SHAKESPEARE LECTURE

Macbeth and the Third Person

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THERE ARE SOME terrible moments in *Macbeth* but none more terrible than this, when one man has to break the news to another that his dear ones have all been murdered:

> Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
> Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner
> Were on the quarry of these murdered deer
> To add the death of you. (4. 3. 206–9)[1]

These two men are not alone; a third is present and listening, and it is he who completes the line left suspended by the messenger's words: 'To add the death of you.' 'Merciful heaven—' this third person cries. He urges the bereaved man to give sorrow words, to be comforted and to dispute it like a man—with 'us'. 'Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge / To cure this deadly grief.' (4. 3. 216–17.) To which the man whose life of incurable grief is just beginning famously responds: 'He has no children.' (4. 3. 218.) We cannot tell for certain whom he means by 'He'—whether the man who is trying to comfort him too promptly or the man who has killed his children. He might have said 'Thou hast no children', or 'You have no children', as Queen Margaret does to the men who butcher her boy at Tewkesbury (*The Third Part of Henry VI*,

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[1] Quotations from *Macbeth* follow the New Cambridge edition by A. R. Braunmuller (Cambridge, 1997); all other quotations from Shakespeare are from the *Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974).

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5. 5. 63), but he does not. It is not the only occasion in *Macbeth* where it is not clear who 'he' is.[2]

Pronouns help us work out who we are, you are, they are, and their singular equivalents. In the theatre pronouns acquire a radical urgency because they are wrought into the conditions of performance. They remind us at a less than fully conscious level that we are all performing these pronouns all the time, whether we like it or not. The three men in this scene do have names of their own: Ross, who brings the news; Macduff who receives it; and Malcolm who listens and intervenes. But in the theatre we do not hear these proper names as we hear the pronouns that enact the relations between them: I, you, thou, he. We hear the name of Macbeth many times in the scene, and the name of Old Siward twice, and we hear words that refer to powerful forces, agents and domains by which the speakers seek to orient themselves, their loyalties, their hopes and fears: Heaven, Hell, Scotland, England, God, the Devil. The words 'Heaven' and 'Heavens' are voiced with particular urgency in this scene, which contains nine out of the twenty in the play as a whole, including the king of England's 'heavenly gift of prophecy' (4. 3. 157). But the names 'Ross' and 'Malcolm' are never uttered nor heard here because the speakers and addressees identify themselves and each other simply as 'I', 'Thou or You',[3] and 'We'.

Macduff is different. His proper name is heard here twice, and the occasions are significant. The first marks the pivotal moment when Malcolm reveals that Macduff has passed the test he's been set. He has distinguished himself from the mass of anonymous agents Macbeth has been sending to Malcolm, and Malcolm honours him accordingly: 'Macduff, this noble passion, / Child of integrity, hath from my soul / Wiped the black scruples, . . .' (4. 3. 114–16). But there is a further noble passion that Macduff must undergo in the second half of this scene. As the news of his family's annihilation begins to sink in, he marks with his own name the first stabbings of guilt:

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[2] Many have noted for instance the uncertainty about the referents of the 'he's and 'him's towards the end of the Captain's description of the climactic encounter between 'brave Macbeth' and 'the merciless Macdonald': 'Till he faced the slave, / Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, / Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chaps / And fixed his head upon the battlements.' (1. 2. 20–4.)

[3] The second person singular has attracted a good deal of attention. A number of helpful contributions are to be found in *A Reader in the Language of Shakespearean Drama*, ed. Vivian Salmon and Edwina Burness (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1987), as for example Randolph Quirk, 'Shakespeare and the English Language', pp. 7–10; Joan Mulholland, '"Thou" and "You" in Shakespeare: A Study in the Second Person Pronoun', pp. 153–62; and Charles Barber, '"You" and "Thou" in Shakespeare's *Richard III*', pp. 163–80.

> Did heaven look on,
> And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
> They were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,
> Not for their own demerits but for mine,
> Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.
> (4. 3. 226–30)

He tries to think of Heaven as lookers-on, witnesses, an audience, a divine third person.[4] For an instant he tries to blame—them. 'The gods look down, and this unnatural scene / They laugh at', exclaims Caius Martius Coriolanus (5. 3. 184–5), at the moment when he falls apart and surrenders to love for his 'dear ones'. It is striking that the challenged manhood of both men is associated with the idea of an uncaring audience above. But Macduff promptly recoils from his shameful impulse and instead accuses himself. 'Sinful Macduff': it was *your* fault, or rather—swiftly revising his pronouns—*I* am to blame. Note the ethical drama embodied in this quick turn of pronouns from the third person through the second to the first: Heaven (third), Macduff (second), I (first). Macduff does have an audience in the two men beside him, one of whom is keen to steady and direct his shaken manhood: 'let grief / Convert to anger', urges Malcolm (4. 3. 231–2). Macduff pauses to recognise the part he could play now: 'O, I could play the woman with mine eyes / And braggart with my tongue.' (4. 3. 233–4). To play a part is to divide yourself and present a third person as a first, to play 'the woman' or 'the braggart' (which is just what Caius Martius loathes). For a moment Macduff contemplates the double meanings of acting as playing and doing, in which Hamlet revels, at which Martius shudders. But to play a part is not the same as to take a part.[5] This involves a different kind of commitment and risk, a matter as it might be of life and death, of what's done being done: 'Did heaven look on, / And would not take their part?' Whomever, whatever, Macduff prays to the 'gentle heavens' with the 'thou' of impassioned invocation heard so many times in this play, to let me take my part, just me and him:

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[4] For the idea that the heavens might be looking on this play—both the events it portrays and their performance—see Ross's words to the Old Man: 'Ha, good father, / Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens his bloody stage' (2. 4. 4–6). Consider also the following associations of heaven or the heavens with sight and knowledge: 'Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark' (1. 5. 53); 'heaven's cherubin horsed / Upon the sightless couriers of the air' (1. 7. 22–3); 'There's husbandry in heaven, / Their candles are all out' (2. 1. 4); 'Heaven knows what she has known' (5. 1. 41).

