

**THE POETRY OF PREVARICATION:
A STUDY OF THE FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION
OF STYLE AND IMAGERY
WITH CHARACTER AND ACTION
IN SHAKESPEARE'S
"MACBETH"**

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1 INTRODUCTION

The denotative meaning of prevarication is: "1. Divergence from the right course, method, or mode of action ... 2. Deviation from duty: violation of trust: corrupt action ... 3. Avoidance of plain dealing: evasion, quibbling, equivocation, double-dealing, deception..." (Onions, 1980: 1666).

Critics have noted that a sense of deceit and hypocrisy prevails in *Macbeth*. Frye (1970:20) states that Macbeth is a liar, and he points out that Macbeth's definition of deceit is found when he says

False face must hide what the false heart doth know
(1.viii.83).

This deceit he practises throughout the drama.

I was delighted to read that Schückling (1922:77) says "Like all weak characters, Macbeth is a liar". This theme of prevarication, that is woven and interlocked into the play, is evident in Macbeth's character and can be traced through the dialogue in the direct lies he tells, in self-deception, and the lies that he is instrumental in causing Lady Macbeth to tell: the lies and hypocrisy of Lady Macbeth: the disinformation given by the Witches: and then the Porter who "warns" us that "here's an equivocator" (11.iii.8 - 9).

Stauffer's assumption is that style and content are basically inseparable and he vindicates this statement: "If, before a great writer phrases some idea, it was never so well expressed, then also it was never so well thought, no matter how often it was expressed" (1966:359).

The intellectual content is the main concern of mundane speech, for a particular thought can be phrased in many ways without losing its force: whereas in poetic, heightened language the force of the particular thought is found in the exact shape of the expression and if this is changed there is a loss of force and impact.

In her discussion of the functions of imagery, Una Ellis-Fermor (1964:79) says that one of the functions by which imagery helps drama to overcome limitations that are inherent in its brevity is an increase in dramatic concentration. She states that imagery "reveals a significant and suddenly perceived relation between an abstract theme and a subject closer to the experience of the senses in such a way as to transfer to rightly apprehending mind the shock, the stimulus with which the union of these two stirred the mind of the poet himself" (Ellis-Fermor, 1964:79).

When Macbeth says, in the brief space of an image, "my way of life/Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf" (V.iii.22 - 23) a strong emotional experience is created that illustrates the reflections, the weariness, the inferences that the last section of the play provokes with regard to the degeneration of the tyrant Macbeth.

Ellis-Fermor (1964:79) correctly points out that there is an "artistic economy in imagery hardly to be equalled by that of any other kind of verbal expression with the possible exception of irony". Economical use of imagery extends the scope and strengthens the poetic texture of a drama. Imagery keeps before us the vastness of the issues involved "of which the action that is shown us is but a part" (Ellis-Fermor, 1964:81). In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's use of imagery is not an ornament used to dress thought, but an inherent and organic part of the thought he expresses.

Imagery enriches "the content and implications that lie within the play itself ... (it) reveals or keeps in mind the underlying mood. This not only knits the play together but emphasizes by iteration - and by iteration whose appeal is always to the emotions - the idea or mood which had guided the poet's choice of theme and shaping of form" (Ellis-Fermor, 1964:83).

Ellis-Fermor (1964:92) also points out that Shakespeare links image with image, so that "the original train of thought is thus started afresh in the mind of the audience who can catch the successive implications of the images, so that at the end of the speech they have experienced the

equivalent of a long argument in the compass of a relatively brief speech, simply by virtue of the power by which imagery is charged to stimulate and to illuminate the imagination". The symbols of "sleep", "darkness" and "blood" are united in two lines: "Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,/Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives" (111.vi.34 - 35).

By means of imagery, drama may retain its pace and yet develop fullness and elaboration of detail in character revelation. Lady Macbeth comments on Macbeth's character: "Yet do I fear thy nature:/It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (1.v.16 - 17). She throws new and useful light on Macbeth's character that is necessary in the exposition: we gather that Macbeth is not a wholehearted villain, and there is every possibility he will endure a spiritual struggle. We are further enlightened with regard to Lady Macbeth's character, for we gather that she is not so "full o'th'milk of human kindness", and that she will be prepared to "catch the nearest way" (1.v.18).

Character is revealed through speech and action. Annette Combrink (*n. d.*: 10) states the "plot and character are indivisibly linked and function together to fulfil the particular purpose of the play". Character is revealed through the "concept of motivation, and this motivation should emerge clearly from the actions, thoughts and words of the character in question" (Combrink, *n. d.*:11). The essence of a character is also formed by what other characters in the drama say of him "even though they might not actually have anything directly to do with each other ... Macbeth does not interact directly with the Porter, yet within the total structure of the play the Porter's reflections on Macbeth (made by implication) are fundamental and significant" (Combrink, *n. d.*:13).

Through textual analysis of *Macbeth*, I shall attempt to indicate that the functional integration of style and imagery with character and action heightens the theme of prevarication, which I consider to be the main contributing current initiating the evil actions that are committed.

2 A NAMELESS DEED

There is an elusive and mysterious quality of evil that exists in *Macbeth*. Bradley (1971:282) comments on the ominous aspects of the play and then generalizes that Shakespeare "has concentrated attention on the obscurer regions of man's being, on phenomena which make it seem that he is in the power of secret forces lurking below, and independent of his consciousness and will". He continues to comment on the evil in *Macbeth* when he states that the play excites "supernatural alarm and, even more, a dread of the presence of evil not only in its recognised seat but all through and around our mysterious nature" (Bradley, 1971:282).

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth wilfully contribute to the mysterious, obscure "murkiness" of evil in the play. Up to the murder of Duncan, we are aware of the evil through their language. Neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth refers to the deed that will be committed as "murder". They use numerous euphemisms in their attempt to hide, in language, the nature of the act. I suggest that this linguistic device used by Shakespeare sharpens our awareness of their self-deception and their attempt to avoid facing up to the truth of the deed, murder, that they are planning.

After Rosse tells Macbeth that he has been made Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth, in an aside, voices his rigorous imaginings: "My thought, whose murdher yet is but fantastical" (I.iii.139). At this stage, the idea of the murder of Duncan is grotesquely imagined and "fantastical". Macbeth's powerful imagination is at work and he merely "sees" what another would "think". From now on, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth make extensive use of "it" without referents: they refer to the murder with oblique, dishonest euphemisms in their attempt at self-deception and equivocation.

In an aside, Macbeth commits himself to a vision of his evil:

... Stars, hide your fires!
 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.iv.50 - 53).

This is the first of numerous passages contrasting eye and hand. The eye is in silent collusion with the acting hand: the eye fears to see the murder that the hand performs. The vagueness of "black and deep desires" stresses the darkening sense of evil. Macbeth appeals to the "stars", that are symbolic of light, nobility, greatness and purity, to sacrifice their light so that darkness may prevail. Macbeth begins using the pronoun without an antecedent, "yet let *that* be," followed by "when *it* is done".

In her first appearance, Lady Macbeth shows that she is in complicity with Macbeth's unwillingness to state succinctly what she intends. She avoids using the word "king":

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou are promis'd
 (1.v.15 - 16;
 my italics).

Lady Macbeth uses euphemistic phrases for murder: "catch the nearest way" (1.v.18): "the illness" (1.v.20). She continues to use pronouns that relate to the idea of murder:

... 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.v.22 - 25;
 my italics).

Her euphemistic use of "do" in place of "murder" foreshadows Macbeth's usage of "do" at the beginning of Act 1 scene vii, and reinforces the namelessness of the deed that is to be enacted.

In his letter to Lady Macbeth, Macbeth ends with "Lay *it*/to thy heart" (1.v.13 - 14) and this is a plea for the creation of a secret pact. From this point, a collusive understanding is established between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

After the attendant has given Lady Macbeth the news of Duncan's imminent arrival, she aligns herself with evil but is disinclined to use the word "murder". She refers to plans for the savage murder as "my fell purpose" (1.v.46) and murder is again referred to as "it", "it" with no referent.

During their first meeting in the play Lady Macbeth uses calculated language in her greeting to Macbeth, where she again avoids the ultimate "achievement", that of "king":

... Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
(1.v.54 - 55).

In the exchanges that follow, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the two self-deceivers, become "one" in their understanding of their mutual aim, that of "strange matters" (1.v.63).

There is a pun on "dispatch" in Lady Macbeth's euphemistic reference to, "This night's great business into my dispatch" (1.v.68). For not only does "dispatch" infer that something be done quickly and efficiently, but also the putting to death of Duncan. The adjective "great" increases the awareness of the horrific nature of the "business" at hand. She does not refer to the murdering of a king - a sacrilegious act, but is "happy" to name the deed as "great business". One notes that this circumlocution will be used by Macbeth without the adjectival "great". When Macbeth wrestles with his

conscience, he tells Lady Macbeth that they will "proceed no further in this business" (1.vii.31). The use of the demonstrative "this" points to their duplicity of what they both, as prevaricators, know is the murder of Duncan.

When Macbeth replies to Banquo about his dream of the Witches, he blatantly lies when he replies: "I think not of them" (11.i.21). He has already set his mind on the murder. Macbeth then suggests that when Banquo has "an hour to serve" (11.i.22) they could spend it "in some words upon that business" (11.i.23). The use of "that business", referring to the Witches, has an innuendo that echoes the "business" at hand, that of the murder of the king that will realise the Witches's prophecies.

When Macbeth deceives the Murderers into believing that they should murder Banquo, there is an echoic use of "business", for he disinforms them of "that business in your bosoms" (111.i.103). He encourages the Murderers to act in deceitful ways in that he tells them they should mask "the business from the common eye" (111.i.124). The definite article points to the particular "business" that is now at hand, that of the murder of Banquo and Fleance.

Ambiguity is reflected in Macbeth's soliloquy that opens Act 1 scene vii, where the evil crime again remains nameless. Macbeth attempts to distance himself from "the horrid deed" (1.vii.24) that will result in his "taking off" (1.vii.20).

Sinister reactions result from Macbeth's euphemistic terms of "do" and "it":

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly

(1.vii.1 - 2).

Mendaciously, Macbeth uses "it" four times and "do" three times in

thirteen words. Macbeth's avoidance of the term "murder" enables him to deceive himself with regard to the nature of the deed he is considering committing. We are aware of Shakespeare's artistry of language as Macbeth gives expression to the horrible, deceitful "deed" (1.vii.14) he is contemplating, that will result in the circumlocutive term "bloody instructions" (1.vii.9):

What beast was't then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
(1.vii.47 - 48).

Lady Macbeth's use of "enterprise" compounds the complicity that she and Macbeth share in the murder plan.

