellen's performance is so intense that it brings Banquo's ghost to life: it is almost as if the spirit were inside him. With Macbeth's fit as spectacle, who needs to see a real ghost? McKellen stares at space and sees a ghost, but, in that ghost may well be us, his audience. After all, he is facing us, while his guests have their backs to us.

Although we have no doubt in Nunn's production that Macbeth is seeing a ghost, if the apparition is available to our eyes as spectators, it makes the evidence that the ghost is present more irrefutable. And where the ghost is located in relation to the other guests at the banquet is also telling. In Antunes' production, its head is in the middle of the banquet table, whimpering and trying to speak. It is the longest contact that any of the five Macbeths has with the ghost, since it is present for quite a long time—even after the guests leave, the face is there, making phantasmagorical sounds. Its insistence to communicate highlights the uncanniness of Antunes' ghost, as well as its parallel with Macbeth's and Lady's Macbeth's open mouths. The dark, open mouth is a trademark of this production.

In Cruz's *Macbeth* the ghost is physically present, but more to us than to anyone on stage. It is represented by a naked actor inside a tube behind and above the banquet table. In the production, though this was left out from the video for technical reasons, there is a cricket sound symbolizing Macbeth's conscience, and in some instances the Porter played by Stenio Garcia is also seen inside the tube, linking him to Banquo's ghost, according to Fabio Cintra, musical director of the production.

In Reilly's film, the ghost is such a physical presence that it even mingles with the guests. Or at

least Battaglia sees him talking to others and making fun of him. This is an uncanny touch because it fools us: *we* see what the usurper sees, and the edition puts our belief in the images at stake. Unlike the other productions, in which Macbeth is usually afraid of the ghost, here he wants to kill him. The camera deceives us and him, making him assume that Bankie is drinking with his other guests. Battaglia starts to strangle him, only to find out that was not the ghost after all. In Polanski's film quite the opposite occurs: Macbeth is so terrified of the ghost that, trying to escape, he is cornered at the same spot where the bear was chained. The ghost haunting Macbeth may well be us.

For contemporary audiences not so easily influenced by the importance of monarchy, the massacre of Macduff's family becomes the most shocking, gratuitous, and horrible murder in the playtext. Macbeth orders the assassination of a woman and child who are in no way blocking his ambitions as regards the Scottish crown. His other murders may be explained—he needs to kill Duncan in order to be king; he kills Banquo and tries to kill Fleance because of his concern with the prophecy that Banquo will generate a line of kings. However, he is not even sure if Macduff is his enemy or not (Malcolm is also unsure and has to test him), and he knows for a fact that Macduff is not in Scotland. He sends his henchmen to surprise Macduff's castle knowing that women and children live there. And, to make matters worse, the playtext indicates that a boy is killed on stage! It is hard to believe that, even in Shakespeare's time, the general audience would care more about the assassination of an incompetent king that happens off stage than about that of a child cowardly killed on stage. It is at this moment in scene 4.2 that Shakespeare wants us to hate Macbeth, or at least to believe the tyrant has gone mad and lost all scruples.

Men of Respect diverges so much from the other productions also because of the key importance of this scene, and the way it deals with it. In the film, Duffy has not gone off to another country—on the contrary, he wants out of the business—and Battaglia does not want to kill his family, only Duffy. That is why he has a bomb planted to his car. Duffy is portrayed as a good father, about to

take his son to the zoo, and responsible enough to have bodyguards with him. The explosion of the car makes the outer inner, for the debris from outside invades the house. In a moment of creative filmmaking and edition, the film focuses on a destroyed family portrait on the floor, and the dissolve literally frames Battaglia, thus blaming him. But, just as in Kurosawa's film (in which the character of Macduff does not exist, so Macbeth is not a murderer of women and children), this Macbeth is seen in a more forgiving light than the other four protagonists I have analyzed. After all, he does not willfully kill a woman and child; it is an accident. The bomb was not meant for them, but for Duffy.