[5] 'Taking a part' and 'taking part' carry the idea of commitment as 'playing a part' does not; one preserves the distinction between your self and your role, the other dissolves it. To 'take part' implies taking part *in* some collective activity, and/or taking sides in a quarrel, dispute or difference of opinion. Thus the Prince of Verona takes Romeo's part in commuting his sentence of

> But gentle heavens,
> Cut short all intermission. Front to front
> Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; . . . (4. 3. 234–6)

I shall come to 'this fiend' by and by. But I begin with this scene because it lies at the edge of the play's main action, and with these three men because they belong to the mass of secondary characters who are often described as grey and colourless, drained of interest for audience, readers, even Shakespeare himself, by the all-absorbing Macbeths. 'A common greyness silvers everything', says Browning's Andrea del Sarto.[6] My concern will be with this greyness.

I want first to set some thoughts going about 'the third person', through definition, connotation, and grammar. Let me briskly sketch a spectrum of beliefs and practices surrounding this figure of the third from the mundane to the mystical. At a mundane level there is the legal position of the 'third party', which is to say, 'A party or person besides the two primarily concerned' as in the third-party insurance familiar to car-drivers: 'insurance arranged against injury done to persons other than the insured',[7] bystanders for instance. At a rather more fabulous level, we may think of the tripled daughters and sisters of myth and folk-tale, of whom the third represents 'that which shall be', or in Freud's tragic scenario the Goddess of Death in masquerade as Cordelia, Aphrodite, Cinderella and

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death to banishment (*Romeo and Juliet*, 3. 3. 26), Mariana pleads with Isabella to take her part before the Duke (*Measure for Measure*, 5. 1. 430), the Fool affects to mock Kent 'for taking one's part that's out of favor' (*King Lear*, 1. 4. 99), Lear bids the heavens 'send down, and take my part' (*King Lear*, 2. 4. 192), Edgar speaks of his tears beginning to take Lear's part (*King Lear*, 3. 6. 60), and Prospero declares at the climax of *The Tempest*, 'Though with their high wrongs I am strook to th' quick, / Yet, with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury / Do I take part.' (5. 1. 25–7.)

[6] *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, vol. 5, ed. Ian Jack and Robert Inglesfield (Oxford, 1995), p. 264. Though I do not agree with all his judgements, I share Graham Bradshaw's suspicion of the long-standing complaint that, as he puts it, 'the chameleon poet does not here display that prodigal, zestful, imaginative energy which endows even minor characters in, say, *Hamlet*, with a rich dramatic existence'. Bradshaw rightly contends that there is 'a clear relation between the tendency to stabilise or "flatten out" character and the tendency to deflect the Macbeth-terror by externalising "order"' ('Imaginative Openness and the *Macbeth*-Terror', in *Shakespeare's Scepticism* (Brighton, 1987), pp. 223–4).

[7] *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*): 'Third party'.

Psyche.[8] Less paganly, we may think of the Holy Ghost as the Third Person of the Trinity, or of Christ on the road to Emmaus, or of the figure in T. S. Eliot's 'What the Thunder Said': 'Who is the third who walks always beside you?'[9] The figure of the third is always ominous, whether of good or of ill, of black magic or white. 'When shall we three meet again?' Such a sociable question to open a play with, far from the uncouth spirit in which a couple of humdrum murderers will later greet a third accomplice: 'But who did bid thee join with us?' (3. 3. 1.) It is none the less always portentous and pregnant, this shadow of the third and the three it makes up, whatever the issue it bodes.[10]

We might also think of the superstitious ideas of third bodily organs. Apart from our fingers and toes, we mainly think of our basic corporeal endowment in terms of ones and twos. We normally greet with alarm the idea of two heads or three nostrils. To have a third nipple was no joke in Shakespeare's time, but a matter of life or death for those suspected of witchcraft. Macbeth makes a nervous joke in response to the Second Apparition, the bloody child who cries: 'Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth', to which Macbeth replies: 'Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.' (4. 1. 77.) But this play holds so many triple happenings and utterances that perhaps one does need a third ear. So psychoanalysis would have us believe when it speaks of a third ear 'which listens intuitively for what lies behind the words heard by the actual ears'. Or perhaps one needs the third eye familiar to Hindu and Buddhist belief, 'the eye of *insight or destruction* located in the middle of the forehead of the god Siva; hence *transf.*, the power of inward or intuitive sight occasionally gained by humans' (*OED*: 'Third', *a.*, 5). We might also pause over the figurative usage, now obsolete, of a third tongue to mean 'a backbiter, slanderer', or as one might say, a false witness who 'maketh debate between a man and his neighbour'.[11] Or between a husband and wife, so that one might think of Iago as exactly 'the third tongue', who comes between Othello and Desdemona.

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[8] Sigmund Freud, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets' (1913), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, tr. James Strachey, vol. 12 (1958). The Weird Sisters of *Macbeth* have of course frequently been associated with the three Fates of classical myth and the three Norns of Germanic myth. Of the latter it is notable that they hold sway over different tenses, Urd being concerned with the past, Verdandi the present, and Skuld the future (*Larousse World Mythology*, ed. Pierre Grimal, trans. Patricia Beardsworth (1973), p. 392). Good stagings of Macbeth, such as Trevor Nunn's acclaimed Royal Shakespeare Company production (1976–8), often distinguish the Third Witch from her sisters by stressing her identification with the crowning future tense.

[9] *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (1969), p. 73.

[10] See amongst others T. McAlindon, *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 200–8. McAlindon observes of the ambivalence of the number three in the Christian tradition, its association both with 'good' power and with 'bad', that 'witchcraft, like devilry, is a rival system which parodies what it seeks to overthrow' (p. 205).