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are aware of the heinous aspect of their crime - the betrayal of trust. They attempt to falsify this by conscious hypocrisy and evasion. Towards the end of Act I scene vii, Lady Macbeth refers to their murderous intentions:

What cannot *you* and *I* perform upon
Th'unguarded Duncan?
(1.vii.70 - 71);

and

Of *our* great quell?
(1.vii.73);

and

Who dares receive it other,
As *we* shall make *our* griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?
(1.vii.78 - 80;
my italics).

The union of "you and I", "our" and "we" has been formed. The unnamed deed, "this terrible feat" (1.vii.81) will be enacted, for Macbeth has decided to commit the murder, "I am settled" (1.vii.80). Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are now physically and spiritually attuned to one another in treachery by the namelessness of "it".

3 IMPERFECT SPEAKERS

The echoic nature of the language and events in *Macbeth* will have as its starting point the Witches and their prophecies, which are the departure point for both the inner and outer action. The prophecies are ambiguous, and although they raise expectations, they do not set clear ends to which character and action can move in one direction: consequently the element of audience uncertainty is brought into the dramatic structure.

I shall attempt to show that the Witches are not only structurally very important, but that they are functional in contributing to the development of other scenes and characters.

I suggest that the Witches act as a chorus to the evil in *Macbeth*, and their use of paradox hints at *Macbeth's* prevarication. The Witches set the ambiguous tone of the play and create the background. By means of paradox, they elicit information and hint at issues that prepare the audience for future actions and events that will contribute to the central action. The physical appearance and locale of the Witches give a visual element of evil, murkiness and prevarication that dominate the play.

Moulton (1963:390) perceives that the function of the supernatural agency - in this case the Witches - in Shakespeare's usage is clear and simple: the Witches "intensify and illuminate human action": they do not determine it.

In the choric sense the Witches motivate the action of the play and they set the scene, for they appear amid thunder and lightning and build an atmosphere of gloom. Their antithetical phrases, "lost and won", "Fair is foul, and foul is fair", suggest the antithesis and equivocations that continue throughout the play. Knights (1965:18) clearly states the importance of the first scene: "the first scene, every word of which will bear the closest scrutiny, strikes one dominant chord".

Macbeth has manifold contrasts and enigmas. However, none of the conflicts is left unenlightened by the diction and syntax used by Shakespeare. In the perfidious world of *Macbeth*, a world of prevarication, equivocation and ambiguity, of treachery, intrigue and betrayal, of chaos and anarchy, it is expedient that the rhetoric be double-edged and the diction be contradictory.

3.1 Fair is Foul

In the first scene of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare introduces the murky ambiguity of morality and language in twelve short lines of verse of probably unprecedented economy. A situation is indicated, characters and human predicaments are mentioned and suggested, a physical scene is painted, and sentences flow in sequence from the previous ones. An important distinguishing feature of Shakespeare's dialogue is his ability to make every sentence flow in natural sequence or natural inconsequence from the previous one. The speeches of characters evolve naturally. Through dialogue, Shakespeare shows a character's mind acting on the minds of others: an idea leads to another, or a word provokes another word.

In the opening scene, the heath where the Witches appear is "blasted" in a double sense, for it is both barren and accursed and affords an appropriate setting for the asexual Witches. There is a significant difference in tone between the sound, rhythm and imagery of the opening of *Twelfth Night*: or, *What you Will*:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die

(1.i.1 - 3);

and that of *Macbeth*:



When shall we three meet again?
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

(1.1.1 - 2).

In these opening lines, Shakespeare creates a style for the Witches unlike that of any other character. Whenever they appear, the rhymed verse used creates an eerie atmosphere that imparts an aura of black magic. In these lines, the Witches further the symbolism of darkness that will prevail through most of the play. The metrical pattern is retained whenever the Witches speak, and this rhythm, together with the strange ambiguities and formulae, makes their speech appear an incantation.

The many short lines spoken by the Witches create a distinctive atmosphere of thunder and lightning in the heavens, that is reflected in the turmoil of the conflicts in the state. Their answer to the question is that they will meet again at a time when all in nature is in disorder:

When the hurlyburly's done,
 When the battle's lost and won

(1.1.3 - 4).

The characteristic ambiguity that is sounded in "lost and won" is continued through the boldness and concord of sound and in the phrases that fix and rivet the audience's attention:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair

(1.1.11).

The mention of Macbeth's name by these "filthy hags" sounds a foreboding note, for they are symbolic of chaos: they can raise winds to fight churches and destroy buildings and consequently are evil enemies of religion and civilization.

Shakespeare employs paradoxical statements in the first scene, with echoic effects in later scenes, to emphasize the confusion of the atmosphere. When the Witches announce in the fourth line of the opening scene that they will meet again after the confusion - the "hurlyburly", "When the battle's lost and won" (1.i.4), the audience is immediately attentive to the use of "lost and won": "lost" and "won" are opposites and a battle that is "lost" cannot be simultaneously "won".

The word "hurlyburly" - meaning confusion and turmoil - with its mid and end repetitive sounds /ly/ and the initial breathed devoiced /h/ contrasted with the mid bi-labial voiced plosive /b/ suggests a kind of pitch-and-toss flow - and when "hurlyburly" is followed by "lost and won" the wider implication of the battle between good and evil is foreshadowed. There is also an ironic chiming link to the end of the play, when Macbeth and Malcolm would have "lost" and "won".

The yoking together of the opposites "lost and won" is echoed at the end of Act 1 scene ii, when Duncan ironically says of the rebel Thane of Cawdor: "What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won" (1.ii.69) which is both true and untrue. Cawdor's repentant death frees him from the treacherous opprobrium that Macbeth will assume: however, the manliness that Cawdor does not lose, Macbeth will lose when he "dares do more" than becomes a man and consequently "is none" (1.vii.46 - 47).

At the end of the first scene, all the Witches chant the first statement of the theme of the play that illustrates the reversal of values and the enigmatic and bewildering state of nature:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
 Hover through the fog and filthy air
 (1.i.11 - 12).

Shakespeare's use of the word "hover" suggests a world in which the values of good and evil are quivering as they hang in the "fog and filthy air":

there is a lack of stability: and a state of suspense is created in an environment where "Fair is foul, and foul is fair". Here Shakespeare uses a variety of stylistic devices for emphasis and to make the audience attentive. He uses syntactic parallelism:

(Subject + Verbal + Object) + (Subject + Verbal + Object)
 Fair is foul and foul is fair

The verbal remains constant, but there is a reversal of the subjects and objects that indicates the reversal of values in the play.

In any parallelistic pattern there should be both the elements of identity and contrast. In this case the syntactic parallelism forms the element of identity: contrast is found in the opposite connotations of "fair" and "foul" that Shakespeare equates so as to form his paradox. The formal parallelism combined with the implication of contrast gives the antithetical theme that is found throughout the play.

The relation of equivalence is between "fair" and "foul" that correspond not only syntactically, but also phonologically, for they are both monosyllables beginning with the fricative /f/. The parallelistic bond between "fair" and "foul" suggests that in the world of *Macbeth*, although the elements of "fair" and "foul" are contrasts, they are the same in this confused and doubtful environment.

The formula for the verbal parallelism of "Fair is foul" and "foul is fair" is that of *Antistrophe*, where the items are repeated in a reverse order:

(a b) + (a b)
 Fair is foul and foul is fair

where (a ...) is "fair" and (b ...) is "foul".

Shakespeare also uses extra regularities by making use of the alliterative pattern of the repeated fricative /f/.

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

f x f x f x f

This alliterative structure is a pattern superimposed on the pattern that is already inherent in the language: it is the recurrence of the phoneme /f/ that is also the stressed syllable.

By means of this extension of the /f/ alliteration, I consider Shakespeare enlarges his theme to include not only the personal level, but also the universal level. In "Fair is foul", and "foul is fair" there is an equation, as in a mathematical formula, of two opposites, "foul" and "fair": this description of "foul" and "fair" in terms of one another is at odds. I suggest that Shakespeare is proposing some mystical unity of concepts that are ordinarily distinct opposites. The microcosmic world of Macbeth is signalled where values are distorted and confused: this distortion and confusion will extend to the macrocosm which is referred to by the wider implication of

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

This repetitive extension of the alliterative fricative /f/ makes one aware of the "fog" that hinders clear vision, distorts hearing and brings about the gloom and darkness that prevails in the play. Macbeth distorts what he hears and through his resulting horrific actions lives in, and is surrounded by "filthy" air which is the objective symbol of evil, corruption and pollution.

The symbolic reference to light and darkness throughout *Macbeth* forms a continuous and recognizable undertone of state of mind or mood. In the opening scene of the play, "light" appears to be fading to make way for the cloak of "darkness": the Witches decide they will meet again "ere the set of sun" (I.I.5). The Witches - the "instruments of darkness" - are contributing factors to the darkness that prevails and of which Macbeth is both victim and instrument.

3.2 So Foul and Fair a Day

The first Witch indicates the limits of the Witches's power in her account of her revenge on the master of the Tiger:

I'll drain him dry as hay:
 Sleep shall neither night nor day
 Hang upon his penthouse lid;
 He shall live a man forbid.
 Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine,
 Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
 Though his bark cannot be lost,
 Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

(1.iii.18 - 25).

There are limits to her power as "his bark cannot be lost". However, the passage echoes what will happen to Macbeth as he sinks deeper into his evil ways. In her speech, the Witch foretells what will happen to Macbeth. His life does become as "dry as hay", for life becomes a "walking shadow" "Signifying nothing" (V.v.24 - 28): sleep evades him after Duncan's murder, for as Macbeth says "Macbeth does murther Sleep" (11.ii.35): although he lives, it is a life of empty "to-morrows" where he "dwindles", becomes emaciated and although he physically survives, he is spiritually "tempest-tost".

It is fitting that the "brave" soldier, Macbeth, should be heralded by a drum for his first physical appearance in the play, although as Macbeth and Banquo are alone the "drum" "seems" incongruous.

The third Witch announces his arrival, and the drum beat is reflected in the rhythm:

Ā drúm! ā drúm!
 Mācbéth dōth cóme

(1.iii.30 - 31).

I suggest the drum is an ominous device used by Shakespeare. The Witch incants Macbeth's arrival to the rhythm of a monotonous drum beat. In the role of a chorus to Macbeth, the Witches could be forewarning Macbeth's being drummed out of life.

Through the sense of hearing, we are made aware of impending doom. Shakespeare links the beginning and the end of the play with consummate forcefulness by means of the beating of drums. Either intermittent or steady drum beats tensely draw together Act V scene ii through to Act V scene viii. This cumulative effect of drums beats the deeper truth home to Macbeth that "There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here" (V.v.48).

Shakespeare presents Macbeth emerging out of the murky distorted atmosphere of fog, blood, revolt and his first words echo those of the Witches with whom he is linked:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen
(1.iii.38).

Spencer (1963:154) points out that "the confusion in the political world is not merely reflected in the world of Nature and the individual: it is - such is the power of the poetic imagination - *identified* with those worlds".

