



ILLiad TN: 169647

Borrower: XBM

Lending String: *VXW

Patron: Lloyd, Monica

Journal Title: Renaissance papers

Volume: Issue:
Month/Year: 1991**Pages:** 75 92

Article Author:

Article Title: Reid, Robert L.,; Macbeth's Three Murders; Shakespearean Psychology and Tragic Form

Imprint:

ILL Number: 75939605



Call #: CB361 .R42 1991

Location: Main AVAILABLE

ODYSSEY
Charge
Maxcost: 0IFM

Shipping Address:
DRAKE LIBRARY-ILL IDS
SUNY BROCKPORT IDS
350 NEW CAMPUS DR
BROCKPORT NY 14420-2995

Fax: 585-395-5651
Ariel:

Vassar College Library (VXW)

Contact: Mike Strong
845-437-5764 – Phone
845-437-5795 – Fax
mistrong@vassar.edu

If there are any problems with this document, please let us know within 2 business days. Thank you!

ILL Number: _____

Borrower Symbol: _____

Ariel Address/Fax Number: _____

Problem with Scan: _____

Please resubmit this page to us with needed corrections via Ariel or fax and we will make corrections as soon as possible.

means to wash the Ethiop were not entirely capable of resolving existing anxieties about white capacity to control blackness, an anxious shame suggested by Carleton's remarks. Ultimately, *The Masque of Blackness*, like Ravenscroft's *Titus Andronicus*, calls at least as much attention to the theatrical will it brings to bear on training blackness to an existing set of political purposes as it does to its success in accomplishing that goal.

In obvious contrast to Jonson's or Ravenscroft's polished finished products, the dramatic narrative of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is fragmented, experimental. It encounters some difficulty deciding whether it is an Elizabethan version of Roman paganism, a revenge drama, a tragedy of state, or some combination of these. This multivalence is what confronted its later adapters, who set about the task of making sense out of it through excavating one of its leading male roles more clearly from what they perceived as the distractions of Shakespeare's plot and so attempting to reorient Shakespeare's multiple voice to the single perspective of Titus or of Aaron.³² The ineradicable problem of adding prominence to the role of Aaron for European audiences and so through this imposition of narrative coherence provoking audience identification with Aaron's point of view was that the racialist discourse out of which Shakespeare shaped him posits an absolute gap between the racial selves it dominated as "black" and "white." However compelling the spectacularization of his wickedness, he remained unknown, unknowable except as the product of European imagination. The emphatic blackness of the Peacham drawing and Shakespeare's multiple narrative voice both proclaim this resistance to appropriation. The theatrical power with which Shakespeare invests Aaron fails, ultimately, to master the force of imagination with which England produced blackness.

University of Kentucky

Joyce Green MacDonald

32. G. Harold Metz, "The Stage History of *Titus Andronicus*," *SQ* 28 (1977), 154-169.

Machbeth's Three Murders: Shakespearean Psychology and Tragic Form

Machbeth is a milestone in man's exploration of . . . this "depth of things" which our age calls the unconscious.

Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*

Interpreters of *Machbeth* have focused almost exclusively on the first murder, the killing of a king in Acts I-II, as the basis for understanding the play—its social, psychological, and metaphysical meanings. Machbeth's subsequent two assassinations, of Banquo in Act III, and of Macduff's wife and children in Acts IV-V, are either ignored, or are treated simply as efforts to secure the usurped crown, or perhaps as a kind of Freudian "repetition compulsion"—the blooded man's first heinous kill engendering serial slayings.¹ Neither of the subsequent murders has been accorded

This study is indebted to Professor Arthur Kirsch and the members of his 1988 NEH Seminar at the University of Virginia.

1. Freud's argument for the second instinctual drive, the aggressive death-wish, grew out of his reflections on the "repetition compulsion"—obsessive re-enacting of a pleasurable sensation, or of a painful and self-destructive behavior. The motive, he felt, was not simply to sustain pleasure or pain, but subconsciously to use it as a means of recovering primal experience, especially in the case of the aggressive and destructive obsession, which he attributed to a desire to return to peaceful nothingness. See "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-through" (1914), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* [hereafter *SE*], trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957) 24 vols., 12:1:47-56; "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), *SE* 18:7-64; Edward Bibring, "The Conception of the Repetition Compulsion," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 12 (1941), 486-519; Hans W. Loewald, "Some Considerations on Repetition and Repetition Compulsion," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* [hereafter *IJP*], 52 (1971), 59-65.

its own distinctive meaning and psychological motivation; they are seen as mere shadowy reenactments of the Oedipal complex which is presumed to underlie the one essential crime, the slaying of the patriarchal king.²

As R. A. Foakes puts it, "the murder of Duncan was the equivalent in mountaineering terms of scaling Everest, and after this [Macbeth] has no trouble with lower hills."³ This exclusive highlighting of the regi-

2. See especially Freud, "Those Who Are Wrecked by Success" (1916), *SE* 14:318-24; and Ludwig Jekels, "The Riddle of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*" (1917), *The Design Within: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Shakespeare*, ed. M. D. Faber (New York: Science House, 1970), pp. 235-49. A survey of such readings is provided by Norman N. Holland, *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: McGraw, 1964), pp. 219-30. Recent treatments of the Oedipal theme include Northrop Frye, "My Father as He Slept," *Fools of Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 3-39; Norman Raskin, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 101-10; Janis Krohn, "Addressing the Oedipal Dilemma in *Macbeth*," *Psychoanalytic Review* 73 (1986), 333-47; Pierre Janion, "Sonship and Fatherhood in *Macbeth*," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 35 (1989), 47-58.