My own emphasis here is on the ethical significance of this figure, its position and its potentialities. The third person may stand at the edge of the scene, a bystander and looker-on, like so many attendant lords and servants. But I am particularly interested in the moment when such a figure 'comes forward' and steps into a scene between two (or more) others. Of course he or she or they may signally fail to do so; or they may be positively turned away and ejected, no longer one of us, to speak and be spoken to, but only spoken about. My concern is with the grammar of these motions in performance on stage—not just of entrances and exits as such, but of their ethical meanings, for the individuals and the world they help to make or mar by such actions, in situations where to do nothing is itself a choice. Not that the choice is always a free one, to 'take a part' or not. Did you choose to be there in the first place? As one might ask the Theban shepherd in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, who witnessed the murder at the crossroads, or the sentry in *Antigone* who witnessed the girl trying to bury her brother's body; from whom the answer would be no, not exactly my choice, just doing my job. So we need to be alive to the conditions of power and helplessness out of which these figures make their entrance on the scene in the first place. At one end of the spectrum are the figures of supreme authority, worldly and divine, who intervene to settle disputes and dispense judgments, like the Duke at the end of *Measure for Measure*, who has been 'a looker-on here in Vienna' (5. 1. 317); at the other is the figure of the child, who 'comes between' the mother and father, as the child unborn and then cast away comes between Hermione and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*. This figure harbours the power of the future, to redeem and to heal, as Perdita does; in tragedy it comes back with a vengeance, like the bloody child in *Macbeth*, like Orestes and Oedipus.

In grammar, the third person distinguishes the position of a person or thing or entity, singular or plural, excluded from direct participation in a speech-act. Note this however, from Stephen C. Levinson in his helpful book, *Pragmatics:* 'third person is quite unlike first or second person, in that it does not correspond to any specific participant-role in the speech event'.[12] In other words, unlike the first or second person, the third person occupies in principle a limitless domain, within which all kinds of position and predicament are possible. You might, as it were, be within touching distance of a speaker and an addressee, just behind or between them, or you might be on the other side of the world, or in another one. And this is merely to speak topographically. There are all kinds of ways of including and excluding the person or persons we are not directly talking to.

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[11] The *OED* here cites Wyclif (1388) and refers to renderings by Wyclif and Coverdale of the *lingua tertia* of the Vulgate.

When we consider the onlookers on the Shakespearian stage, we could try to make a rough distinction between spectators and witnesses. We could think of these figures as spectators when there is a more or less clear line of demarcation separating them from what they are looking at (as we say) or looking on (as the Shakespearian usage notably prefers). Obvious examples would be the 'plays-within-plays' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, or the masque in *The Tempest*. And we could think of these figures as witnesses when they are on the edge of an action from which they are not clearly separated, when a decision of some kind is required from them—to see or not to see, to speak or be silent, to intervene or turn away. Yet such a distinction between spectator and witness is impossible to maintain, certainly in the theatres for which Shakespeare wrote, where the boundary separating the players from the lookers-on is not hard and fast, but soft, beguiling, treacherous, and challenging. This is true both for the watchers and witnesses within the fiction—think of Troilus and Ulysses and Thersites watching Cressida and Diomede[13]—and for the audiences supposedly outside it.

Consider these three examples of different kinds of 'witness'. First, the men who stood by and watched the three York brothers stab the Lancastrian Edward Prince of Wales in front of his mother, Queen Margaret. At least this is how Margaret recalls in *Richard III* the horrific scene near the end of the previous play in the history cycle (*The Third Part of Henry VI*, 5. 5), when she curses Rivers, Dorset, and Hastings: 'you were standers-by, / . . . when my son / Was stabb'd with bloody daggers' (*Richard III*, 1. 3. 209–11).[14]

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[12] Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 69.

[13] *Troilus and Cressida*, 5. 2.

[14] There is confusion here, as there is bound to be in such cases. Hershel Baker notes that Edward Hall names Dorset and Hastings as parties to Prince Edward's murder (*Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 719). Shakespeare's own staging of the gang-murder specifies no named figures apart from the York brothers themselves (*The Third Part of Henry VI*, 5. 5), though modern

Secondly, the servant in *King Lear* who intervenes to try and stop Regan and his master Cornwall from blinding Gloucester's other eye (3. 7). He is not quick enough to save the first eye, and he is not a sufficiently skilful fighter to save the second, nor to save his own life. When Albany hears the news that Cornwall has died from this man's brave intervention, he exclaims, 'This shows you are above, / You justicers' (4. 2. 78–9).[15] It does nothing of the sort. Unlike heaven, Cornwall's servant does look on and does take a part. 'Thrill'd with remorse' (4. 3. 73), he dies for justice, a nobody, a pronoun, a man without character.

Lastly, Emilia in *Othello*. I have in mind the scene in which Othello and Desdemona have their First Marital Row (3. 4). Othello upbraids Desdemona for losing the precious handkerchief, while Desdemona pleads, with the worst of timing, for the disgraced Cassio. And Emilia looks on in silence. It is a pained silence for sure, given the levity with which she has picked the handkerchief up—not exactly stealing it—and passed it to Iago ('What he will do with it / Heaven knows, not I' (3. 3. 297–8)), and given the swift pang of remorse for this disloyalty to her mistress ('Poor lady, she'll run mad / When she shall lack it' (3. 3. 317–18), and the abrupt command to keep her mouth shut ('Be not acknown on't' (3. 3. 319), from the husband whom 'tis proper she obey (5. 2. 196). What's done cannot be undone, and now she is complicit in she knows not what. If her silence is cowardice, she makes brave reparation when she breaks it at last, too late to prevent a monstrous crime, but in time to take the part of her mistress against her husband, and—like

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stagings unconstrained by problems of doubling may choose to include them (especially Hastings, whose presence is explicit in 4. 7 and 5. 7), and modern editions reasonably supply the soldiers who must be in attendance to escort Oxford and Somerset off to their deaths and the Prince on to his, and to bear the Queen hence, in response to Edward's commands. In *Richard III* Shakespeare further complicates matters by making Grey identify himself and Vaughan along with Rivers as the objects of Margaret's curse for 'standing by', as the three of them go to their execution (3. 3. 15–17). Considering the case of Rivers, as represented in the *Mirror for Magistrates* and taken over by Shakespeare, M. M. Mahood writes well of the story the dramatist makes for him, in terms that bear closely on my own argument: 'Rivers' last words are those of a good man. But he is also an appeaser, who failed his prince in being all too ready to lay aside his halberd at Richard's command.' (*Bit Parts in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 100; reprinted as *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare* (1998)).