Macbeth's words, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" that echo the Witches's chant, also build up a sense of uncertainty and by using similar echoic diction, Macbeth places himself in the centre of moral evaluations that make the play a great vision of the reality of the horror of evil. In this topsy-turvy atmosphere where everything appears to be unreal and yet strangely real, appearances cannot be trusted: this state is referred to by Duncan when he says

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face
(1.iv.11 - 12).

Macbeth's cryptic statement, the paradoxical, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" is a deliberate stylistic attempt to establish still further the echoic atmosphere of doubt and confusion that is created by the Witches in the first scene. However, Macbeth's statement also sets the pattern of contrasts, "foul and fair", of his moral confusion.

This stylistic device of linking Macbeth with the Witches by means of Macbeth's echoing of the Witches's paradox at the end of scene i, has been the cause of much comment. Dowden (Rosen, 1960:61) argues that "although Macbeth has not yet set eyes upon these hags, the connection is already established between his soul and them. Their spells have already wrought upon his blood".

I consider this an incorrect interpretation, for the Witches can only tempt Macbeth: Macbeth retains his free will. I agree with Rosen, when he points out in his counter-argument to Dowden's proposition that "the Weird Sisters have the gift of foreseeing the end of events, but they are not depicted as having the power to compel man to act in a predetermined way" (Rosen, 1960:61). The Witches are "foul" in form and "fair" in promise.

I consider that Macbeth's words link him to the Witches in the sense of uncertainty, for at this early stage of the play, through his echoic statement, we realise that it is Macbeth - not Banquo for instance - who will be involved in the uncertainty, doubt, and gloom that exists.

The Witches greet Macbeth prophetically: the third greeting is, "All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be King hereafter" (1.iii.50) and it is this greeting that leads Macbeth to his "horrid image" that he visualizes as his first murder.

3.3 Why Do You Start?

By their prophecies, the Witches motivate the action and provide structural

continuity: they are instrumental in indicating the characters of Macbeth and Banquo. Banquo records Macbeth's reaction to the Witches:

Good Sir, why do you start, and seem to *fear*
Things that do sound so fair?

(1.iii.51 - 52;
my italics).

From the first scene in the play Macbeth appears to be a subject of agitating fear. The cause of this fear is unknown to us, but Macbeth seems to be aware of what the fear is. Banquo notices Macbeth's strange reaction to the "fair" prophecies of the Witches. I consider that Macbeth "starts" because the evil voiced by the Witches is the inner, evaded, unvoiced evil in Macbeth. He is shocked by recognizing that his covertly and dimly acknowledged evil thoughts are clearly and publicly voiced by the Witches. The Witches succinctly state, although foul in shape, the thoughts that seemed fair within his self-deceiving mind.

In the encounter by Macbeth and Banquo with the Witches, reality is an enigma and the Witches use puzzling ambiguities:

- 1 *Witch.* *Lesser* than Macbeth, and *greater*.
- 2 *Witch.* *Not so happy*, yet *much happier*.
- 3 *Witch.* Thou shalt *get kings*, though thou *be none*

(1.iii.65 - 67;
my italics).

The opposing paradox states: "Lesser ... greater": "Not so happy ... much happier": "... get kings ... be none". They again reflect the theme of the play - that of appearances and reality, and point to the action that will lead to an evaluation of the characteristics of Macbeth and Banquo. Banquo will not be king and therefore lesser than Macbeth in the social order, but he will be spiritually greater than Macbeth. Shakespeare's stylistic use of ambiguities allows compressed diction to convey maximum meaning.

It is interesting to note the mastery of Shakespeare's technique: he does not use the negative/positive pattern throughout these three lines. The contrapuntal rhythm is directly repeated and consequently the paradox is heightened.

Banquo, who is in harmony with nature, is ready to dismiss the creatures and comments on the unnaturalness of the "withered hags" that he is prepared to dismiss: Macbeth is "rapt" and because of his empathy with these "instruments of darkness" he is reluctant to dismiss the "imperfect speakers" from the heath and from his mind. To Banquo they give information that he considers diseased, but this same information disinforms Macbeth who is ripe for corruption, and ready to "hear" that which will spur his ruthlessness to annihilate all that prevents his wish becoming a reality.

Banquo questions:

Or have we eaten on the insane root,
That takes the reason prisoner?

(1.iii.84 - 85).

Macbeth's reply is not an answer to the question, for his mind is still attuned to the Witches, and he reiterates their prophecy:

Your children shall be kings

(1.iii.86).

To Banquo's, "You shall be *king*" (1.iii.86), Macbeth attempts to prevent Banquo from discovering his embryonic commitment to prevarication, by a screen of anticlimax as he questions "And *Thane of Cawdor* too; went it not so?" (1.iii.87; my italics).

When Rosse informs Macbeth that he has been honoured by Duncan and is to be called "Thane of Cawdor", Macbeth replies

The Thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

(1.iii.108 - 109).

In this particular clothing image, there is no slur attached as there is when Macbeth is actually wearing "stolen garments". I think the clothing imagery suits and fits the change in the character of Macbeth. In this particular clothing image, there are no underhand undertones, for Macbeth is still "relatively" honest, whereas as Macbeth's dishonesty and evil develops, so do the clothing images reflect this change. This image reflects Macbeth in his embryonic stage of corruption. The tone of the clothing imagery becomes censorious as Macbeth's evil ways develop. It is in a legitimate and honest manner that Macbeth will wear the robes of the Thane of Cawdor.

Banquo watches Macbeth, who is rapt in his ambitious thoughts: his comment is

New honours come upon him,

Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould,
But with the aid of use

(1.iii.145 - 147).

Later this image becomes ironical, for Macbeth argues against the murdering of Duncan on the grounds that it may damage his reputation:

... and I have brought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon

(1.vii.32 - 35).

I consider that there is interest in noting that according to the Witches's formula, every appearance of *fair* in the play should in a darker, evil sense

be equated as *foul*. The "fair" and "foul" paradox is echoed when Banquo reflects on Macbeth's position after he has been crowned king:

Thou has it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the Weir'd Women promis'd; and, I fear,
Thou play'dst *most foully* for't

(111.i.1 - 3;
my italics).

Not only is the paradox stated, but Shakespeare points to Banquo's strong suspicions by adding the superlative "most" to "foul". In this use of "most foully", there is an implied realization of the depths to which Macbeth has stooped in order to achieve his ambition. In Act 1 scene iii, Banquo questions Macbeth as to why he starts and seems "to fear" "Things that do sound so fair?" (1.iii.52).

In Act 111 scene i, this state of "fear" is echoed, but this time it is Banquo who "fears" Macbeth's "most foully" played actions. Banquo discovers that which sounded "fair" upon the heath, is foul in the event.

Macbeth chooses not to question the ambiguities of the Witches: his greed and whetted appetite wants to know more:

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more
(1.iii.70).

Banquo, in contrast to Macbeth, is conservative, calm and reflective in his attitude to the prophecies of the Witches:

But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of Darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence

(1.iii.122 - 126).

When Macbeth hears of his new title of Thane of Cawdor, his reaction is in complete contrast to that of Banquo's: he shows nervous excitement:

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme

(1.iii.127 - 129).

Macbeth's subjective attitude shows himself - the isolated self - as his point of reference:

... *I* am Thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do *I* yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix *my* hair,
And make *my* seated heart knock at *my* ribs

(1.iii.133 - 136;

my italics).

Banquo's impersonal, objective manner is revealed in his references that point outward to the community - "to win *us* .../... tell *us* truths;/Win *us* ...". The use of "us" is contrasted with Macbeth's subjective use of "me" and "I". The Witches speak evasively and with ambiguity in the meaning of their words, and consequently disinform Macbeth who is capable and willing to be disinformed, as opposed to Banquo who is not prepared to be disinformed. (*My italics*.)

Banquo's opening lines in Act 111 scene i, prepare the audience for the next murder, and they extend the audience's thoughts on Macbeth's character. Initially Banquo addresses an imaginary Macbeth, and then his thoughts turn to his private suspicions and he creates an intimacy between the audience and himself. "But, hush; no more" (111.i.10) indicates that the king is about to enter, and adds stress to the division between private truth and public deceit that is a theme of the play. This passage also prepares for the slyness of Macbeth's probing questions that follow and Banquo's reserved and short replies in Act 111 scene i lines 19 - 36.

4 BIRTH OF EVIL

4.1 Nothing is, But What is Not

In an aside, Macbeth reveals the birth of his evil path: his prevarication that follows after this birth of evil is necessary in order that he should secure his position obtained through evil and abominable crimes. Macbeth reflects on the prophecies of the Witches:

This supernatural soliciting
 Cannot be ill; cannot be good:-
 If ill, why hath it given *me* earnest of success,
 Commencing in a truth? *I* am Thane of Cawdor:
 If good, why do *I* yield to that suggestion
 Whose horrid image doth unfix *my* hair,
 And make *my* seated heart knock at *my* ribs,
 Against the use of nature? Present fears
 Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so *my* single state of man,
 That function is smother'd in surmise,
 And nothing is, but what is not

(1.iii.130 - 142;

my italics).

False appearances fool Duncan, but in this aside Macbeth is tormented by them: he "hovers" between the agonising torment of what is right and what is wrong. In this dilemma, which is intellectual and a moral one, he is reduced to the hopeless conclusion of "nothing is, but what is not".

Macbeth's subjective use of "me" and "I" shows that his point of reference is himself - the isolated self. At the beginning of the aside, Macbeth's "I thank you gentlemen" serves to mark his isolation: it is in this isolated state that he can consider his doubts and fears, his "horrible imaginings"

that lead him to his "thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical".

Macbeth questions the nature of the prophecy. How can it be ill if it is the truth now that the title of Cawdor has been legitimately bestowed on him? Yet how can it be good if it causes him to have instantaneous thoughts of murder? In this focal aside of temptation and initial capitulation, the language is at cross-purposes with itself and culminates in a clash of conflicting figures.

Once again there is the repetition of the logic of disjunction as in "So foul and fair a day", and we are shown a man tossed between facts and the excitement of an instant, vivid imagination. In this speech, in which the opposing forces of good and evil are balanced in fearful suspension, the moral dilemma of Macbeth is revealed in his thought of murder.

When a parallelism occurs in poetry, there is the need to find some deeper motive: in the seesaw rhythm of "Cannot be ill; cannot be good", the parallelism strongly urges a connection between "ill" and "good", but it is a combination that contrasts with similarity, for "ill" and "good" have opposed denotations and connotations. However, in an attempt to give an immediate interpretation there is the suggestion that they are similar: a wider interpretation illustrates that the parallelism summarizes with great concentration the antithesis, the paradox of Macbeth's ambition. Macbeth considers first the negative possibility, "If ill", and then the positive possibility, "If good". This reveals the first struggle within Macbeth emerging that will continue for a larger part of the play.