Even in the playtext, scene 4.2 is probably the most uncanny in *Macbeth*. It takes place inside a castle, a home, a *heimliche* place which should be devoid of danger. Strange men come in to disrupt this peace, and what they do is strangely familiar. Polanski's film gives the most eloquent demonstration of this disruption: while screams from the outside invade the room where Lady Macduff and her son stand, the camera concentrates on the *heimliche* details about to be broken—the child's bath, the Lady's organization of objects. The thugs drop the homely objects on the mantelpiece onto the floor, shattering the familiar peace. Also, before this scene, we were not sure how far Rosse would go to buy his way into Macbeth's clique. It is true that he had helped to kill Banquo and, immediately afterwards, Banquo's murderers. But organizing the murder of men and organizing the murder of women and children he knows are different things, even for this opportunist. His leaving the gate open for the thugs to come in as he leaves, smiling, is a very disturbing image in a film full of disturbing images. In a way, he shares the blame with Macbeth, demonstrating that this society has other sociopaths besides the usurper.

In Nunn's production Rosse is also an opportunist who talks to Lady Macduff before her death, although there is no apparent involvement of his in her murder. What is more uncanny here is that the whole cast is sitting in a circle around the main action, and one of the actors is the one playing Macduff. He is able to watch his wife and son killed in front of him, without any reaction. In Cruz's

production, however, although part of the cast sits and watches Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, no one observes the brief scene in which Lady Macduff and the baby she carries are killed. Part of the cast actively participates by surrounding her, as the sounds of birds of prey accompany the scene. In Antunes' production, Lady Macduff is pregnant, and the pattern depicted here (characters near the walls, separated by a blood-red stage) is repeated.

The playtext presents few instructions for the final scenes. It indicates that Macbeth and Young Siward fight, and the latter is slain, and that Macbeth and Macduff fight, then leave (part of their fighting occurs off stage), then come back: “Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain. Macduff carries off Macbeth's body.” And, finally, “Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head” (5.9). We do not even know if these are actually Shakespeare's instructions or those of later editors. Each director has to decide how he will close the production. Nunn's choice is to give more importance to the dialogue than to the fighting sequence per se, which is only between Macbeth and Macduff. The main violence during this scene in Nunn's production is the one which Macbeth commits against one of his voodoo dolls, cutting the hole that stands for its eye with his sword. The sequence ends with Macbeth's holding two daggers and saying “Damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'”, as in the playtext. When Macduff comes back with bloody hands and daggers, he does not bring Macbeth's head, in keeping with the invisible elements of the production—no dagger that leads him to Duncan, no ghost at the banquet, no tyrant's head. But Macduff's bloody hands holding the daggers are enough to remind us of Macbeth's hands after he had just killed Duncan, indicating that there is a strong possibility that history will have a compulsion to repeat itself, with Macduff and Malcolm mimicking the same dynamics as Macbeth and Duncan. Those who live will experience *déjà-vu*, another part of the uncanny.

This suggestion that violence will prevail even without Macbeth is also present in the end of *Men of Respect*, which closes with Bankie's son, Philly, drawing blood and being accepted into the Mafia. The prophecy that Bankie's son will become Padrino may happen, but not without a little help

from violence. In an illegitimate outfit like the Mafia, power does not change hands peacefully. Fate, it seems, is something to be constructed.

Of the five productions I have analyzed, Cruz's is the one, after Polanski's film, in which the final scenes are more physical. Here Macbeth does indeed kill someone called Siward, his body remaining on stage. The tyrant fights with bamboo poles and swords, and there is even a tug of war as spectacle. Antonio Fagundes may not have been in great physical shape for the action sequences, as Cintra maintains, but the production's preoccupation with what could be called "Hollywood action" is evident. Macbeth does not die easily. He needs to be hit by Macduff twice before he stops struggling. When Macduff returns with a bloody sword and the usurper's head, and hails the new king (who is absent), the soldiers and thanes do not respond. Macduff leaves, as if defeated, and Malcolm comes in with the crown, to name himself king in front of apathetic supporters. His first act is to share political favors and make all his loyal men rise in title. This is not enough to make them happy, as they seem to be almost as dead as Macbeth. Malcolm will have to buy more favors if he wishes to remain in power. The association with Collor's corrupt government is not subtle.