[15] The 'Iustisers' come from the 'corrected' First Quarto (1608); otherwise they are 'Iustices', in F1, Q1 'uncorrected', Q2 (*The Parallel King Lear 1608–1623*, prepared by Michael Warren (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1989), p. 102).

Cornwall's servant—to pay with her own life for this rebellious act of justice.[16]

Let me here spell out the hint I gave earlier about the grammar of acting. Imagine yourself as an actor on stage. At any moment you are going to be in one of three 'playing positions'. You are either doing something (which includes speaking); or you are having something done to you (which includes being directly addressed by another speaker); or you are in neither of these positions, but ready and waiting to enter one of the other two, or to exit from the stage altogether. In other words, for the time being—and the time may stretch from an instant to eternity—you are a first person, a second person or a third person. But of course these are not fixed positions. As a third person you may be out of the firing line or the conversation, but you are not safe. You are neither here nor there but both at once. And on the tragic stage, you are likely to be marked for life: like the Theban shepherd who was at the cross-roads the day Oedipus killed his father, or like the bystanders who watched the Lancastrian Prince Edward being murdered in front of his mother.

Returning to *Macbeth* I want to train my attention on Ross. Harley Granville Barker tells us that in the stock-company tradition of the nineteenth century, the role of Ross was considered 'the last insult that could be offered to a responsible actor'.[17] Kenneth Muir has a delightfully dry footnote recording the efforts of one late-nineteenth-century reader to spice the part up:

> the ingenious Libby . . . [who] demonstrated to his own satisfaction that Ross is the real villain of the play, who first gets the Thane of Cawdor executed on a false charge of treachery, then murders Banquo, disguised as the Third Murderer, is Macbeth's agent in the murder of Macduff's family, and then, seeing

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[16] In recent years the part has been memorably taken on the British stage by Zoë Wanamaker partnering Ian McKellen's Iago in the Royal Shakespeare Company production directed by Trevor Nunn (1989), and by Maureen Beattie opposite Simon Russell Beale's Iago in the Royal National Theatre production directed by Sam Mendes (1997–8).

[17] 'Preface to *Macbeth*' (1923), in *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, vol. 6 (1974), p. 83. Granville Barker notes that the part 'is threaded more consecutively through the play than any other', but he conceives of the character as 'emotionally untouched', 'a kind of silent or smoothly speaking and cynical chorus', 'the play's taciturn *raisonneur*' (pp. 83-4). Thomas Wheeler's *Macbeth: An Annotated Bibliography* (The Garland Shakespeare Bibliographies, no. 22: New York and London, 1990), has a number of entries about Ross (and Lennox, who attracts some comparable interest). See in particular Normand Berlin, 'Ross in *Macbeth*', *Neophilologus*, 58 (1974), 411–23, and Camille Wells Slights, 'Cases of Conscience in Shakespeare's Tragedies', in *The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert and Milton* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 67–132.

> that Macbeth's power is on the wane, [he] deserts to Malcolm and is rewarded with an earldom.[18]

In defence of the hapless Libby, one may say that his theory is quite effectively acted out by John Stride in Roman Polanski's 1971 film, and that at least it is less implausible than the idea that Macduff deliberately sacrifices his family as a way of guaranteeing his loyalty to Malcolm, let alone the allegation that Fleance is Lady Macbeth's child by Banquo, and so on.[19] In the theatre most audiences will barely distinguish Ross from the other lords—from the Angus we first see him with attending on Macbeth and Banquo, from the Lennox and Macduff with whom he silently attends on Duncan's entrance to the Macbeths' castle, from the Lennox with whom he enters, together with Macbeth, just after Macbeth has stabbed Duncan's servants to death. Ross might seem to emerge more distinctly in the following scene with the nameless Old Man (2. 4). But we shall be hard put to remember what his name is. We have no such difficulty with Macduff's name because Ross (or whoever he is) says helpfully: 'Here comes the good Macduff' (2. 4. 20). But Ross himself is harder to recognise. On his arrival at the English court, Malcolm's first reaction is marked by the words: 'My countryman, but yet I know him not.' (4. 3. 162.) In fact the only time in the play when the name 'Ross' is heard by the actual ears is on the man's very first entrance. 'Who comes here?' asks Duncan and Malcolm replies: 'The worthy Thane of Ross.' (1. 2. 45.) If it were not for that very first naming, this man would be anonymous, and to the audience in performance he is almost all pronoun. This is exactly the fate of his colleagues Angus, Lennox, Menteith, and Caithness, whose names are never heard in the theatre any more than are those of the three witches, the captain, the porter, both doctors, the old man, a lord, Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman, the Macduffs' wee boy, Macduff's wife and even, for that matter, Lady Macbeth.[20] Yet to his fellow beings Ross is a familiar person, and to the Macduff family he is something more than this. He calls Lady Macduff, 'My dearest coz' (4. 2. 14) and her son, 'My pretty cousin' (4. 2. 25), and if Malcolm does not instantly recognise him at the English court, Macduff certainly does and greets him with notable warmth, 'My ever gentle cousin' (4. 3. 163).[21] This is what matters about 'Ross', that the lack of his hold on a name of his own throws into relief the relations he stands in to others, and his readiness to act on them and take a part.

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[18] Introduction to his Arden edition (1951), p. xlvii, referring to M. F. Libby, *Some New Notes on 'Macbeth'* (Toronto, 1893). Jan H. Blits notes that Ross's actions, 'often puzzling, are especially mysterious' in the scene with Lady Macduff (*The Insufficiency of Virtue: 'Macbeth' and the Natural Order* (New York, 1996), p. 147), and he offers some support to the credibility of Libby's explanation of Ross's actions in the next scene in the English court, 4. 3 (p. 159). Braunmuller notes that according to Holinshed the historical Ross was executed 'during the ten-year period of Macbeth's reign as a good king' (New Cambridge edition, p. 101).