The simple words Macbeth uses are concepts of "truths", "ill", "good" and their repetition indicates that Macbeth is concerned with, and worried by these abstract concepts. He uses mundane physical objects, "hair", "heart" and "ribs". He also uses more elaborate nouns and noun phrases, "happy prologues", "imperial theme", "supernatural soliciting", "earnest of success",

"horrid image", "horrible imaginings", "surmise". He combines two simple elements "swell" and "act" into "swelling act" that relates to both the physical and abstract concept: from two monosyllabic words a polysyllabic phrase is formed.

The verbs used in the first portion of the speech draw attention by their simplicity: they are various forms of "be" and "have". The change in the type of verb comes after "I am Thane of Cawdor": the verbs become more definite, "yield", "knock". Up to "I am Thane of Cawdor", Macbeth expresses conceptual matters in the simple forms of verbs and nouns: after "I am Thane of Cawdor" he turns to physical expression - "hair", "unfix".

Macbeth's wrestling with his problem ends in the antithetical negative form: "And nothing is, but what is not". The use of the negative "nothing" and "not" reflects Macbeth's mind that shows a concern for, and a loss of reality. By using the simple form of the verb "to be" and the negation, Shakespeare shows the blurring of a world where it is difficult to distinguish appearance and reality, that Banquo so aptly describes:

Were such things here, as we do speak about,
Or have we eaten on the insane root,
That takes the reason prisoner?

(I.iii.83 - 85).

In Macbeth's aside, the rhythms are generally irregular, and they change frequently. It is interesting to notice the link in the rhythm of

Cǎnóť bĕ ířl, cǎnóť bĕ ěóod

that is the same as

Ańđ nóťhĩng ís, bŭť wħat ís nót.

In "Cannot be ill, cannot be good", the phrasing is short and the repetitions of "cannot be" give insistence. This shortness of phrasing is followed in "If ill", that is followed by the fluency of "Why hath it given me earnest of success". Then follows the twelve syllables of, "Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor". The metrical basis of this line is not simple: both "I" and "am" could take a stress. The pause of realization after the question mark holds the rhythm, which is out of balance, in check. If spoken in two half-lines, the affirmation of "I am Thane of Cawdor" eases the difficulty in the metre. With "If good", that is the positive argument, the rhythm is once again sure.

Both "Cannot be ill" and "nothing is, but what is not" echo Macbeth's "So foul and fair a day" that in turn echoes "Fair is foul". Macbeth's moral struggle is reflected in the stylistic use of the interrogative that divides his problem into "If ill ..." and "If good ...".

The first conscious lie that Macbeth tells is found in his reply to Banquo's comment that they "stay" upon Macbeth's leisure. Macbeth has been reflecting on the possible means of realizing the prophecies of the Witches, yet in reply to Banquo, Macbeth apologizes:

Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten

(1.iii.150 - 151).

Macbeth intends to give the impression that he is attempting to recall something. In a footnote to *Macbeth*, Muir (1973a:22) points out, "He is lying". Macbeth further shows that he has been lying, for he immediately turns to Banquo and in an aside to him suggests that they discuss the weird happenings at a later stage:

Think upon what hath chanc'd; and at more time,
The Interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other

(1.iii.154 - 156).

Be it that his brain was indeed "wrought", his speech is nonetheless a lie - a blatant lie. Macbeth's heart is no longer "free", for he is bound on his evil path, and this first lie reveals him to be at odds with his moral values.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare combines the individual, the state, and the external world of nature into a single interrelated whole, so that a disturbance in one section disturbs the other.

Stauffer (1966:21) points out that "the state of Scotland also furnishes a frame and a metaphor for the personal moral drama": Macbeth realizes the one part of the "idea of mutual responsibility between rulers and subject". Shakespeare places Macbeth in perspective. Although he is a hero, he reaffirms his place in the order of life - both socially and politically - when he presents his thoughts in a noble manner to Duncan:

The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honour

(1.iv.22 - 27).

Although Macbeth realizes this mutuality, he also shows that he speaks with prevarication. There is irony in the "nobility" of the thoughts that he presents, for the falsity of these words is realised when one recalls that in the previous scene Macbeth spoke of

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man

(1.iii.139 - 140).

The "duties" to King that Macbeth discusses above are the ones that he will violate: he will kill his king: cut off the line of Duncan's children: he

will be responsible for the murder of the grooms in order to protect himself from the heinous crime he has committed. He does all that is not safe toward the "love and honour" that is Duncan's due. With conscious hypocrisy, Macbeth eloquently expresses why he owes Duncan his loyalty and yet his betrayal will almost be more heinous than the betrayal of Christ by Judas.

Macbeth will sacrilegiously betray Duncan while he is the king's host and consequently should be his life protector. The central action of the physical killing of a king supplies the metaphor for the moral action of the killing of a conscience or the spiritual being of a man.

Walker (1949:199) distinguishes four typical atmospheres in *Macbeth* that are in effect two pairs, "gloom and darkness are the usual accompaniments of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the Witches: Dusk and Daylight are the element (sic) of Duncan, Banquo, Malcolm, and Macduff". Spring, the time of seed planting, begins the plant-growth imagery that develops in a circular movement relating to the seasons, and that reflects the circular movement of the play. We witness the character Macbeth developing and deteriorating: from the hero in the spring of his life, he ascends the throne in the heat of summer, only to reap his autumnal harvest resulting in his winter death that gives rise to the birth of a new spring in the person of Malcolm.

Banquo asks the Witches if they "can look into the seeds of time" (1.iii.58) and they may well be able to see the autumnal harvest.

The plant imagery is continued when Duncan welcomes Macbeth and Banquo:

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing

(1.iv.28 - 29).

Banquo replies by extending the growth image: "There if I grow,/The harvest is your own" (1.iv.32 - 33). Macbeth replies by extending "labour" used by Duncan:

The rest is labour, which is not us'd for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach
(1.iv.44 - 46).

There is irony in Macbeth's use of labour, for his labour in being the "harbinger" for Duncan will in fact be his preparations for the murder of Duncan.

Shortly after Macbeth has expressed his alleged loyalty to Duncan, Duncan confers the title of Prince of Cumberland on Malcolm, where he uses the imagery of light - that of stars:

The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers
(1.iv.39 - 42).

Although Macbeth is shown, by his own words, to know his place in society, he threatens the pattern of order with his thought of direct action: he voices his shock:

The Prince of Cumberland! - That is a step
On which I must *fall down*, or else *o'erleap*,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not *light* see my *black* and deep desires
(1.iv.48 - 51;
my italics).

Macbeth uses the image of leaping over the obstacle, Malcolm. The nature of the obstacle over which he must leap is a moral, rather than a physical one. At this point we are not aware of how Macbeth will do so, but since he avoids direct confrontation with the "deed", his "o'erleaping" shows that he will ignore the moral aspect of his action. He also continues the star imagery, but in a negative manner: he calls on the stars to "hide" their light and give darkness. Macbeth expresses his desire to obscure the signs of nobleness in his nature: he invokes evil and death: he reveals his duplicity and his lack of integrity.

4.2 False Face

In the letter that Macbeth writes to Lady Macbeth, Macbeth makes his first fatal mistake: he "omits" to state that Banquo was present at the meeting with the Witches. Consequently, Lady Macbeth never knows the full reason for Macbeth's desire to kill Banquo - that he knows too much. I suggest that this "omission" is conscious, for Macbeth would like to think that Banquo was not there: although Macbeth suggests that he and Banquo should discuss these happenings at a later stage, when the opportunity arises, Macbeth chooses not to discuss the Witches with Banquo.

During Lady Macbeth's first appearance in the play, she reads the letter from Macbeth that informs her of the prophecies of the Witches: she shows that she is anxious "to catch the nearest way" (1.v.18). We are immediately aware that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth will join forces in corrupt collusion. Lady Macbeth has an analytical, ratiocinative mind: it is a mind that reveals cunning and shrewd insights: she will achieve her ends, no matter what means she has to employ. Unlike the imaginative Macbeth, she is unimaginative and she understands Macbeth less than she understands herself.

The dramatic importance of Macbeth's letter to Lady Macbeth is to recount the events, that the audience has already witnessed, to Lady Macbeth: it is also a means of illustrating the speed of Lady Macbeth's sinister, resolute decision:

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
 What thou art promis'd

(1.v.15 - 16).

The impact of the letter is shown in Lady Macbeth's reaction to the letter rather than in the content itself. What the letter does reveal is Macbeth's mind that is full of "horrible imaginings". Macbeth is rarely as articulate as the powerfully expressed facts in the letter.

The letter moves swiftly. He states, "They met me in the day of success ..." (1.v.1). In this short space, Macbeth informs Lady Macbeth that he was victorious, and that he met the Witches: he did not seek them, they sought him out. The letter ends with a courtly impression that suggests nobility:

... This have I thought good to deliver thee (my dearest
 partner of greatness) that thou might'st not lose the dues
 of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promis'd
 thee

(1.v.10 - 14).

The suggestion of mutual intrigue then follows, "Lay it/to thy heart" (1.v.13 - 14).

In her first speech, Lady Macbeth resolves to help Macbeth realize his ambitions which are also her wishes: her description of Macbeth is that of a man, her husband, as opposed to the descriptions we have had of him as a public hero.

The references to mother's milk start indirectly with Lady Macbeth's reference to Macbeth's being "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (1.v.17). In her contemptuous use of "milk of human kindness", Lady Macbeth refers to her husband's moral nature and his vulnerable qualities: she realizes she will have to rid him of these qualities, if he is to achieve his (and her) ambition.

She admits that he is "not without ambition" but she adds that he is "without/The illness should attend it" (1.v.19 - 20). Moral sensitivity and his fears are the restrictive forces that stand between his wishes and the fulfilment of these wishes.

Lady Macbeth realizes that an opportunity is about to present itself, and that without her urgings and prevarication Macbeth may let it pass. Lady Macbeth recognizes that although Macbeth is not without great ambition, he lacks the ruthless resolution and disregard of human values to make his wish an actuality. She imagines her determination will strengthen his infirmity of purpose. Lady Macbeth continues to delineate Macbeth's character: not Macbeth, the victorious soldier, but Macbeth, the man - her husband.

Shakespeare uses a chiming effect in:

... what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily

(1.v.20 - 21).

Lady Macbeth shows that Macbeth takes no delight in crimes or lying - at this stage, for that which is "highly" wished - the ambitions that he has - he would, ideally, like to achieve "holily", not by "foul" means. The purpose of the chiming effect, and the parahrhyme that connects the similarity of sound in "highly" and "holily", is to make us more aware of their possible connections and therefore the conflict that exists in Macbeth's character.

Shakespeare continues with a paradoxical parallelism:

... wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win

(1.v.21 - 22).