Important revisionary studies of gender-psychology (either shifting attention from embattled father to devouring mother, or totally reevaluating the parental roles) include David Barron, "The Babe That Milks: An Organic Study of *Macbeth*," (1960), in *The Design Within*, pp. 251-79; D. W. Harding, "Women's Fantasy of Manhood: A Shakespearean Theme," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20 (1969), 245-53; Robert Kimbrough, "Macbeth: Prisoner of Gender," *Shakespeare Studies* 6 (1972), 175-90; Marilyn French, *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* (New York: Ballantine, 1981), pp. 242-53; Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 151-5, 172-92; Carolyn Asp, "'Be bloody, bold, and resolute': Tragic Action and Sexual Stereotyping in *Macbeth*," *Studies in Philology* 78 (1981), 153-69; Patrick Colin Hogan, "Macbeth: Authority and Progenitorship," *American Imago* 40 (1983), 385-95; James J. Greene, "Macbeth: Masculinity as Murder," *American Imago* 41 (1984), 155-80; Arthur Kirsch, "Macbeth's Suicide," *ELH* 51 (1984), 269-96, esp. 276-80; C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler, *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 11-13, 242, 266-9; Janet Adelman, "'Born of Woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in *Macbeth*," in *Cannibals, Witches, and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), pp. 90-121; Dianne Hunter, "Doubling, Mythic Difference, and the Scapegating of Female Power in *Macbeth*," *Psychoanalytic Review* 75 (1988), 129-52.

3. Foakes, "Images of Death: Ambition in *Macbeth*," *Focus on Macbeth*, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 18.

cide (as the "be-all and end-all" of the play) entails, however, that the final three acts must dwindle from real theatrical power to melodramatic spectacle⁴—a result of the victims' shrinking symbolic import and, correspondingly, the shrinking spiritual grandeur of the protagonists, who deliver fewer and fewer eloquent soliloquies, consign their villainies to hired thugs, and finally are swept aside by the nobler (but less charismatic) avengers, Macduff and Malcolm. Many astute critics of the play—including Bradley, Rossiter, Hellman, Sanders, Jorgensen, Mack, Kirsch, and Muir—have struggled with this central conundrum: can the playwright sustain great tragedy if the only true kingly spirit is dispatched at the outset?⁵

Like most of these critics, I believe that Macbeth's capacious mind, despite its moral degeneration, remains at center stage, showing the horrific consequences of a truly heroic spirit embracing evil. But instead of conceiving the tragedy as one great cosmos-shaking act of regicide followed by two subordinate aftershocks, I would characterize the Macbeths' journey into darkness as three equally significant stages of spiritual catastrophe, three distinctive and theatrically-potent dimensions of evil as it evolves and festers in the human psyche. Macbeth murders first a *parental ruler*, then a *brotherly friend* (his "chiefest friend" according to Holinshed), and finally a *mother and her children*.⁶ His victims thus

4. Julian Markels, "The Spectacle of Deterioration: Macbeth and the 'Manner' of Tragic Deterioration," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12 (1961), 293-303.

5. Hellman, Sanders, Mack, Muir insist on Macbeth's greatness of spirit, but also on the sordid depths of his degradation. Cf. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedies*, 2nd ed. (1905; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1949), pp. 349-65; A. P. Rossiter, *Angel with Horns*, ed. Graham Storey (New York: Theatre Arts, 1961), pp. 209-34; Robert B. Hellman, "The Criminal as Tragic Hero: Dramatic Methods," *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966), 12-24; Wilbur Sanders, *The Dramatist and the Received Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Eng., 1968), pp. 253-316; Paul A. Jorgensen, *Our Naked Frontiers: Sensational Art and Meaning in Macbeth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 185-216; Maynard Mack, Jr., *Killing the King* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 138-85; Kirsch, "Macbeth's Suicide"; Kenneth Muir, introduction, *Macbeth*, New Arden Edition (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. xliii-liii, lxxv.

6. This "object relations" pattern was (in slightly different form) first noted by L. Veszy-Wagner, "Macbeth: Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair," *American Imago* 25

represent the three fundamental human bonds, together comprising (in reverse order) the three basic stages of human maturation, or the three essential cathexes of the human psyche. Thus, in the course of the three murders Macbeth deconstructs the entire psychological infrastructure of human identity. Shakespeare's awareness of this pattern is underscored by its earlier prototypical appearance in *Richard III*, where that villain-hero similarly kills a king (Henry VI), then a brother (Clarence), then children (the Princes).⁷ In *Macbeth*, however, the playwright is much more fully apprised of the scheme's psychological implications, which he methodically exploits.

The dramaturgical design of *Macbeth* precisely emphasizes this three-phase pattern: Acts I and II present, in a continuous sequence, the regicide and its immediate consequences; Act III shows the murder of Banquo and then its impact on Macbeth at the banquet; Acts IV and V, another continuous cycle of action, presents the slaughter of Macduff's family, then its social and psychological consequences.⁸ This 2-1-2 structure, the

(1968), 242-57. In her brief discussion of the pattern's implications, she subordinates each victim to a patriarchal version of the Oedipal struggle; but she acutely observes that Macbeth's "main problem is . . . uncertain identity" with regard to gender.

7. Cf. Emrys Jones, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 195-224.

8. For detailed treatment of this three-part structure of *Macbeth*, see Jones, *Scenic Form*, pp. 195-224. On Shakespearean tragic structure as three stages of self-discovery, see Maynard Mack, Jr., "The Jacobean Shakespeare: Some Observations of the Construction of the Tragedies," *Stratford upon Avon Studies: Jacobean Theatre*, ed. John R. Brown and Bernard Harris (London: St. Martin's Press, 1960), pp. 11-42. Arguments for both a three-part and a five-part structure of Shakespearean tragedy are debated by Ruth Nevo, *Shakespeare's Tragic Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 3-30, 314-57.