[19] William Empson writes: 'I believe that the various muddles which have occupied the minds of critics (the kind of thing which allowed the Victorian Libby to produce a rather impressive argument that Ross was the villain all through) were deliberately planned to keep the audience guessing but fogged' (*Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. David B. Pirie (1986), p. 144). For the idea of Macduff's villainy, see Franco Ferrucci, '*Macbeth* and the Imitation of Evil', in *The Poetics of Disguise: The Autobiography of the Work in Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare*, trans. Ann Dunnigan (Ithaca, 1980), pp 125–58; and for the theory of Fleance's parentage, see Julia Sheilds, 'Fair is Foul', *English Journal*, 70 (March 1981), 54–5.

The case of Ross is less clear-cut than Emilia's in *Othello*, but it presents some parallels to it. The key moment is the scene where he counsels Lady Macduff to be patient and school herself in her husband's absence (4. 2. 1–29). He does not advise her to run for her life with her children, as the 'homely man' does a few minutes later, sadly too late.[22] It is hard not to feel that this is exactly what Ross *ought* to have done, instead of counselling a stoicism of no practical use in the circumstances, a faith in her husband's judgement of 'The fits o'th' season' that is quite misplaced (4. 2. 15–17), and a trust in the commonplace that 'Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward / To what they were before' (4. 2. 24–5), which as Edgar would have told her is dangerous nonsense, for 'the worst is not / So long as we can say, "This is the worst"' (*King Lear*, 4. 1. 27–8).

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[20] Barbara Everett notes Lady Macbeth's lack of a first name, in the course of remarking how few 'characters' the play contains (*Young Hamlet: Essays on Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Oxford, 1989), p. 98). Jan H. Blits comments on the namelessness of so many figures, including the 'Lady Macduff' created by editors; in the Folio she is named on her entrance in 4. 2 as 'Macduffes Wife' and her speech-heading throughout the scene is 'Wife' (*The Insufficiency of Virtue*, p. 206). For a lively piece on speech-tags which supports this line of thought, see Random Cloud, '"The very names of the Persons": Editing and the Invention of Dramatick Character', in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (1991), pp. 88–96.

[21] 'Cousin' is a sociable form of address, a way of claiming or conferring kinship, or the sense of it. Thus Duncan exclaims of Macbeth: 'O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman' (1. 2. 24), and greets him with 'O worthiest cousin' (1. 4. 14); Banquo calls Ross and Angus 'Cousins' (1. 3. 126); Macbeth calls Malcolm and Donalbain 'our bloody cousins' (3. 1. 31); Malcolm addresses his fellow warriors (Siward, Macduff *et al.*), as 'Cousins' (5. 4. 1), and calls Young Siward, to his father, 'my cousin your right noble son' (5. 6. 3).

[22] Though Bradshaw gives a forceful account of the Macduff marriage, including an unusually severe view of Lady Macduff, I cannot agree with his reading of her exchanges with these two men, that they both 'risk their lives in trying to persuade her to take her children away . . . but she will do nothing but talk' (*Shakespeare's Scepticism*, p. 238). Ross counsels patience; the homely man counsels action.

It is instructive that Libby and Polanski have been able to seize on Ross's feebleness to make him a right villain, but this is a morally comfortable move. Ross *is* guilty, but his guilt is more ordinary than this.[23] When he brings the news of the family's annihilation to Macduff, the utterance of this terrible deed is for him both a punishment and a means of reparation. Both Ross and Macduff will feel for ever that they could have averted the massacre: 'Did heaven look on, / And would not take their part?' But I failed them, and so did you: we cannot but hear these unspoken words pass between the two men. If the final act is merciful in allowing Macduff to take the part of justice, it also grants Ross a chance to make further amends for his complicity in the Macduff massacre. Once more he becomes the messenger of death, but now at last he can report a good death with a clear conscience, that of Young Siward, who 'only lived but till he was a man, / The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed / In the unshrinking station where he fought, / But like a man he died.' (5. 9. 6–9.) This is good timing, both the dying and its telling, though it is shadowed by the thought that the moment of reaching manhood might be just the proper time to die.[24]

I turn again to questions of grammar, to the little words 'this' and 'that', and their importance to sociability. The opening scenes of *Macbeth* are much concerned with friends and foes and the brutal need to distinguish between them. We watch the convulsions of a social body pulling itself together as the alien invader is repelled and the traitor in our midst is expelled—the Cawdor who was not after all one of us, but one of them. The gathering can be heard in the micro-drama of deictics. Consider this sequence. 'What bloody man is that?' asks Duncan (1. 2. 1). He does not say 'what bloody man is *this*?', as he might have. But Malcolm does make the move from 'that' to 'this' when he answers: 'This is the sergeant' (1. 2. 3). And he goes on to address the newcomer with the notably warm and egalitarian welcome: 'Hail, brave friend' (1. 2. 5). There is a great deal of 'hailing' and 'all hailing' in the play, but this is the only occasion on which it is coupled with 'friend'. Note the sequence 'that', 'this', 'thou': from third person 'distal' (that), to third person 'proximal' (this), to second person address. The terms 'distal' and 'proximal' come from linguistics, and they mark a good deal more than meets the naked ear. The shifts from 'that' to 'this' or from 'this' to 'that' mark tiny but critical changes of climate, temperature and ambience—little welcomes and rebuffs, concertings and disjointings.[25] The excitement of the Captain's narration naturally induces him and his listeners to use 'this' and 'these' when he might have used 'that' and 'those': 'No sooner justice had, with valour armed, / Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels' (1. 2. 29–30); 'Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?' (1. 2. 34). This is typical of messenger speeches, that the excitement of their performance turns things which were 'that and there and then' into 'this and here and now'. Note conversely the way Banquo keeps at bay the excitement of the witches' predictions, by choosing a disowning 'that' rather than a complicit 'this', when he responds to Macbeth's 'Do you not hope your children shall be kings, . . .?' (1. 3. 117), with 'That trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown' (1. 3. 119).

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[23] Camille Wells Slights takes Macduff's dilemma in choosing between his family and his country as a model for the 'morally similar, if personally less terrible predicaments', in which all the characters find themselves: 'Banquo, Rosse, and Lennox also have to decide how to act in circumstances where good and evil, falsehood and truth are hard to distinguish and where moral issues cannot be obvious. In the minor characters, the focus is on the difficulty of decision rather than the correctness of choice.' (*The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert and Milton*, p. 123).