"Wouldst" is placed as a constant: the "not" together with the verb "play" and adverbial "false" present a positive "honesty" - Macbeth wanting to be honest. However, the conjunctive "and" is followed by the conditional "yet" that results in the "win" - Macbeth's ambition - being "wrongly" achieved.

By means of the paradoxical parallelism, Shakespeare shows Lady Macbeth's accurate summary of Macbeth, in that he will wish to act in such a way that although his ambition is achieved dishonestly, he will not wish to commit a dishonest act. Macbeth passionately wishes that which he is not entitled to have. Although he desires the murder of Duncan, he would prefer the murder to be committed by someone else.

The vices that Lady Macbeth attributes to Macbeth are in fact considered virtues in society: her values are reversed. Her intention to prevaricate and the oblique approach she will follow is indicated:

... Hie thee hither,
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal

(1.v.25 - 30).

She indicates the muted, subtle strategy she will adopt. She will not approach him directly, but will, through the sense of hearing, "pour my spirits in thine ear" - into the unsuspecting ear - and again she will attempt to approach and instil courage to commit murder, by means of "the valour of my tongue". The "golden round" represents the complete end of human endeavour for Lady Macbeth. She will use her wiles by pouring her demonic spirits, figuratively, into his ear. For this task she prays to be filled with evil energy "from the crown to the toe" (1.v.42): a terrifying invocation to evil.

The supreme virtue represented is ambition with its ruthless achievement: moral scruples standing in the way of ambition are represented as shameful. Although Lady Macbeth recognizes that social feelings are natural to man, she acts on a different premise, where the highest qualities of man involve the ability to disregard morality in order to fulfil a conscienceless ambition: a premise where the "milk of human kindness" is symbolic of weakness. She appeals to the evil spirits to "take my milk for gall" (1.v.48) and reveals her wicked intentions.

After the Messenger has informed Lady Macbeth of Duncan's impending visit, she refers to

... The raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements

(1.v.38 - 40).

The raven is the messenger of misfortune and she indicates her evil desires when she assigns the hoarse raven to her home that will welcome Duncan's "fatal" arrival: an ominous note.

At her most ruthless stage, Lady Macbeth invokes evil spirits to take possession of her and subdue the nature of her womanhood that conflicts with her evil wishes:

... Come, you Spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty!

(1.v.40 - 43).

In this speech, Lady Macbeth appeals for the normal role of her womanhood, that of life and nourishment, to be reversed: she pleads for

her feminine qualities to be put aside, to be unsexed, and her milk converted to gall. Muir (1972:151) points out that, "it is Lady Macbeth, stigmatised at the end as 'fiend-like Queen', who is more positive and conscious in her choice of evil". Just prior to Macbeth's entrance, Lady Macbeth calls upon "thick Night" (1.v.50) to mask the light so "That my keen knife see not the wound it makes" (1.v.52); and consequently heaven will not "peep through the blanket of the dark" (1.v.53). She attempts to prevent heaven seeing her dastardly deed. Brooks (1971:26) points out the relationship of "blanket" and "pall", "the one clothing of sleep, and the other, the clothing of death", which are both aptly garments of the dark: the imagery is threatening and dark as Lady Macbeth faces the implication of her foul purpose. Lady Macbeth's appeal to mask the murder recalls Macbeth's earlier aside: "Let not light see my black and deep desires" (1.iv.51).

When Macbeth arrives at the Castle, Lady Macbeth further questions him about Duncan's impending visit:

Macb. Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady M. And when goes hence?

(She questions the time at her disposal to carry out her "fell purpose".)

Macb. To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady M. O! never

Shall sun that morrow see!

(1.v.59 - 61).

By means of the time words "to-night" and "to-morrow", we are made aware of Duncan's plans, and we are also aware that his plans will not be carried out if Lady Macbeth can fulfil her evil plans that are as yet unknown to Macbeth. The use of "to-night" and "to-morrow" signal the short time space in which the first action of murder will take place. There

is also irony in Lady Macbeth's use of "never/Shall sun that morrow see!" for after the murder, Rosse literally describes the day that was "strangled" by darkness and does not see sun:

... by th'clock 'tis day,
 And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp
 (11.iv.6 - 7).

Clothing images that mask and cloak run through the play and Brooks (1971:26) comments on this train of images: he says "the oldest symbol for the hypocrite is that of a man who cloaks his true nature under a disguise".

Macbeth soon becomes aware that Lady Macbeth has preplanned Duncan's "fatal" visit. She tells Macbeth that he is to

... bear welcome in your eye,
 Your hand, your tongue: look like th'innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under't
 (1.v.64 - 66).

Nature, found in the "flower", is to be masked by evil. She proposes the false front that Macbeth must adopt: she encourages Macbeth to practise craftiness and to all outward appearances he must appear to be the welcoming host. She then makes use of the clothing image that masks and cloaks the true nature of man under a disguise. Lady Macbeth "orders" Macbeth to adopt an equivocal front: he must appear as "th'innocent flower,/But be the serpent under't".

By the end of Act 1, Macbeth adopts this attitude. The rhyming couplet with which Act 1 ends marks not only the end of the Act, but also Macbeth's intention to commit the murder: it also echoes Lady Macbeth's words above:

Away, and mock the time with fairest show: .
 False face must hide what the false heart doth know
 (1.vii.82 - 83).

These words may well have been uttered by Lady Macbeth, because they reflect her thoughts and philosophy. However, since Macbeth speaks them, they indicate his determination to adopt a prevaricating approach. The falsity and hypocrisy is emphasized by the parallelism of the subjects - "False face" and "false heart": the innermost thoughts of the heart must be masked by "False face".

4.3 All Our Service

When Duncan and Banquo enter Macbeth's castle, the nesting imagery gives its gentlest aspect to the cycle of procreation - "wooiingly", "procreant", "Where they most breed and haunt" (1.vi.6 - 9). This contrasts with all that Lady Macbeth has renounced, when she called upon the "Spirits" to "unsex me here" (1.v.41). The very movement of Duncan's mind is captured in, "This castle hath a pleasant seat" (1.vi.1). Shakespeare, by means of imagery, allows us to infer what forces are at work in the speaker's mind.

The raven is the messenger of misfortune and since the hoarse raven is the bird of Lady Macbeth's home, we feel the irony of Banquo's description of the castle. He continues the seasonal imagery when he comments on the martlet that is

This guest of summer,
 The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
 By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
 Smells wooingly here
 (1.vi.3 - 6).

The bird imagery causes tension in the audience, for there is a chasm between what is heard - the "martlet" - and what is known - "the raven".

A marked change in character and spirit is felt. The "martlet" is found in place of the raven: the gentleness of the royal guests, in place of the violence of the hosts: innocence, in the place of deception: love, in place of hatred. The momentary salubrity brought in by Duncan's grace will not return until after Macbeth's downfall.

Lady Macbeth's entrance defiles the air, and Duncan in his greeting to her observes "The love that follows us sometime is *our trouble*" (1.vi.11; my italics).

Lady Macbeth's shrewd and deceitful speech to Duncan and his *entourage* is slow in pace and every deceptive phrase is loaded with prevarication and hypocrisy:

All our service,
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad, wherewith
Your Majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits

(1.vi.14 - 20).

The "service" Lady Macbeth will prepare for Duncan is his murder plan, and she will make "doubly" sure that there are no loopholes in her plans. Her statement that they "rest your hermits" is blatant prevarication, for the last words that we heard from Lady Macbeth in the previous scene were "Leave all the rest to me", indicating that she is ready to plan Duncan's murder. Lady Macbeth's present coolness and calm attitude show the extent of her treacherous nature and suspense is consequently created.

The equation of "Fair and noble hostess" with "why do you start, and seem to fear?/Things that do sound so fair?" (1.iii.51 - 52) is important: not only does Lady Macbeth appear "fair", but there are two apparently "fair" Thanes of Cawdor in whom Duncan "misplaces" an absolute trust.

At the end of the scene, a scene of thirty-one lines that has converted what appeared an earthly paradise into an earthly hell, Duncan requests that Lady Macbeth should "Give me your hand" (1.vi.28). Duncan's request, following Lady Macbeth's second allegation of devotion and loyalty, gives ritual and symbolic meaning to the crime of betrayal and sacrilege against the king.

4.4 I Am Settled

I agree with Stauffer (1966:211) in his interesting observation that the murder of Duncan is "a kind of parallel over-symbol in the external action for what is happening in Macbeth's own being". At the beginning of the play, Macbeth attempts to kill the ruling power of his nature - his "eternal jewel" of conscience. Before his actual physical death, Macbeth strangles his spiritual life. In his soliloquy before the murder, Macbeth rejects the probability of life after death, although he is aware that "We still have judgment here" (1.vii.8).

Stauffer (1966:213) points out that ambition is an insufficient motive for the murder of Duncan, and that horror of the murder lies "in the sudden unopposed flourishing of evil in a man and woman of such potentialities for good". Although she is unaware of her double nature, Lady Macbeth shows her awareness of Macbeth's double nature - that he at once wishes to be high but yet holy. Stauffer (1966:214) maintains that Lady Macbeth's resolution "in evil breaks sooner than Macbeth's because her imagination, limiting her to an illusion of ruthless power, is not congruent with her own nature".

Poetry can be "absolutely dramatic in the exact sense of revealing character in action in a way which is swifter and more concentrated than prose" (Drew, 1937:233). I agree with Drew (1937:233) when she says that in Macbeth's soliloquy, "If it were done..." we are aware of the "very sense of the sudden jumps, the ellipses and jerky associations of images and arguments, which are the actual process of thought". In this soliloquy, we become aware of Macbeth's state of mind and we sense the problems of good, evil and damnation.

In his first soliloquy, that is not only clear and logical, but also syllogistic, Macbeth fully articulates duplicity:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly

(1.vii.1 - 2).

These initial lines show the predominance of the harsh, staccato, voiceless and voiced alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/, that draw our attention to the meaning of the statement that contains "done" three times: "it" and its contracted forms four times in one and a half verse lines. Macbeth may intend to say, "If, once the murder is committed it will be over and done with, then the crime should be done immediately". This reading of the lines heightens the compassion Macbeth appears to afford Duncan, his kinsman, king, and guest, later in the passage.

The use of the subjunctive "If" is appropriate to the syllogism. The speech opens with a statement and this major premise offers not a more-than-stated "as if", but a plain statement that leads us from the beginning to expect an end that denies the possibility conditionally stated in the beginning. The force of the syllogism that emphatically recoils from the thought of murder carries over into the exchange with Lady Macbeth, where Macbeth expresses his changed attitude to the murder in plain emphatic language: "We will proceed no further in this business" (1.vii.31).