My interpretation of the structure of mature Shakespearean tragedy is as follows: Acts I-II, like Acts IV-V, each work as a cyclical unit, in which the latter act "answers" the former. In *King Lear*, e.g., the lengthy opening scene of Act I, in which Lear divests, humiliates, and exiles Cordelia, is answered by the lengthy concluding scene of Act II, in which Lear himself is, in precisely analogous manner, stripped, humiliated, and exiled—thus completing a cycle of worldly empowerment and divestiture. Acts IV and V of the play similarly work as a unit, the latter "answering" the former, but now enforcing a cycle of spiritual empowerment and divestiture. Act III is

dramaturgic pattern of all of Shakespeare's mature tragedies, perfectly accommodates his treatment of Macbeth's three murders.

To attain this neatly coherent pattern of psychological devolution, Shakespeare has drastically altered Holinshed's *Chronicles*⁹—first, by condensing all the major crises of Duncan's six-year reign and of Macbeth's seventeen-year reign into the two-hour traffic of the stage. The entire battery of wars and assassinations seems to transpire in a matter of days, rather than a quarter of a century, making the three murders (as well as the broader framework of political violence in Acts I and V) seem closely and causally connected.

Equally striking is Shakespeare's moral reshaping of the victims, casting them as iconically benevolent members of the human family, in order to accommodate his three-fold tragic pattern. Instead of the chronicles' portrait of a weak, cowardly, and greedy king, about the same age as his cousin Macbeth, Shakespeare portrays Duncan as aged, humble, and generous—an ideal, almost saintly monarch.¹⁰ Similarly Banquo, in the chronicles a co-conspirator in regicide, is recast as a devoted friend in life's warfare, modestly resisting each temptation to which his colleague falls prey.¹¹ Likewise Macduff, who in the chronicles enters the story always a coherent unit in itself, its action revolving around a climactic central encounter which is the axis of the entire play.

9. See Muir, pp. xxxvi-xliii; Muriel C. Bradbrook, "The Sources of *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Survey* 4 (1951), 35-48; David Norbrook, "Macbeth and the Politics of Historiography," *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of 17th-Century England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwiicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 78-116.

10. Though some recent critics, in the radically revisionist spirit of New Historicism, interpret Duncan's "womanliness" as Shakespeare's indication of his unkingly impotence, I believe Norman Sanders' view is correct: Duncan's nurturing, fertile, self-mortifying traits contribute positively to Shakespeare's portrait of "a most sainted king" (IV.iii.109). Duncan begins where Lear and Cymbeline end, as a king who can "see feelingly." Cf. Harry Berger Jr., "The Early Scenes of *Macbeth*: Preface to a New Interpretation," *ELH* 47 (1980), 1-31; James L. Calderwood, *If It Were Done: Macbeth and Tragic Action* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), pp. 119-21; Graham Bradshaw, *Shakespeare's Skepticism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 244-50; Adelman, "Born of Woman," pp. 93 ff.

11. Banquo's probity, even more than Duncan's, has been subjected to repeated

I

belatedly, mainly seeking personal revenge, is transmuted into an ever-present touchstone of charitable social compassion—the Man of Feeling who best embodies what his wife and babes, those “strong knots of love,” represent: the most primitive human bond. It is Macduff’s horrified response to Duncan’s murder that initiates the knocking of conscience in the Macbeths; and it is his patriotic opposition to the usurper that galvanizes Scotland and England into a retributive force.¹² Shakespeare’s radical reconstruction of the chronicles, especially his amelioration of the victims’ moral character, thus emphasizes the destruction of three primordial human bonds. This three-phase sequence of psychological disintegration (and implicit affirmation of the values destroyed) provides a paradigm of Shakespeare’s mature tragic form.

questioning and qualification: see, e.g., A. C. Bradley, pp. 379–87; Roy Walker, *The Time Is Free* (London: Andrew Dakers, 1949), pp. 89 ff; Richard J. Jaasma, “The Tragedy of Banquo,” *Literature and Psychology* 17 (1967), 87–94. Berger’s and Calderwood’s subtle criticism of Duncan’s “aggressive giving” (n. 10) would similarly qualify Banquo’s lavish praise of his warrior-colleague (I.iv.54–58). Yet that Duncan’s and Banquo’s compliments are benevolent is underscored not only by their repeated association with “royalty” and “grace,” but also by the contrast with Macbeth’s deceitful, murderous mode of “aggressive giving”—especially his forceful invitation of Banquo to the feast (III.i.11–39) and flattery of the missing guest (III.ii.30–31, iv.41–44, 91–92). Though Shakespeare implies political shortcomings in Duncan’s aged weakness and in Banquo’s Hamlet-like inertia after the regicide (thus qualifying the playwright’s compliment to James I), nevertheless in revising the chronicles Shakespeare has taken pains to idealize the moral character of both victims; their frailties, like Hamlet’s, derive more from warring evils of the world than from their own innate urges.

12. Adelman and Hunter (n. 2) devalue Macduff’s moral probity by taking seriously Lady Macduff’s anxious but wittily-exaggerated accusations of her husband (IV.ii.6–14, 44–45); yet even the child appreciates the irony of her remarks. In spite of the pointed criticisms levelled at Macduff by his wife, by Malcolm (IV.iii.26–8), and, most emphatically, by himself (IV.iii.224–7), it is clear that he is moved by generous compassion for Scotland as a whole, and that his compassion grows out of the intense family feeling manifested by his wife and child.