[24] Ross's absence from Malcolm's entourage in the scenes leading up to the final battle (5. 2 and 5. 4) has occasioned comment. Why is he never there for the real fighting? Why does he only turn up when the hurly burly's done? (Lennox too goes missing from 5. 4, though he is named and speaks in 5. 2). Nicholas Brooke suggests that the answer may well be found in the exigencies of doubling, the actor playing Ross being needed for the Doctor and/or Young Siward and the one playing Lennox for Old Siward: see the introduction to his edition (Oxford, 1990), pp. 85–6, and his note to the stage-directions heading 5. 4, p. 201.

There is a particular edge to 'this' and 'that' in this play. Both point to a third person or thing, but 'that' draws a line between me and it or us and them: he, she, it or they, lie beyond or outside some notional boundary—that, there, then (the spatial and temporal markers clearly go with it). 'This' on the other hand draws a line on the far side of him, her, it or them, who is within reach or touch or sight or hearing or memory—this, here, now. To ask 'Is this a dagger that I see before me?' presumes the possibility of touching it, as to ask 'Is that a dagger that I see before me?' does not. At the end of the play 'this butcher and his fiend-like queen' (5. 9. 36) are still too close to have turned (as they will) into 'that butcher and his fiend-like queen'. Unlike 'that most disloyal traitor' (1. 2. 52), 'that Thane of Cawdor' (1. 2. 63), in the opening scenes, who is already history, as we say. But Malcolm can point to the severed head of this Thane of Cawdor, here and now for all to see, as his father never could to that.

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[25] John Lyons's term for this is 'empathetic deixis', cited by Levinson, *Pragmatics*, p. 81.

There is a little turn of phrase in which this play is revealingly rich: the pronominal formula ‘that which’. This indicates the existence of something while refusing to tell you what it is, as when Hamlet declares that he has ‘that within which passes show’, in strongly marked contrast to ‘These but the trappings and the suits of woe’ (*Hamlet*, 1. 2. 85–6). In *Macbeth* the cumulative effect of ‘that which’ creates a sense of things beyond our grasp that are at once within and without and all round about. The phrase does not carry much stress when Lady Macbeth says, ‘That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold’ (2. 2. 1). But in other cases it casts an aura of fearful desire or superstition round the thing it marks or indicates. Consider these examples.

> (i) *Macbeth*: Let not light see my black and deep desires,
> The eye wink at the hand. Yet let that be,
> Which the eye fears when it is done to see. (1. 4. 51–3)
>
> (ii) *Lady Macbeth*: Thou’dst have, great Glamis,
> That which cries, ‘Thus thou must do’ if thou have it;
> And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
> Than wishest should be undone. (1. 5. 20–2)
>
> (iii) *Malcolm* (to Macduff):
> That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose;
> Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell. (4. 3. 21–2)
>
> (iv) *Gentlewoman* (refusing the Doctor’s request to tell him what she has heard Lady Macbeth say in her sleepwalking):
> That, sir, which I will not report after her. (5. 1. 12)

In every case, there is a refusal to name *that*—a something that lies out of reach, beyond.[26]

There is however one occasion in the play and one alone when the speaker deliberately pauses to specify the ‘that’ which he might have glossed over:

> My way of life
> Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
> And that which should accompany old age,
> I must not look to have; . . . (5. 3. 22–6)

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[26] Further examples include Lady Macbeth’s ‘Wouldst thou have that / Which thou esteem’st the ornament of life’ (1. 7. 41–2), and ‘’Tis safer to be that which we destroy / Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy’ (3. 2. 6–7); Macbeth’s ‘Ay, and a bold one, that dare not look on that / Which might appal the devil’ (3. 4. 58–9), and ‘I conjure you by that which you profess’ (4. 1. 49), and the last messenger’s ‘Gracious my lord, / I should report that which I say I saw’ (5. 5. 29–30).

But I have of course missed out a line. That which Macbeth utters here so unforgettably is this:

> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have; . . .

From what an unearthly distance this man contemplates the things that might have made life worth living, that are now irretrievable third person nouns, never to be lived between 'you' and 'me'. 'Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour and keep him in sickness and in health?' the Priest asks 'the Woman', or used to. As for the troops of friends, the great model in Shakespeare's own time was provided by the witnesses to marriage, those 'friends and neighbours' described in the Book of Common Prayer and addressed by the Priest: 'Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God . . .'. But the Macbeths are death to such gatherings; they displace the mirth and break the good meeting, to put it mildly.

I borrow some words from Lady Macbeth in the banquet scene and this brings me to 'our dear friend Banquo', as the newly crowned Macbeth calls him (3. 4. 90). A king may have loyal subjects but he can have no true friends. He is all 'I' and 'We', and strain as he may to address others as second persons, they remain as out of reach to him as he does to them, whether in person ('Your highness', 'your majesty'), or behind his back ('He that's coming must be provided for' (1. 5. 64–5)).[27] Think of that bluntest of verdicts on King Richard III before Bosworth Field: 'He hath no friends but what are friends for fear' (*Richard III*, 5. 2. 20); or of King Richard II's plaintive confession that 'I live with bread like you, feel want, / Taste grief, need friends' (3. 2. 175–6). In terms of the grammar with which I am concerned, the figure of the 'friend' is one which moves freely between third and second persons—from 'him' or 'her' to 'you' and back again—more freely than the figure of the beloved, who is either triumphantly 'mine' or dejectedly 'his' or 'hers', either 'you' in ecstatic welcome or 'she' or 'he' in despairing farewell ('She should have died hereafter' (5. 5. 16)). It is no more easy to draw a firm line between friendship and love than between 'this' and 'that', and there is a potential rivalry between Banquo and Lady Macbeth for Macbeth's love and friendship.

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[27] Meditating on Duncan's canniness, Bradshaw notes the way he bids for the Macbeths' continuing affection and loyalty (1. 6. 28–30) with a nice shift of pronouns 'from the flatteringly intimate "me" and "mine" to the promisingly regal "we" and "our"' (*Shakespeare's Scepticism*, pp. 248–9).