In Macbeth's meditation, his nervous energy is evident in the compression and rhythmic organisation of his soliloquy by means of the quick monosyllables, the caesuras, and repetition. The accent is on the syntactical pointers, "If" and "then":

If it were dóned, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
If were done quíckly

(1.vii.1 - 2).

The word "done" appears three times in a short space. Only in the first instance does "done" receive the accent. The actions that are referred to in the second and third usages of the verb "to be" are made subordinate to the action of murder, that in its complete sense embraces both the moral and spiritual implications of the deed. By means of this rhythmical subtlety and within a logical structure, Shakespeare indicates Macbeth's complex attitude. The soliloquy, which begins rhetorically, shows Macbeth moving his thoughts to murder, and the transplacement emphasizes the doing of the deed and the magnitude of murder which is again referred to as "it".

The word-play on "done" is followed by Macbeth's hissing of the rapid sibilants of

... if th' *assassination*
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his *surcease* *success*

(1.vii.2 - 4;
my italics).

The seesaw state of Macbeth's mind is brought to a climax in "surcease success". Macbeth recognises the hopelessness of the pursuit of the deed: his speech is a series of frustrated gestures towards action. He dimly personifies the assassination in an elaborately metaphorical way as vainly

trying to "catch/With his surcease success". Related to this is the equally vain attempt to "trammel up the consequence", for this impossibility is expressed mockingly by the king's "surcease" turning into the final "success".

Macbeth reflects on the after effects of the murder that he is to commit: he contrasts eternity with the present "here", "upon this bank and shoal of time" (1.vii.6). Macbeth's immediate concern appears to be surety of success in the present: the future and the life to come appear to be of little concern to him.

As Macbeth proceeds in this speech careful logic is never entirely lost. However, as the violence of imagery increases so does his logic yield to his emotional apprehension. He pictures the horror his action will cause.

He recognises that he will have judgment "here". Macbeth openly forsakes the banquet where Duncan is being entertained: he acknowledges the breach of social bonds and considers the retribution that may follow his first action as, "Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return/To plague th'inventor" (1.vii.9 - 10).

Duncan's murder is the most undisguised aspect of evil, and the blood that results from his murder will return to punish Macbeth. The imagery of the "poison'd chalice" containing the symbolic blood of Christ has its meaning, when one equates Macbeth with Judas. Duncan has almost completed his dining when Macbeth deliberates on the murder of Duncan. The "poison'd chalice" will return to Macbeth in the mental torment of despair and the punishment of rejection of humanity.

Macbeth alternates highly abstract nouns, "assassination", "surcease" with simpler forms, "deed", "blow". As Macbeth arrives at a concrete image of the murder, "Not bear the knife myself" (1.vii.16), there is a transition from the concrete to the agitated pictorial imagination: "Will plead like angels" (1.vii.19). At this stage, Macbeth even avoids the use of "deed" and

speaks of "his taking-off". Pity, likened to a "new-born babe", is the image that causes Macbeth's revulsion from the deed.

In the movement and language of Act I scene vii, ambiguity is reflected as Macbeth "hovers" between the desire to do evil and the fear of its consequence on earth. For the most part, Lady Macbeth's description of Macbeth is justified. She says of him that what he wants "highly" he wants "holily". Be it that he may insist his main concern is earthly judgement, rather than in the life hereafter, the two merge. During his contemplation of his horrendous and hellish plan he uses figures connotative of holiness, "chalice", "meek", "virtues", "angels" and "heaven's Cherubins". He appears not to want to be "false". He realises the extent of the sin that he is about to commit: it is a repudiation of nature and Macbeth invokes the natural forces that militate against the deed:

... He's here in double trust:
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself

(1.vii.12 - 16).

In visual terms, that add to the theme of unrest and disharmony, Macbeth sees the effects of the murder in his description of Pity:

And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's Cherubins, hors'd
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind

(1.vii.21 - 25).

These sensational lines in their violence of emotion and imagery represent Macbeth suffering in a most characteristic way. His conscience cries out with its last plea, for the deed against Innocence will be avenged by the faculty of Innocence: Pity "like a naked new-born babe". The "eye" will be the sufferer of the punishment. Macbeth fully grasps the ultimate punishment of damnation and the macrocosmic enlargement that the murder will cause in bringing about a revolt in Nature.

The imagery, as well as the action, has the universally appealing symbol of Innocence, babies. Pity takes the seemingly helpless form of a babe that is yet that powerful to "blow the horrid deed in every eye".

Helen Gardner (1968:253) has taken Cleanth Brooks to task over his comments: she maintains that "Professor Brooks has sacrificed this Shakespearian depth of human feeling ... by attempting to interpret an image by the aid of what association it happens to arouse in him, and by being more interested in making symbols of babes fit each other than in listening to what Macbeth is saying".

Helen Gardner is correct in demanding that images be considered individually and in context: however, she should accede to the importance of a group of images as a whole.

Muir (1973b:137) answers her charge by saying that "we may assume, perhaps, that the discrepancy between the argument of the speech and the imagery employed is deliberate". I agree with Muir (p. 137), when he continues that on the surface "Macbeth appears to be giving merely prudential reasons for not murdering Duncan: but Shakespeare makes him reveal by the imagery he employs that he, or his unconscious mind, is horrified by the thought of the deed to which he is being driven".

I would like to suggest that the "Pity, like a naked new-born babe" speech which begins with the earthly concrete image of a "new-born babe"

develops into a speech that incorporates the whole wider expanse of the universe and its elements - "striding the blast", "heaven's Cherubins", "couriers of the air" - and the final two lines the concrete "the deed in every eye" are linked with the universal image in "tears (concrete) shall drown the wind (universal)". This moving from the concrete to the incorporation of the universe is typical of Macbeth's vivid imagination.

The babe image appears on a number of levels - in this case of "Pity, like a naked new-born babe" as a metaphor. Brooks (1971:31) comments on the various babe images that appear: as a character there is Macduff's child; there is the babe "as a symbol, like the crowned babe and the bloody babe which are raised by the Witches on the occasion of Macbeth's visit to them".

The babe imagery signifies not only the future, but "all those enlarging purposes which make life meaningful, and it symbolizes, furthermore, all those emotional and - to Lady Macbeth - irrational ties which make man more than a machine - which render him human" (Brooks, 1971:35).

After the horrific sensations of his imaginings, Macbeth sees the futility of the murder:

... I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th'other -

(1.vii.25 - 28).

Here, there is the suggestion of a rider mounted on a horse to one who is vaulting into the saddle. Consequently these closing lines suggest that although Macbeth has no sense of purpose to "spur" him on, he continues to entertain his thoughts of his fearful ambition. Shakespeare's poetry shows Macbeth's self-contradictions.

Macbeth is emotionally drained: he is aware of the penalty of ambition. As he imagines himself on the "bank and shoal of time" (1.vii.6) jumping - risking - the life to come, so is he aware that ambition that "o'erleaps itself" (1.vii.27), leaps only to fall again. Time moves quickly for Macbeth in the beginning of the play, and as he leaps and vaults so does he use rapid images: "Time and the hour runs through the roughest day" (1.iii.148). Later his deed cannot overtake the flighty purpose as he is in blood "stepp'd", a word denoting slow movement, as he "wades", when returning is as "tedious as go o'er" (1.11.iv.137).

Macbeth enters the play as Duncan pronounces "trust" (1.iv.14): in an echoic manner, Lady Macbeth joins Macbeth as he says "I have no spur" (1.vii.25). Lady Macbeth is the evil "spur" that feeds Macbeth's evil, for as much as Macbeth is a prey to evil, so is he also a prey to good. Macbeth has thought of all the reasons that argue against the killing of Duncan and announces to Lady Macbeth, "We will proceed no further in this business" (1.vii.31).

Lady Macbeth reverses natural order: she assumes an aggressive, dominant and masculine role: she attacks Macbeth on various levels. While order is celebrated within, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth plot the overthrow of order without. This contrast of the reversal of masculine and feminine relationships is indicative of the disordered relationship and the disorder being planned by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Macbeth uses an ironical clothing image when he argues against the murdering of Duncan on the grounds that it may damage his reputation:

... and I have bought
 Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
 Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
 Not cast aside so soon

(1.vii.32 - 34).

Lady Macbeth extends the clothing image used by Macbeth in her contemptuous retort: "Was the hope drunk,/Wherein you dress'd yourself?" (1.vii.35 - 36). Although this is a mixed metaphor, it is appropriate, for it illustrates Lady Macbeth's contemptuous picture that she wishes to evoke.

When Lady Macbeth does not put words into Macbeth's mouth, she uses an old trick, that of startling him into saying what she wishes by a series of short, whiplike rhetorical questions, that she lashes at him with fearful energy.

Lady Macbeth has earlier foreseen the objections Macbeth makes and she taunts him - a military man - with cowardice

... Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire?

(1.vii.39 - 41).

Lady Macbeth acts not only as a spur, but also as a driving thorn in Macbeth's conscience and mind: what man can withstand a challenge, not only to his courage but also to his manhood, from his wife? Moral indecision causes Macbeth's hesitation to accede to the murder: like the weather that is "fair and foul" - Macbeth indicates his uncertainty: he pleads for "peace" for Lady Macbeth assaults him, not only through his outer ear, but through his ear of imagination:

Pr'ythee, peace.
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none

(1.vii.45 - 47).

Lady Macbeth, who has called upon nature to "unsex" her, shows her fierce and scornful contempt for Macbeth by taunting him with his lack of manhood: in her conniving and shrewd manner she likens him to a beast:

"What beast was't then,/That made you break this enterprise to me?"
(1.vii.47 - 48).

The force of Lady Macbeth's use of "beast" is emphasized by the direct dramatic contrast to "man" in, "I dare do all that may become a man". In an atmosphere where "foul is fair" it is appropriate that Lady Macbeth uses "the traditional difference between man and animal to encourage her husband in an act that perverts the natural distinction between them" (Spencer, 1963:156).

When Macbeth appears to hesitate, Lady Macbeth uses her last conniving and most frightening image:

... I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this

(1.vii.54 - 59).

Lady Macbeth exposes frailties violated by evil. There are words of gentleness of feeling "tender", "love", "milks", "smiling", "nipple", "boneless gums" and they are matched against the inhumanity of "pluck'd", and "dash'd the brains out". One is aware that Lady Macbeth is attuning herself to her depraved path of evil and attempting to coerce Macbeth into being what she "considers" a man should be.

In her savage and unnatural appeal, Lady Macbeth says she would not have her natural instincts of motherhood interfere with her ambitious desires. In this terrible image, Lady Macbeth urges Macbeth into committing an act that is opposed to nature and the order ordained by God. I find the slyness in Lady Macbeth's mind in her use of this image very frightening: it is a "strange" and horrific mind that can think up such a terrible image.

It is interesting to note that in her ruthlessness, Lady Macbeth at once refers to the "babe" as "it", "his", and "the". I would suggest that the inconsistency of the pronoun, which I condone, is due to her desperate need to instil unnatural "courage" into Macbeth: the sex of the "babe" is unimportant: it is the image that is vital.