It is hard to top the level of uncanniness present in one of Polanski's last scenes, the one which shows the point of view of Macbeth's decapitated head. For some seconds, we see what he is seeing: the laughs and sneers from the same soldiers who in the beginning of the movie applauded him, the knowledge that he has become a spectacle. The result of violence again generates laughter, as in the bloody man's narration. The subjective point of view is reminiscent of "The Sand-Man"'s obsession with eyes and vision, of Nathanael's buying glasses from Coppola, the man he fears and hates, so he (Nathanael) can see more clearly. Macbeth's eyes, like Olimpia's, are also devoid of life at that point. Like Coppola, who tears out Olimpia's eyes and throws them at Nathanael, Polanski too, in a way, is tearing out Macbeth's eyes and thrusting them at us, so we can see better. And what we see is the worst of human nature: Macbeth has become "the show and gaze o' th' time" (5.8.24). It would be impossible

for a theatrical production to reproduce this moment, for it is as if the camera were inside Macbeth's decapitated head, sharing with us what he sees. In fact, the camera *is* his head, and this is a fitting image for a film based on a playtext that clearly privileges Macbeth, at least as far as exposure is concerned. The scene of his head being cut by Macduff would be enough in terms of violence, but the adding of these images seen through Macbeth's head go that extra mile to make it more uncanny. The violence of the previous scene is, once more, enhanced by the uncanny.

But Polanski does not stop there. After we see “the usurper's cursed head” (5.9.21) exposed in an arena, the film cuts to an apparently headless man riding a horse. We have already seen Macbeth's body without its head, falling from the stairs, and now we see a knight. Even if another addition a few seconds later will reveal this to be Donalbain, riding to the witches' coven to probably hear new prophecies, just the image of a headless person moving is a strong indication that violence shall continue, Macbeth's death notwithstanding

Even if the uncanniness in the final scenes of Polanski's *Macbeth* cannot be equaled, Antunes tries hard enough with his *Trono de Sangue*. First, the fight between Macbeth and Macduff happens off stage. As they go out through one of the gates, and the soldiers run to watch (and block) what we cannot see, we hear the sound of swords. After some time, Macduff comes in, crosses the stage, and leaves. Then soldiers use a rope to pull a bloody Macbeth. Then we see what seems to be a corpse alone on stage, and suddenly, with rock music playing on the soundtrack, the wounded, half-dead tyrant has a seizure and becomes “a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage” (5.5.25-6). Here we have no kings crowning themselves or being crowned by opportunists, only the shadow of a man who refuses to die. His proximity to the floor contaminates the stage, justifying its blood-red color. Just as he complained, after killing Duncan, that he could not get rid of the blood on his hands, “making the green one [the ocean] red” (2.2.60), now his wounds make the red one red.

Like Macbeth in the playtext and in the five productions, we are also frustrated that the guests

at the banquet do not see Banquo's ghost. We feel that they should see something that we see so clearly. However, no one will see the same image. We cannot believe, after watching *Reservoir Dogs* for the second or third time, that the torture scene was *not* graphically depicted. Unlike Macbeth who, according to Armstrong, in the end becomes a character of the Witches' prophecies, rather than the author of his actions (Regime 199), we are always the authors of the images we see, or at least of how we decipher those images. But we are also characters in a larger context of violence. After all, violence is a spectacle that precedes us, that existed before we were born and will continue to exist after our deaths, just as it is suggested in all five productions that I have analyzed that the violence in that world shall go on, even without Macbeth. Violence, unfortunately, seems to be an intrinsic part of the plot of human nature.

Macbeth is a playtext of transgressions in which boundaries are disrespected, and the uncanny is “the presence of what ought to be absent” (Royle 88). Either on stage and on screen or off, violence remembers, leaving traces in our minds. Violence off stage and off screen has a strong element of fantasy, since it is not visible to us, so we must imagine it. Almost all of the violence we see on stage and on screen, however, is not real either. It is staged and artificially presented to us. We have to suspend our disbelief to be absorbed into that world in which men actually kill one another, instead of pretending to kill one another. The uncanny disrupts this liminality between what is fantasy and what is real and blurs our own existence. As the bloody man in *Men of Respect* says at one point in his narration, “Oh Christ, I can't do it justice. You had to be there,” we are always there, even when we are not.

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