In presenting an initial assault on regal or parental authority in Acts I–II, *Macbeth* is comparable to all the tragedies from *Hamlet* to *Coriolanus*. The murder of a parent-like king, reflecting the Macbeths’ aspiration to God-like greatness and power, is an Oedipal repudiation of superego (as commentators since Freud and Jekels have acknowledged). Yet the gender implications of Duncan’s rule have been too reductively construed by Oedipal-oriented psychoanalysis. For centuries it has been assumed that Duncan’s *fatherliness* forms the basis of his comprehensive social identity (Scotland) and of his Christ-like spiritual identity (“The Lord’s anointed temple,” II.iii.70)—that as *patriarch* he, like Lear and Cymbeline, represents the acme of psychological development, the mature conscience of the race, or in Freudian terms, “superego.”¹³ Critics persistently construe the regicidal motive as an Oedipal antagonism, citing Lady Macbeth’s

13. In Acts I–II of each mature tragedy, Shakespeare portrays an assault on conscience or synteresis [Freudian superego], not merely as a fatherly or kingly power, but increasingly as a consolidating, androgynous figure of authority: Othello-Desdemona, Lear (whose initial attempt to arrogate female nurture confirms the flaw in his sovereignty), the bi-gendered Duncan, Antony-Cleopatra. On the nature and symbolization of superego, see S. Freud, “The Ego and the Id” (1923), *SE* 19:3–66; Manuel Furer, “The History of the Superego Concept in Psychoanalysis,” in *Moral Value and the Superego Concept in Psychoanalysis*, ed. Seymour C. Post (New York: International Universities Press, 1972), pp. 11–62; Alex Holder, “Preoedipal Contributions to the Formation of the Superego,” *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* [hereafter *PSOC*] 37 (1982), 245–72.

On the Renaissance view of conscience or synteresis as a means of consolidating mental powers and gender-components of human nature, see Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie* (London, 1618), Part 2, pp. 364–511, especially on restoring of the Elenic communion between heart’s affective powers (pp. 437–511) and head’s intellectual powers (pp. 364–436).

Both Elizabeth I and James I exploited the idea of monarchy as an androgynous consolidation of paternal authority and maternal nurture, as noted by Stephen Orgel and Louis A. Montrose in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 58–9, 65–87.

distress at Duncan's fatherly appearance during the assault (II.ii:12-13), to which one might add Macbeth's condemnation of the murder as a "par-ricide," projecting his own Oedipal urges onto Malcolm and Donalbain (III.i:31).

Yet the Macbeths envision Duncan not just as a *father* (who "hath been / So clear in his great office," I.vii:17-18), but also as a *mother* (who vies with Lady Macbeth in expressing love for her husband and for the other thanes, and who is cast as Lucrece to Macbeth's "ravishing Tarquin" with his phallic dagger). In addition, both Macbeths at critical moments in their soliloquies envision the monarch as a vulnerable and soul-like *child* (the heavenly infant which Lady Macbeth would deny the chance to "peep through the blanket of the dark, / To cry, 'Hold, hold!'" and which Macbeth projects apocalyptically as a "naked new-born babe" of Pity). Thus, in psychoanalytic (or "object relational") terms Duncan is not just the father, but all aspects of the human family—perhaps most poignantly, mother and child.¹⁴ By their own gender obsessions, the Macbeths have promoted the erroneous and reductive conception of kingship as a pure patriarchy. As recent critics have noted, the Macbeths' urge for kingly greatness is expressed as a fantasy of becoming exclusively "manly" by taking up phallic weaponry to eliminate womanly and childlike characteristics.¹⁵

The Macbeths' notable series of monologues in Acts I-II is fueled by willful hyperbole, which accommodates their male-oriented aspiration to "greatness" (a word whose variants appear 17 times in Act I, more than in the other four acts combined). To the extent that we as audience identify with the Macbeths' grand speechmaking, hypnotic role-playing, and cosmic aspiration for greatness in these acts, we must also experience the ironies that emerge in the actual performance of the murder: pettiness, furtiveness, cowardice, and utter deceit.

As the hyperbolic fantasy of these early soliloquies reveals, the type of ego functioning that informs this regicidal-parenticidal stage of Mac-

beth's career in villainy is *sublimation* but in its most perverted form. Anna Freud describes sublimation as the highest phase of psychic functioning in the construction of selfhood, the ultimate means of enriching the ego.¹⁶ Ideally, sublimation resolves the ongoing Oedipal struggle (a struggle for the final, genital stage of sexual maturation), not by evading bodily consummation of sexual energies, nor by suppressing the female aspect of those energies, but by promoting comprehensive and free interplay between gender-components of the self. Thus the Macbeths' brutish rape of kingly greatness works exactly contrary to authentic sublimation. By furtively killing the king they not only destroy the bond with this androgynous parent, but they also violate the illuminating and consolidating powers of their own superego or conscience, thus inducing a deeper regression into self-divisive and annihilative ego defenses.

II

The murder of Macbeth's "chiefest friend" in Act III is motivated not by further aspiration to greatness, but by rivalrous envy of a broth-

16. "Some Remarks on Infant Observation" (1952) in *The Writings of Anna Freud*, 8 vols. (New York: International Universities Press, 1968), 4:509-85. In her most important work, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, 1936, Anna Freud began to establish that ego-functions serve not only defensive but constructive purposes. In much current Ego Psychology, "sublimation" is no longer a fashionable term, being displaced by "neutralization" and "desexualization." These latter terms, however, emphasize the *defensive* nature of the ego's workings (especially its pacifying of the ever-clamorous libido) rather than identifying the essentially *constructive* purpose of this ultimate ego function, particularly its contribution to the Kohutian struggle for "grandiose selfhood" (the evident goal of the Macbeths). On the ego's defensive postures and mechanisms, see Willi Hoffer, "Defensive Process and Defensive Organization: Their Place in Psychoanalytic Technique," *IJP* 35 (1954), 194-8; and Heinz Hartmann, "The Development of the Ego Concept in Freud's Work," *IJP* 37 (1956), 425-38. On the ego's constructive functioning (especially in the closely-related processes of sublimation, superego formation, and therapeutic transference), see Hans W. Loewald, *Sublimation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), ch. 1-2; Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), pp. 309-24.