Alone on stage Banquo addresses Macbeth with a 'Thou' which echoes the passionate vocatives with which Lady Macbeth first invokes her husband's presence: 'Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be / What thou art promised' (1. 5. 13–14); 'Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all' (3. 1. 1)'.[28] Macbeth's is not just the story of the man who kills his king; it is also, and dare one say it, even more centrally the story of the man who destroys the love and friendship embodied in his wife and Banquo. One does dare say it, because puzzling as it has seemed to some, it is indeed the murder of Banquo that occupies prime time and space at the heart of the play, in the sequence of three murders that begins with Duncan and the two grooms and concludes with Macduff's wife, children, servants, all.[29] And it is the great central feast of rejoicing at which we witness this double divorce, along with the witnesses on stage, the company of all the Macbeths' 'friends'.[30] Banquo is the epitome of the friendship that the Macbeths destroy, antithesis of the false friend Iago, owner of the good 'third tongue' on which the health of a whole little world should rely.

In a sense we may say that third persons have been less than real to the Macbeths because they have addressed each other so intensely and exclusively.[31] Everyone else has always been 'those people coming to stay the night' rather than 'these people'. Their tragedy is registered in a dire failure with the pronouns and deictics that we need to make distinctions, distinctions between treating others as a second person and as a third, between socializing them as a 'this' third person, and strangering them as a 'that'. The living human body will move freely from one to the other and back again, whether family, society, or individual. The Macbeths do not. Their deictic pronominal systems rigidify and then quiver uncontrollably and finally collapse. Think of the collapse of temporal deictics represented by Macbeth's famous: 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow' (5. 5. 18). Instead of, as it should be, 'Yesterday, and today, and tomorrow'.[32] 'But let the frame of things disjoint', Macbeth exclaims (3. 2. 16). But it is we who do the disjointing: you and I and he and she.

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[28] For 'Thou' and 'You', see above, n. 3. Macbeth and Banquo normally address each other with an unmarked 'you' as befits social equals on easy terms, though once Macbeth is crowned king, Banquo becomes properly punctilious with his 'your highness', 'my lord', and 'my good lord' (3. 1. 11–41). They never use the marked or impassioned 'thou' to each other's living faces; Banquo opens this scene by addressing the absent Macbeth as 'Thou' and Macbeth closes it by returning the compliment: 'Banquo, thy soul's flight, / If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.' (3. 1. 140–1). But the 'thou's' erupt in Macbeth's mouth with a vengeance when he is confronted by Banquo's Ghost: 'Thou canst not say I did it; never shake / Thy gory locks at me!' (3. 4. 50–1), 'Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too' (3. 4. 70), and so on.

[29] It goes without saying that this does not make the murder of Banquo more 'important' than those which precede or succeed it. There is special weight and significance to all three positions in a sequence of three, and the three murderous events are carefully distinguished from each other.

[30] The play uses the words 'friend' and 'friends' more tellingly than frequently; but there is a certain concentration in this central scene, five occurrences out of the play's total of fifteen.

[31] Though I do not agree that the play is 'extremely bare in human relationship', as Barbara Everett puts it, I share her view of the Macbeths' marriage: 'The two Macbeths between them sacrifice every other possibility of relationship that might have opened round them.' (*Young Hamlet*, p. 102.)

In conclusion I want to consider the third person or persons unknown who look on at the play with apparent impunity: the audience who are us, or them, or even possibly 'him above', as the anonymous lord rather offhandedly nods up at God, in colloquy with Lennox (3. 6. 32). I want to draw briefly on an important argument by Katharine Eisaman Maus about witnesses, confession, and judgment in the law-courts of Shakespeare's time, and the problematic development of ideas of 'inwardness'. I am going to quote a passage in which Maus is reflecting on the theatricality of Richard of Gloucester and other stage machiavels (as she calls them), and the special relation they establish with an audience. We the audience, she says, are confident that Richard exposes to us the true inner self he conceals from the others on stage.

> The theatrical situation, distinguishing sharply between the privileged viewpoint of the theater spectators and the impercipience of onstage colleagues, is thus a convenience for the machiavels, allowing them both audience and scope for action. Yet the same situation reproduces the Christian providential scheme the machiavel defies, with its contrast between divine omniscience and mortal myopia. The fact that the machiavel's machinations are *witnessed* guarantees both our delight and his undoing. . . . The almost reassuring, 'comic' quality of many stage machiavels as they plot their cruelties is entirely consistent with the fantasies of immunity and omniscience theatergoers are encouraged to entertain, as we are given safe, enticingly godlike access to fictional hiddenness . . . . In *Richard III* Shakespeare puts us not only on God's side but in God's place, in the position of 'the high all-seer' in the providential drama of history.[33]

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[32] In English at least, though in Hindi it would be simpler, as the same word does for yesterday and tomorrow, and in Japanese it would be more complicated because there are words for the three days before today and for the two after (Levinson, *Pragmatics*, p. 75). Francis Barker amongst others has remarked on the obsessive marking of time in the play: 'as many such temporal deictics can surely hardly be equalled in a work of this type and length' (*The Culture of Violence: Essays on Tragedy and History* (Manchester, 1993), p. 61).

[33] *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, 1995), p. 54.

Now *Richard III* is not *Macbeth*, and the words 'reassuring', 'comic quality', and indeed 'stage machiavel' apply more happily to the earlier play than to the later, for all that *Macbeth* may gesture towards a divine providential viewpoint congenial to the reigning monarch and patron of Shakespeare's company. But even for *Richard III* Maus's position is easier to sustain in the study than in the theatre. Against the fantasies of our immunity and omniscience, we need to set the ordeals of the several witnesses whom we ourselves witness *within* the play. 'Our onstage colleagues' in *Richard III* are not uniformly dupes and gulls; Richard's antagonists are not all equally deceived. Clarence is, and Hastings, and so is Lady Anne—but then she is undeceived; Buckingham is undeceived and still loses out; Queen Margaret, the Duchess of York, and Queen Elizabeth are not deceived for a moment, though the last may pretend to be; Stanley is clear-sighted and canny throughout. In performance we eagerly look on the choices made by all these secondary and tertiary figures, no less than we look on the primary agents.[34] We look on them for signs of our own capacity in the face of power, for pity and terror and anger, for courage and cowardice, for insight and blindness.