In the light of Lady Macbeth's shrewd and scheming ways there is also the possibility that she uses this most "holy" of woman's images, to play upon Macbeth and so, in an equivocal manner, force him to commit the murder in order to prove his courage. She, a member of the so-called weaker sex, would go to such horrendous ends to prove her courage, and this she uses to enforce upon Macbeth the solemnity of his promise to kill Duncan, which will achieve her desired ends.

Lady Macbeth succeeds in overpowering Macbeth's decision by undermining logic, imagination and metaphysics. Her approach is a specious argument based on the distinctions between cowardice and courage and between beast and man. She denies that pity and fear are an integral part of the nature of humanity. Under her mesmeric influence, Macbeth's conscience is disarmed and his one concern becomes the practical consequences.

Macbeth's question is a pointer to his becoming a concurring accomplice and his fall from grace: he questions, "If we should fail?" (1.vii.59). This question, although far more simple-minded, is very close in form and meaning to the first words of his soliloquy, "If it were done". Macbeth has allowed his wife's false reasoning to replace his true reasoning. Lady Macbeth's reason has proposed a plan and now an appropriate method of "performing" the end is needed. She provides him with an alibi and thus a means of escaping earthly suspicion. Lady Macbeth uses a compelling image of stress in her spurring Macbeth on: "But screw your courage to the sticking-place" (1.vii.61).

Macbeth is "rapt" in admiration at Lady Macbeth's bombastic ambition that he, as an ungraced man, sees in his unsexed wife. In a powerful statement,

that excludes everything but fearlessness from the nature of man, he compliments her: "Bring forth men-children only!" (1.vii.73).

At this stage, I find little evidence of Lady Macbeth's sincere love for Macbeth except for what he can become under her "fell purpose". She may well be the referent to "it" in the Porter's speech: "it makes him, and it mars him" (11.iii.32).

At the horror of blood and the realization of the futility of their plans after the night's "great business", Lady Macbeth will collapse.

Cleanth Brooks (1971:33) gives a succinct statement of the prevarication shown in Lady Macbeth's nature: "She knows what she wants: and she is ruthless in her consideration of means". I agree with his elaboration of Lady Macbeth's character (p. 33): "Even though she loves her husband and though her ambition for herself is a part of her ambition for him, still she seems willing to consider even Macbeth at times as pure instrument, playing upon his hopes and fears and pride".

In Act 1 scene vii, Shakespeare forcefully dramatizes Lady Macbeth's strength of will: with aggression she overpowers and overwhelms Macbeth to such an extent that his concern for moral considerations gives way to the practicalities of murder. For all the questions he puts forward, Lady Macbeth has a bold and forceful solution.

To Macbeth's hesitant questioning about the passing of the guilt to the Chamberlains, Lady Macbeth gives an apparently decisive answer:

Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

(1.vii.78 - 80).

This is blatant prevarication. The use of "dares" shows the weakness of her argument: the crux of the proposed alibi is that publicly none will "dare" dissent from the verdict given by the King and Queen.

In solemnizing the espousal of evil, Macbeth is as specific as Lady Macbeth in her incantations of "murdering ministers" and "dunest smoke of hell". His commitment to the collusion between himself and Lady Macbeth is emphatic at the end of Act I:

I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know
(1.vii.80 - 83).

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have concurred to do the "deed".

4.5 The Bell Invites Me

In the beginning of Act II, - the scene of the murder, its circumstances, and its consequences - Banquo refers to the darkness of the night - the stars have hid their "fires":

... There's husbandry in heaven;
Their candles are all out
(11.i.4 - 5).

The darkness of the scene setting literally suggests the horror and mystery of evil that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth identify with - the blackness of night that is reflected in the darkness of the dialogue used by them.

The atmosphere of *Macbeth* is that of a nightmare and Banquo makes a succinct statement of the kind of evil which the main characters in the play must face. Before Banquo retires he reveals that he is enmeshed in a

horror:

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
 And yet I would not sleep: merciful Powers!
 Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
 Gives way to in repose!

(11.i.6 - 9).

These "cursed thoughts" are mysterious and dark. They may refer to the fundamental evil in man's imagination but I consider they have a more tangible, and yet mysterious, origin. Banquo had "dreamt last night of the three Weïrd Sisters" (11.i.20) and the impact of that evil dream elicits his concern.

Banquo is unable to sleep because of the problem, posed by the Witches, that torments him. However, in contrast to Macbeth, he prays to the "merciful Powers" to guide him. One of the contrasts between Banquo and Macbeth is shown by means of their differing approaches to insomnia.

There are scattered references to sleep throughout the play, but I shall only consider those of enormous emphasis. Sleep is banished after Duncan's murder and Kott (1970:70) points out that "in no other Shakespearean tragedy is there so much talk about sleep, Macbeth has murdered sleep, and cannot sleep any more. In all Scotland no one can sleep. There is no sleep, just nightmares".

Banquo is the last person Macbeth wishes to meet just prior to Duncan's murder: Banquo hands him a diamond, a gift from Duncan to Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's reply is forced and somewhat obscure, as is the case in most instances when he prevaricates:

Being unprepar'd,
 Our will became the servant to defect,
 Which else should free have wrought

(11.i.17 - 19).

What Macbeth intends to say is that he and Lady Macbeth would have entertained Duncan more royally had they had the time to prepare. Macbeth's speech has no bearing on what Banquo has just said: the theme of which is that Duncan has gone to rest and has sent the diamond to Lady Macbeth in gratitude.

Macbeth's apology has a strange, forced style, that is difficult to read. The excuse he makes does not have any bearing upon his alleged reason - "Being unprepar'd": no preparation was needed to (a) meet Duncan at the castle gate (b) to be at the feast in honour of Duncan, where he was supposed to be the host and (c) to attend Duncan to his chamber. These are all social bonds that he has broken, moral bonds will follow.

With brevity, Banquo accepts Macbeth's implied apology: "All's well" (11.i.19) and Banquo continues:

I dreamt last night of the three Weïrd Sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth
(11.i.20 - 21).

Banquo appears doubtful of Macbeth's apology, as the immediate challenge follows.

Macbeth is aware of Banquo's uncertainty about his intentions towards Duncan. Banquo's use of "some" truth heightens Macbeth's awareness - "some" of the prophecies have become a reality - but there remains the last and final prophecy, "that shalt be King hereafter" (1.iii.50). Macbeth is aware that Banquo's knowledge of the prophecy is his chief source of danger. With no hesitation, Macbeth lies in his abrupt, insidious retort: "I think not of them" (11.i.21).

Since his previous lie to Banquo in Act I scene iii, Macbeth has twice appeared on the stage: the action in these two scenes has been directly

related to the prophecies of the Witches: firstly with Lady Macbeth's greeting to him echoing that of the prophecies of the Witches and secondly during his absence from the banquet, when he and Lady Macbeth finally decide upon the murder of Duncan: "I am settled" (1.vii.80). This decision is indirectly related to the prophecies of the Witches.

In Macbeth's dialogue with the dagger, "Is this a dagger, which I see before me" (11.i.33) there is the powerful emergence of a symbolic partner. This device of Macbeth addressing a question to himself, makes his sensations and feelings more vivid and immediate. He tries to clutch at the symbolic dagger before him, yet although it is visible, he finds he cannot hold it. This dagger is as real as any real object can be: Macbeth speaks to it: it becomes a fearful partner in his struggle:

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

...

... I see thee still;

And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,

Which was not so before

(11.i.35 - 47).

Before the murder is committed, Lady Macbeth can visualize the terrible deed, "That my keen knife see not the wound it makes" (1.v.52). Although Macbeth has a more vivid imagination, he does not visualize the act of murder prior to killing Duncan, but he does "see" a visionary dagger before him that is stained with "gouts of blood,/Which was not so before. - There's no such thing" (11.i.46 - 47). The blood on the dagger symbolizes the shedding of Duncan's blood: Macbeth is about to commit the crime and yet he will not heed this foreboding voice of conscience.

Macbeth's nightmare is about to start: he dismisses the vision of the dagger from his sight: he will not listen to the echo of his conscience and he dismisses the incident as a falsity caused by "the bloody business which informs/Thus to mine eyes" (11.i.48 - 49).

As Macbeth moves towards the murder, "accusing nightmare images rise to torture him and show that the ghost of conscience still dwells in the deserted house of the soul" (Stauffer, 1966:216). However, the darkness imagery implies a certain spiritual blindness. The murder of Duncan - the central event in the play - occurs in the dark, dead of night - the haunted period of time: Macbeth describes this time in rhythmic lines that indicate slowness and cautiousness:

... Now o'er the one half-world
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
 The curtain'd sleep: Witchcraft celebrates
 Pale Hecate's off'rings; and wither'd Murther,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost. - Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it. - Whiles I threat, he lives:
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives
 (11.i.49- 61).

In this passage, style indicates actions, for the sonorous vowels demand slowness of pace as Macbeth's silent movements are slowly and warily paced to Duncan's chamber. Both movement and diction lead to the ominous first crisis: Shakespeare so interrelates speech and movement that the vocal pattern and the visual pattern match one another completely.

The first reference to sleep as victim that Macbeth makes shows that he is aware of its vulnerability: "Now o'er the one half-world ... curtain'd sleep". There are perhaps two interpretations of this powerful image: a curtained bed of state, like Duncan's, behind which the deceiving intruder can creep in: or evil dreams that deceive the unaided sleep behind the closed eyelids.

The deadness of nature is not only a theme of midnight horror, but a deadness in the nature of Macbeth that causes him to obey his "wicked dreams". The reference to witchcraft is apposite in that Macbeth, who understands the supernatural sanctions he considers violating in Act I scene vii, uses the language of superstition that is debased and corrupt in which violation is the rule.

The imagination is fired as poetry creates a living picture of personified "Murther" and its wolf stealthily creeping towards its victim. By mentioning Tarquin, who raped the virtuous Lucretia, the impression is transformed and reinforced, and a new scale of evil is established against which Macbeth is measured.

Shakespeare employs ritual in murder and uses resonant adjective-heavy language to create the ominous atmosphere. In Macbeth's soliloquy as he prepares to kill Duncan, the verse provides verbal orchestration that sends chills down the spines of the audience and makes them feel "the present horror" of the time that so powerfully "suits with it". Through music in language, Shakespeare makes the impending murder as horrible as possible: sound is heard in the howl of the wolf: more subtly it is heard in the pace and sound as murder moves toward its design. A hesitant, yet compulsive and increasing movement forward is expressed by the pace and rhythm:

... and wither'd Murther,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost

(11.i.52 - 56).

Besides the rhythm of the lines, the sinister atmosphere is suggested by words like "stealthy" and the soundlessness in "moves". Beneath the horrified whisper that progresses towards murder the rhythm, the impending forward movement, is intrinsically felt.