14. Cf. David Willbern, "Phantasmagoric Macbeth," *English Literary Renaissance* 16, (1986), esp. pp. 520-27.

15. See, e.g., Harding, Kimbrough, French, Kahn, Adelman, Hunter in note 2.

erly alter-ego.¹⁷ According to Aquinas, "After the sin of pride [whereby Lucifer aspired to be a deity] there followed the evil of envy . . . whereby he grieved over man's good."¹⁸ Envy, and the rivalrous doubling and splitting which necessitates confronting distasteful mirror-images of the self at the center of each of the tragedies, is secondary to that earlier violent effort to displace divine-regal-parental authority. The regicide-parenticide thus leads to fratricide-amiticide, a chronologically secondary but equally universal phenomenon, which carries its own momentous psychological implications.

This assault on a warrior-friend who is virtually the mirror-image or double of Macbeth ("all hail, Macbeth and Banquo! / Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!" I.iii.68-69) is a direct violation of ego, involving a psychological "splitting" into self and shadow-self, as Macbeth perversely identifies with the darker, more illusory component. Though he rationalizes the

17. Rivalrous envy becomes Macbeth's *dominant* motivation only during Act III, in the deliberations over murdering Banquo. In Acts I-II Macbeth's basic motivation is not envy, either for Duncan, Banquo, or Malcolm (though the basis for later envy is obviously established): in spite of anxiety at Duncan's appointing of his son as Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth never considers killing Malcolm along with Duncan (leaving the unappointed Donalbain to shoulder the guilt). In his initial embracing of evil Macbeth is preoccupied with the sublime fantasy of regicide as the "be-all and end-all," conferring inviolable supremacy; only on discovering its failure to provide such aggrandizement does he turn to bitter envy of "fraternal" rivals.

18. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 2 vols., 1.63.2. Macbeth's rivalrous fury toward the fraternal Banquo is thus a second stage of evil, resulting from the failure to satisfy the hunger for greatness, just as Cain's envious fratricide stemmed from his parents' frustrated desire to emulate God. For a different perspective on the analogy between Cain and Macbeth, see Jorgensen, pp. 47-51, 190-5, 200, 213.

On the pervasiveness of envy in human motivation, see Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* (New York: Basic Books, 1957); and René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (1972; rpt. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), especially pp. 56-168. On the persistent use of this envy principle in Shakespeare's "enemy twins," see Joel Fineman, "Fratricide and Cuckoldry: Shakespeare's Doubles," *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray W. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 70-109.

murder of Banquo in only one soliloquy, far less grandiose than the monologues of Acts I-II, Macbeth throughout Act III continues the fiery expression of his inner powers by a number of intense dialogues in which he no longer effectively communicates his deeper meaning either to his auditors or to himself.¹⁹ They can only guess at the dark nuances in his spate of bestial images: serpents and scorpions (III.ii.13-5, 36; III.iv.28-30); bat, "shard-bound beetle," and crow (III.ii.40-2, 50-3); "greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs" (III.i.92-4); "Russian bear, arm'd rhinoceros, or th'Hyrcan tiger" (III.iv.99-100); "magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks" (III.iv.121-4). If Acts I-II show a perverse mode of hyperbolic aspiration (appropriating sublimation as a means of overthrowing the superego or conscience), this furtive imagery of Act III shows Macbeth's regression to the prior psychic function of *projection*, the defensive externalization of his depraved and problematic qualities onto others, which enforces a general process of "decomposition" and "splitting" of the ego.²⁰ At its best, projection (an expulsive psychic function deriving from the anal stage of infancy) plays a key role in the development of selfhood, enabling one to

19. Jorgensen (p. 194) calls these speeches (like the similar ravings of Lear in Act III) "soliloquys made public." Equally important, they are soliloquys made obscure through intense repression, so that neither Macbeth and Lear, nor their auditors, can easily fathom their speeches' profound self-reflections. Cf. Barry Weller, "Identity and Representation in Shakespeare," *ELH* 49 (1982), 356 ff.; Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 218 ff.

20. On the key role of projection in developmental psychology see *The Writings of Anna Freud* 4:509-85; and Darius Ormston, "On Projection," *PSOC* 33 (1978), 117-66. Melanie Klein, in "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," *JIP* 27 (1946), 99-110, and in *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, trans. Alix Strachey (1932; rev. ed., New York: Delacorte Press, 1975), pp. 142-8, 178, observed a pattern in childhood development of *introjection-projection-reintrojection*. But I believe that the "reintrojection" occurs on a higher level, as in sublimation, and that this higher level is made possible by the stimulating effect of projection. Thus reintrojection, like Wordsworth's "recollection in tranquillity," is a culminating mode of psychic internalization and identity-construction occurring on a more comprehensive, controlled, and "sublime" level. Cf. Robert P. Knight, "Introjection, Projection, and Identification," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 9 (1940), 334-41; A. Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York: International Universities Press, 1966), pp. 50-53.

influence others by projecting onto them one's own ego ideals and inadequacies, and also enabling one thereby to experiment with and test those values and identities. But at its worst, as in malicious rituals of murder and scapegoating, projection revises reality so drastically that "nothing is. / But what is not," and the murderer's own selfhood, his "single state of man," is increasingly shaken and disjoined (I.iii.134-42).