Let me glance at another critic whose arguments sharpen this issue. In the theatre, Harry Berger contends, we succumb all too easily to the spell of illusion, the power of ritual, the charisma of performance.[35] It is only in reading that we keep our cool and sufficient distance to resist these illusions and analyse the means by which they are wrought. Take *Macbeth*: in performance an audience is hard put to resist the force of all the Christian cosmologising, all the talk of good and evil, of witches and ghosts, of a natural order violated and restored. But the reader can see through this mumbo-jumbo to the murderous rivalry on which the world of the play is really based, and by which all the men are corrupted. As readers we can perceive Banquo's silent complicity in Duncan's murder, a complicity repeated by Ross and Macduff, and the other Scottish lords. And the reader can see the witches for the superficial scapegoats they are,

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[34] For this whole topic Mahood provides invaluable stimulus in *Bit Parts in Shakespeare's Plays*, reprinted as *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare*.

[35] Harry Berger, Jr., *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1989), and *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford, 1997). The latter contains two challenging essays on *Macbeth*: 'The Early Scenes of *Macbeth*: Preface to a New Interpretation' (1980), and 'Text against Performance in Shakespeare: The Example of *Macbeth*' (1982).

'grotesques, shrunken figures of evil who are as comical as they are sinister'.[36]

So according to Berger it is the reader rather than the spectator who has safe, enticingly godlike access to fictional hiddenness—and to the means by which fictions hide themselves. The spectator is simply a credulous dolt who must graduate to become a reader, while the reader in turn, but more easily, 'awakens to his complicity as a spectator'.[37] Berger marches bravely backwards to the truth from which one might prefer to start, that the spectator and the reader in us can never be cleanly distinguished but are always, to accept his useful term, 'complicit'—that is, complicit with each other *and* with that which they attend. Some words of William Empson remind us of the 'fog' in which *Macbeth* takes place, for the audience as for its characters. It would be comforting to believe that the play was once longer, and that what we have now is 'a cut version of a tidy historical play now unfortunately lost'. But this, Empson says, is a classic dodge to avoid the play's power to embroil its witnesses: it is 'a rather massive effort, very consistently carried out, to convey the immense confusion in which these historical events actually occur.'[38]

One may hope that Harry Berger is grateful for the blessing recently conferred on him by Harold Bloom.[39] Bloom writes with unabashable zeal as the supreme reader for whom all those other people, on stage or in the auditorium, are merely a distraction. He writes: 'Shakespeare rather dreadfully sees to it that *we are* Macbeth; our identity with him is involuntary but inescapable. . . .' As for all the secondary males, they are 'wrapped', Bloom says, 'in a common grayness'.[40] Or a fog, one might say. But not all the other selves we encounter in Shakespeare are as huge as Macbeth or Hamlet or Falstaff. Some thrust themselves between us and them, the great figures with whom as readers we two alone can sing like birds i' th' cage, I-and-Thou and the world well lost.[41] Bloom is not alone in seeking to disparage the 'common grayness' of all the others in *Macbeth*, the forgettables. But grey is exactly the colour of fog, between the certitudes of black and white, a greyness which both shrouds and silvers. If the secondary characters of *Macbeth* seem grey, it is because they belong to the space that Primo Levi has unforgettably described from his experience of Auschwitz as 'The Grey Zone', 'the space which separates (and not only in Nazi Lagers), the victims from the persecutors, . . . Only a schematic rhetoric can claim that that space is empty: it never is; . . .'.[42]

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[36] *Making Trifles of Terrors*, p. 116. Berger goes on to describe the witches as 'bemonstered manlike images of the feminine power that threatens throughout the play to disarm the pathologically protective machismo essential to the warrior society' (p. 116).

[37] *Making Trifles of Terrors*, p. 125.

[38] William Empson, *Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. David B. Pirie (Cambridge, 1986), p. 146. Another way of considering the play's purposive 'confusion' is suggested by Huston Diehl, who describes the good reasons a Renaissance audience would have had for feeling implicated in 'the problematics of vision': 'Because the human world is a world of shadows where images may be God's signs or the devil's illusions, man must continually engage in the act of interpretation. . . . The images of the play demand interpretation, but they are confusing, ambiguous, and seem to defy interpretation. The ambiguity of these visions is experienced by characters and audience alike; both share the condition of "seeing through a glass darkly."' ('Horrid Image, Sorry Sight, Fatal Vision: The Visual Rhetoric of *Macbeth*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 16 (1983), 191–204, at 193). In considering the play's engagement with the discourse of witchcraft, Stephen Greenblatt argues even more strenuously that 'there is something ethically problematical in sight' ('Shakespeare Bewitched' (1993), reprinted in *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, ed. Susan Zimmermann (1998), p. 136). The weird sisters are certainly at the heart of the play's fog, and Shakespeare is there with them, so Greenblatt wittily concludes, 'in the position of the witch' (p. 130).

[39] In *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1999), Bloom declares Berger's *Imaginary Audition* to be 'a wise book' (p. 720).

We do not go to tragedy for fantasies of immunity. *Macbeth* reminds us that there is no safe place for the third person, not even for the reader, and no pinnacle of surveillance outside the making of history, not even for an absolute monarch. There is no coign of vantage outside the performances in which we participate, immediately or from a distance. We should therefore attend to the predicament of those onlookers, witnesses and bystanders whose choices and fates prefigure our own, as we endlessly turn from him and her to thee and you and me and us, playing our parts and taking them, making and unmaking our one common world.

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[40] *Shakespeare*, p. 517.

[41] Even Shakespeare's 'great' figures will lose their particularity once they are cut off from the density of the world they inhabit with others. John Carey has rightly complained that by the time Bloom finishes with Shylock, Mercutio, Touchstone, King Lear and the others, 'these figures are no longer Shakespeare's. They have been generalised out of existence.' ('All in the Mind', *Sunday Times*, 28 February 1999).

[42] Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, tr. Raymond Rosenthal (1988), p. 25.