Envy, and the resultant splitting of selfhood, dictates the entire sequence of Act III: Macbeth's spiteful soliloquy in which he feels "rebuked" by Banquo's "royalty of nature"; his strange ranking of dogs in the abusive hiring of the assassins, humiliating them, even as he claims to raise and "make love" to them; his furtive insecurity even with his wife (rehearsing her part while concealing his full intent); his "half-participation" in the murder itself, perhaps as the third murderer;²¹ and of

21. In spite of Macbeth's show of surprise at Fleance's survival (III.iv.20-24), it is tempting to believe that Macbeth is the "third murderer" [first advanced by Allan Park Paton, *Notes and Queries* (1869), and lucidly reformulated by Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960), 2 vols., 2:122-6]—so that he only "half-participates" in the second murder. That Macbeth can hardly admit (even to himself) his involvement suggests the extent of his splitting psyche: for if he is the third murderer, it reveals both a deepening insecurity and a growing obsession with rational control (utter self-repression, anal attentiveness to detail, and a host of other defensive mechanisms aimed at sustaining to others and to himself the illusion of kingship, including the pretense of shock on learning of Fleance's escape—which resembles his extravagant show of dismay on learning of Duncan's death). Macbeth's furtive pretense of uninvolved even for his own cutthroats would thus demonstrate his increasing cowardice, alienation, and lack of a stable central self. Hence, for the second murder Macbeth both is and is not an active participant, owing to his descent into psychic bifurcation.

George Walton Williams, however, in "The Third Murderer in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23 (1972), 261, observes that "The supposition that Macbeth is the third murderer . . . necessitates a staging that twice violates the 'Law of Reentry.'" Thus, though the third murderer clearly indicates Macbeth's growing anxiety, and may vicariously represent his grasping for control (attending more closely than the others to the usurper's crucial purposes), stage convention would seem to argue against Macbeth's schizoid reappearance as monarch-cutthroat-monarch in such rapid sequence. Yet if we consider the extraordinary liberties and experimentation in the staging of other Shakespearean plays of this period (e.g., the Dover cliff scene in *King Lear*), one wonders at the theatrical ingenuity of having Macbeth immediately reenter, perhaps with a dark cape only thinly disguising his kingly garments, so that the audience

course the self-division which builds to a climax during the banquet. Macbeth's schizoid vacillation between noblemen and assassins, between true and feigned selves, gradually gives way to a deeper vacillation between conscious and unconscious realities. His obscene praise of the missing guest ("And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss") serves the psychic function of invoking his double's macabre presence, filling the central seat to which Macbeth himself is inexorably drawn.²²

Throughout Act III Macbeth's insecurity focuses no longer on the proud

would actually be aware of his devious schizophrenic "doubling." If so, it is the most stunningly purposeful violation of the Law of Reentry in the Shakespearean canon.

22. In "*Macbeth*: King James's Play," *South Atlantic Review* 47 (1982), 12-21, George Walton Williams astutely observes that the ghost of Banquo, rather than of Duncan, holds sway in the drama's central scene, thus heightening the compliment to King James I, even though it subverts decorum. Williams (pp. 20-21, fn. 12) notes the symbolic suggestiveness of the seating which underlies the doppelgänger effect at the banquet: "Macbeth does not sit in his throne [the "static" where Lady Macbeth remains]—to which he has no spiritual right; he does expect to sit at the table—a level to which he does have a right." The "place reserved" for Banquo, to which Macbeth is drawn as to his own natural place, is centrally located: "Both sides are even: here I'll sit i'th' midst" (III.iv.11). Almost exactly the same event occurs in Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, and similar psychic displacements occur in James' *The Turn of the Screw* and Conrad's "The Secret Sharer"; but only Macbeth confronts a double who represents not his sinister shadow, but the ruination of his better self.

No critic has fully considered Banquo as Macbeth's "double." Robert N. Watson briefly mentions Banquo as "doppelgänger" in "Thriftless Ambition, Foolish Wishes, and the Tragedy of *Macbeth*," *William Shakespeare's Macbeth*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 142-7; James Kirsch, in *Shakespeare's Royal Self* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1965), pp. 331 ff, comments on the "participation mystique" of the two men (Macbeth being more attuned to the unconscious, but the weaker ego); Matthew N. Proser, *The Heroic Image in Five Shakespearean Tragedies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 76-78, describes the good Banquo's ghost "as a kind of analogy for Macbeth's mutilated soul."

On literary uses of the "double" and the general process of "decomposition," see Doris L. Eder, "The Idea of the Double," *Psychanalytische Review* 65 (1978), 579-614, esp. 587-9; and Robert Rogers, *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), including a provocative but misleading identification of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as doubles. Rogers does not distinguish between the *homeroic* phenomenon of mirror-transference (between close friends, sibling rivals, or hero and alter-ego), and the more complex psychic transference between *heterosexual* partners, especially in marriage.

aspiration for kingly greatness, but on envious rivalry with his antithetical friend Banquo, who is to him what Edgar is to Edmund, Hal to Hotspur, Orlando to Oliver: the child favored with a loving heart, who thus calls into question the unloving self's entire "being" and must be utterly eliminated:

every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: and though I could
With bare-faced power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop.

(III.i.116-21)

Instinctively Macbeth envisions the bond with his "chiefest friend" in the context of a universal siblinghood, making the murder of Banquo as broadly symbolic as that of Duncan: first he eliminates the universal parent or greater-self, then the archetypal sibling or mirror-self. In each of the mature Shakespearean tragedies, this shattering confrontation with an antithetical self-image occurs at the play's center, the middle of Act III: Othello's temptation by Iago (III.iii), Lear's discovery of "Poor Tom" (III.iv), Macbeth's spectral encounter with Banquo (III.iv), Antony's battle with Octavius (III.vii). As in Lear's meeting with the mad beggar, Macbeth's rencontre with his mutilated alter-ego engages him in full awareness of fraternal Otherness; but while this stunning encounter leads the kingly Lear instinctively to affirm the oneness of human souls, it provokes the usurper Macbeth to repudiate "that great bond" (III.ii.49).²³ In discarding Banquo, Macbeth thus divests himself of brother-love, the homoerotic bond, the second crucial cathexis forming the normative identity of the human psyche.

23. The positing of an "indissoluble tie" (*Macbeth* III.i.15-18) between self and shadow-self (or alter-ego) occurs at the exact center of *Othello* and *Macbeth* and, with more benevolent implications, at the center of *King Lear*. At this moment each protagonist confronts the darkest possibilities of selfhood (the imputed treachery of Desdemona, the feigned sins of Poor Tom, the butchery inflicted by Macbeth himself).

III

In Acts IV and V, focusing on the slaughter of a mother and children (and the immediate social and psychological consequences of that deed), Macbeth eliminates the third and most fundamental human bond, as he violates the primitive core of selfhood, what Freud called the id. Most critics treat this third assault as mere "fourth-act pathos," as a dim echo of the previous kills, or as a hasty and illogical afterthought testifying to a kind of madness in the tyrant, since these victims offer neither militant opposition nor patrilineal threat to Macbeth's royal claim.²⁴

But Macbeth's essential motive for the third murder is not a reenactment of the Oedipal struggle (casting Macduff as the new parent-power to be deposed); nor is it another envious rivalry with a mirroring sibling (seeing Macduff's goodness, like Banquo's, as a galling comparison to his own evil). Rather, building upon and blossoming out of those two previous modes of aggression, Macbeth's "black and deep desires" now enter a third and culminating phase: scornful annihilative hatred of the simple passionate core, the mother-and-child matrix of selfhood—the healthy "oral-narcissist" bonding which contrasts the perverse narcissism now unfolding in Macbeth.²⁵ Macbeth's contemptuous repudiation

24. See, e.g., Hogan (n. 2), who interprets the slaughter as a transference of the on-going Oedipal struggle, an indirect blow at Macduff as threatening authority and as fertile progenitor.

25. We must carefully distinguish Macbeth's tyrannous infantilism (culminating in narcissistic rage) from the healthy oral-narcissistic bond, involving mutual recognition and respect between parent and child during the sucking stage. For the potentially negative aspects of infantile narcissism, see S. Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," *SE* 14: 69-102; Otto F. Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: International Universities Press, 1975); and the important Shakespearean studies of aberrant narcissism by Kirsch, "Macbeth's Suicide" and Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" (n. 2), and "'Anger's My Meat': Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*," *Representing Shakespeare*, pp. 129-49. On the positive mode of narcissism and of maternal oral-narcissistic bonding, see Kohut, "Forms and Transformations of Narcissism," *JAPA* 14 (1966), 243-72; and Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), pp. 11-50. Shakespeare seems particularly attuned to this primitive cathexis which forms the core of human identity, emphasizing not just negative but positive aspects of motherly nurture

and perversion of the affective-cognitive human core (the "id") informs this final sequence of psychic degradation in Acts IV and V. The ego function which dominates this earliest phase of psychic development (and which most pertinently informs the final two acts of Shakespeare's mature tragedies) is *introjection*, the ego's incorporation of desired aspects of the nurturant other in order to construct its own identity.²⁶ Introjection of the beloved, for the purpose of achieving (or re-achieving) total selfhood, is the psychological principle which is either violated or embraced in the final phase of each of Shakespeare's major tragedies. Acts IV and V invariably draw their cathartic and transforming energy, not from the killing of a king, but from the heroic male's reaction to the destruction of a *beloved maiden* (Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia) or, in the final tragedies, a *mother with children* (Lady Macduff and Lady Macbeth; Cleopatra; Virgilia and Volturna).²⁷

A wholesome mode of introjective bonding informs the poignant scene of Lady Macduff and her son (IV.ii), where in the father's absence she frets over the child's continued sustenance. But the boy's affirmation

in the cathartic sequence of each of his mature tragedies, most strikingly in Cleopatra's death-scene ("Dost thou not see the baby at my breast / That sucks the nurse asleep?").

26. On "introjection" (as well as the related functions of "incorporation," "internalization," and "identification"), see, in addition to the writings of A. Freud and M. Klein cited in note 20, S. Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), *SE* 14: 237-58; Hans W. Loewald, "Internalization, Separation, Mourning, and the Super-ego," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 31 (1962), 483-504, and "On Internalization," *JIP* 54 (1973), 9-17; Roy Schafer, *Aspects of Internalization* (New York: International Universities Press, 1968); William W. Meissner, "Internalization and Object Relations," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 27 (1979), 345-60, and *Internalization in Psychoanalysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1981); Rebecca Smith Behrends and Sidney J. Blatt, "Internalization and Psychological Development throughout the Life Cycle," *PSOC* 40 (1985), 11-39.

27. Though the cathartic valuation of womanly/matronly nurture in Acts IV-V holds true for all of Shakespeare's major tragedies, *Hamlet* requires qualification. Never fully reunited with Ophelia or Gertrude, Hamlet only incipiently comprehends the meaning of a grave holding his "fool" and his beloved. The play's final focus on the killing of a false parent-king, of an inadequate sibling-double (Laertes), and of a disloyal nurturing mother, suggests unresolved Oedipal (and pre-Oedipal) anxieties and an incomplete quest for identity.

that Providential if not parental care will feed him, echoing Matthew 6:26, suggests the dignity of what he has thus far introjected from his parents. This humane and spiritual nurture contrasts with the strikingly perverse mode of introjection in the preceding scene: the witches' materialistic, cannibalistic ritual. Into their womb-like cauldron's mouth (the *vagina dentata*)²⁸ they fling fragments of poisonous and ravenous beasts (toad, snake, dragon, wolf, shark, tiger) and parts representing the erotic and sensory powers of non-Christians (Jew's liver, Turk's nose, Tartar's lips)—including those lower senses of smell and taste involved in feeding.

The final and focal object in the witches' catalog of dismembered parts is "Finger of birth-strangled babe, / Ditch-deliver'd by a drab" (IV.i.26-31). Thus, from the "pilot's thumb" of the witches' early scene (I.iii.28), symbolizing the perversion of parental guidance or superego, Macbeth regresses inexorably to the aborted potency of the child (or id), as symbolized by the foetal "finger" or phallus, "strangled"-castrated-devoured by the cauldron-womb-mouth of the Voracious Mother, the "drab" or prostitute. Introjection (an incorporative mode of identification deriving from the experience of sucking and swallowing during the oral stage of infancy) is thus materialized and brutalized by the witches to secure worldly power.

From the vicious opening ritual of Act IV (which provokes the entire cycle of action in Acts IV-V), Macbeth embraces the witches' omnivorous

28. On the castration threat as a *vagina dentata* fantasy, see Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth* (New York: Robert Brunner, 1952; orig. 1924), pp. 48-49; Sandor F. Ferenczi, *The Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1925), pp. 278-81; Leonard Shengold, "The Effects of Overstimulation," *JIP* 48 (1967), 403-15; C. Philip Wilson, "Stone as a Symbol of Teeth," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 36 (1967), 418-27; Daniel B. Schuster, "Bisexuality and Body as Phallus," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 38 (1969), 72-80; and especially Roy Schafer, *Language and Insight* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 153-60, who provides the context of a broad gender analysis.

Note, however, that the demonic symbolism in *Macbeth* IV.i is an alliance of male and female perversions: the witches' devouring cauldron (*vagina dentata*) is shortly joined by their demon masters' "armed head" (*penis dentata*) which similarly tempts Macbeth to annihilate children (IV.i.69-86). This satanic collusion of perverted gender components, a marital travesty which promotes mutual deception and annihilation rather than mutual support and procreation, evolves throughout the play.

perversion of the primal introjective principle. Each of his three murders has been associated with imagery of feasting, but it is particularly in his impulsive butchering of mother and babes that Macbeth has willingly and unhesitatingly "supp'd full with horrors" (V.v.13). Thus the third murderous assault, a Herod-like massacre of innocents from which Macbeth completely distances himself, but which Shakespeare exposes to the audience with the most excruciating intimacy, brings us to the peak of horror, the breaking of the deepest taboo, which violates the very rudiment of selfhood and of social bonding.

Far more than King Duncan and Banquo, whose entrapment in political motivations partly cloaks their essential being, the intimacy of mother and child brings us closest to the core of human nature. In each of Shakespeare's mature tragedies, the final cathartic sequence of Acts IV-V jeopardizes the primal psychic ground of being; the inception of love: the drawing of woman, "fool," or child into the web of deceit and violence promotes in the male authority-figures not merely revulsion against evil, but clear and intense awareness of the rich essence of life which has been lost. Macbeth himself, in his finest show of inner light, envisioned the soul's greatest power in its early innocence and in its affective mode of "pity": "Like a naked new-born babe, / Striding the blast" (I.vii.19-20). As he loses touch with that child-like and woman-nurtured essence in himself, Macbeth also loses his capacity for true kingship.

Emory and Henry College

Robert L. Reid

Shakespeare's *Theatrical Italics*

Paul Armstrong starts his recent book, *Conflicting Readings*, with the proposition: "Endless variety is possible in interpretation, but tests for validity can still judge some readings to be more plausible than others." Armstrong then proposes three such tests for the validity of any interpretation: *inclusiveness*, *intersubjectivity*, and *efficacy*. For *inclusiveness*, he argues that "a hypothesis becomes more secure as it demonstrates its ability to account for parts without encountering anomaly and to undergo refinements and extensions without being abandoned." Although "as a normative ideal, or principle of correctness," this yardstick by itself may be useless, it can still be valuable "in that it can exclude bad guesses." As to *intersubjectivity* (linked to persuasiveness): "our reading becomes more credible if others assent to it or at least regard it as reasonable," while "the disagreement of others may be a signal that our interpretation is invalid because unshareable." To invoke *efficacy* is to see whether or not in pragmatic terms an interpretation "has the power to lead to new discoveries and continued comprehension," for "the presuppositions on which any hermeneutic takes its stand are not immune from practical testing" but "must continually justify themselves by their efficacy." If such presuppositions "repeatedly fail to lead to persuasive, inclusive readings, friends as well as foes may conclude that the problem lies not with the limited skills of the method's adherents but with its assumptions."¹

To apply Armstrong's arguments and distinctions to the many warring approaches to Shakespeare's plays is a daunting task far beyond my province. Nonetheless, in my own idiosyncratic terms I confess to a yen for

1. *Conflicting Readings: Variety and Validity in Interpretation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. ix, 13-16.