The sustained whisper in Macbeth's voice is demanded by the hissing sibilant /s/ consonants in the passage. As Macbeth slowly moves towards the murder chamber, he breaks in his movements at the full stop after "ghost" that instils a hush and pause by its throaty qualities. Macbeth invites us to collaborate in his experience:

... Thõu sùre aňd íírm-sět earth,
Hěar nót mý stěps, whíčh wáy thěy wálk
(11.i.56 - 57).

The foreboding and determination of movement and purpose are reflected in the regular rhythm of the lines and Shakespeare's use of monosyllabic words.

As Macbeth contemplates the murder of Duncan, his speech mirrors his perturbation. Macbeth, deceived by the image of the dagger, marvels that his "eyes are made the fools o'th'other senses,/Or else worth all the rest" (11.i.44 - 45). As he "screws" his courage to the "sticking-place" contrasts continue:

... Whiles I *threat*, he *lives*:
Words to the *heat* of *deeds* too *cold* breath gives
(11.i.60 - 61;
my italics).

As the bell rings at the end of his soliloquy, Macbeth interrupts his address so as to include the sleeping Duncan, his victim:

... the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to Heaven, or to Hell
(11.i.62 - 64).

The irony lies in the fact that the bell tolls for the murderer, not the victim. The direct imperative, "Hear it not", expresses Macbeth's intense involvement with Duncan whom he is about to murder. This soliloquy reflects Macbeth moving, not warlike or impetuously but in a calculated, insidious, committed manner toward his design.

4.6 Sleep No More!

I agree with Ellis-Fermor (1964:81) when she maintains that "the universal, all-enveloping horror of Macbeth's crime, its unutterable and inescapable consequence, is borne in upon us, not only by the pitiless relation of cause and effect revealed in action, but by images that light up, by potent analogy, the nature of the deed":

... No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red

(11.ii.60 - 62).

The microcosm is reflected in Macbeth's "hand" and the effect of the deed committed by the "hand" will spread to the macrocosm "the multitudinous seas". His deed of murder will infiltrate and contaminate the country: we are never permitted a length of time without a reminder of the universal nature of calamity and evil.

In *Macbeth*, the polity of man is measured against the order/disorder created by Macbeth. In the development of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare shows a personal problem spreading from the individual to the vast, surrounding world of all the subjects of a country.

Although apparently unruffled, Lady Macbeth shows a chink in her armour whilst Macbeth is murdering Duncan:

... th'attempt and not the deed
Confounds us

(11.ii.10 - 11).

We are also made aware that Lady Macbeth fully realizes the magnitude of the murder in which she is an accomplice. The "great bond" (11.ii.49) - the natural law - that Macbeth acknowledges is also recognised by Lady Macbeth, for she knows the meaning of a love of a father: she cannot commit the murder for

... Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't

(11.ii.12 - 13).

Shakespeare makes strong use of contrast in speech, when he not only describes states of mind, but also deep differences in outlook. When Macbeth returns to Lady Macbeth after he has committed the murder, the simple, tense staccato statements and simple verb forms reflecting the nervous tension of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth change as fear penetrates Macbeth's mind: as his conscience obsesses him, our racing minds are slowed down by the throbbing tone:

Měthóught, Ĩ heárd ě vóice cřý, 'Sléep nŃ móre!

(11.ii.34).

Shakespeare signifies rapid speech by means of breaking the verse line into short phrases between speakers that necessitates a quick cue follow-on. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth show fear and tension in the abruptness of their exchanges in their dialogue: the syntactical form that signals Macbeth's insecure state is his use of the interrogative form:

Macb. I have done the deed. - Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macb. When?
 Lady M. Now.
 Macb. As I descended?
 Lady M Ay.
 Macb. Hark!
 Who lies i'th'second chamber?
 Lady M. Donalbain.
 Macb. This is a sorry sight.
 Lady M. A foolish thought to say a sorry sight

(11.ii.14 - 21).

In this short dialogue, Shakespeare prepares for the upheaval in nature that we shall hear of that relates to the murder of Duncan. The violence in the variation of the tempo expresses the action and thoughts of Macbeth and controls the response of the audience. The variation in tempo of Macbeth's dialogue reflects the pitch and toss of his mind, that will be echoed in his actions and emotional responses in Act V.

After the murder of Duncan, sounds become tormenting: the owl shrieks and screams. The evil omens are now directed to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and not to Duncan. Lady Macbeth uses apt images but she is unaware of the aptness to her of another bell, "the fatal bellman,/Which gives the stern'st good-night" (11.ii.3 - 4).

Appalling voices and lamentings in the air and strange screams of death are heard for the benefit of the prevaricators. Repeatedly a voice cries "cry" and cry to "all the house" (11.ii.40), a voice that only Macbeth hears. Possibly this is the auditory cry of Macbeth's conscience that is the start of the repercussions that will deprive him of the sleep he has murdered.

The two images of sight and blood merge when Macbeth comments on the appalling sight of his bloody hands after the murder, "This is a sorry sight" (11.ii.20).

Macbeth's horrified attention is focussed on his hands - hands that have committed murder, "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes" (11.ii.58). In one line Shakespeare's compactness of "eye" and "hand" imagery, and poetic intensity reveal the merging of blood and darkness symbolism: the hands of the murderer are blood-smearred and Macbeth realizes that in killing Duncan he has brought spiritual darkness to himself. Macbeth's spiritual sight is blinded by deeds committed by his "bloody and invisible hand". His most sensitive and tormented sense, his "eye" has been exposed to the murdered Duncan, and he will not return to the murder scene, "I'll go no more" (11.ii.49).

Immediately after the murder Macbeth tries to convey the horror of his feelings. Perhaps one of the most profound questions he asks is, "But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?" (11.ii.30). Macbeth realizes he has forfeited future blessings. Lady Macbeth brushes aside his fears, "Consider it not so deeply" (11.ii.29), and "You do unbend your noble strength, to think/So brainsickly of things" (11.ii.44 - 45). Whatever her private thoughts may be, she withholds any sympathy. Lady Macbeth does however indicate her start of despair, "These deeds must not be thought/After these ways: so, it will make us mad" (11.ii.32 - 33). Ironically, sleep and blood will cause Lady Macbeth's decline and deterioration, until we see her in the sleep-walking scene as a broken physical and spiritual being.

Clemen (1953:102) states that "the most important standard whereby to judge the imageries of the tragedies, is the degree of harmony existing between the image and the dramatic situation producing it". In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's use of dramatic imagery is condensed and suggestive and Clemen (1953:180) re-enforces this when he states that in *Macbeth* "Shakespeare continually thought in images which are charged with symbolic meaning to such a degree that we could not understand the tragedy's significance and import without a proper understanding of its image-patterns".

Shakespeare alternates rhetoric and conversation forms between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is impatient and looks for a practical solution: "Consider it not so deeply" (11.ii.29). Shakespeare uses rhetoric to indicate the contrast from Macbeth's thoughts that move into realms that Lady Macbeth cannot envisage. Macbeth's great apostrophe to sleep has symbolic emphasis, for in murdering Duncan, Macbeth has murdered sleep. Mgr. Kolbe (1930:7) shows that this passage serves four purposes "(a) it is the high light of the sleep-colour, (b) it throws forward Macbeth's personal character, (c) it carries on the story, and (d) it foreshadows the Nemesis":

Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murther Sleep,' - the innocent Sleep;
Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast; -

(11.ii.34 - 39).

Macbeth is cut off from oblivious sleep that is the only escape for him from his horrific vision of himself. He has murdered sleep that is "the death of each day's life" and from now "He and his wife are become like the tortured criminal of China, whose eyelids are cut away: but this not in the physical, but the metaphysical realm" (Murray, 1959:333).

The symbolic use of sleep is suitable - for sleep is not merely a topic of conversation, but a "dramatic issue of first importance" (Clemen, 1953:101). Macbeth's fears are furthered because he murdered Duncan in his sleep, consequently in his murdering of Duncan, Macbeth also murdered the sacredness of sleep. The murdering of sleep is a very real frightening power to Macbeth, and the richness of the imagery is appropriate, for it reflects the resulting effect within Macbeth's soul. Sleep is a key-word in the play and Clemen (1953:101) remarks that "Macbeth perceives again and

again what he has done with a strange clarity, and expresses this in imagery".

This passage illustrates Macbeth's highly imaginative powers of expression and he visualizes the ideas that torment him. Mgr. Kolbe (1930:7) states that "he here and elsewhere tried to smother his conscience in words, like a boy whistling in the dark for fear of ghosts". I accept this, but I should like to add that Macbeth is not a boy, but an adult aware of the heinous crime he has committed and who will neither stop nor listen to the echo of his own conscience. Macbeth's isolation from society and his God begins: of Macbeth's aloneness Wilson Knight (1972:126) says "Sleeplessness and nightmare vision are twined with this loneliness, this severance of individual consciousness - consciousness feverishly awake and aware of its deception and isolation due to - or urging towards - the proposed deed of blood".

Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's meaning, and he replies

Still it cried, 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
 'Glamis hath murder'd Sleep, and therefore Cawdor
 Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!'
 (11.ii.40 - 42).

In this passage of nine lines (11.ii.34 - 42), "Sleep" is repeated eight times, and the phrase "Sleep no more" is repeated four times to remind us that the "most terrible element in the punishment of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is a loss of sleep" (Wilson Knight, 1972:127). Macbeth has no need to lie, for he is with his partner in crime. The passage illustrates Macbeth's highly imaginative powers of expression and he visualizes the ideas that torment him: the adjectives he uses are used in a controlled manner - the *innocent* "Sleep": sleep belongs to the innocent, and because Duncan was murdered in his sleep, Macbeth is aware that he also murdered the sacredness of sleep: he faces up to what he has done and he is a man full

of fear. His control of language in this passage is contrasted with that used in his speeches after the discovery of the murder.

The murder of sleep personified in the literal murder of Duncan in his capacity as a sleeping king, as a sleeping guest, and as a sleeping elderly gentleman, carries the appropriate retribution of insomnia: this triple murder - as it were - is echoed in the three personalities given by Macbeth to himself: he will suffer sleeplessness as "Glamis", as "Cawdor", and as "Macbeth". Wilson Knight (1972:121) states that the signs of Macbeth's state of evil are "loneliness, a sense of unreality, a sickly vision of nightmare forms".

In *Macbeth* in which "nothing is, but what is not" the irony of verbal meaning is often negative as well as positive. Muir (1973b:153) says of the characteristic of style - the concealed pun - that it provides "an illogical reinforcement of the logical sequence of thought, so that the poetic statement strikes us almost as a remembrance". Mahood (1968:130) states that puns fall together with other aspects of the play's language "into that pattern of ideas which contribute so much, though often at an unconscious level, to our excitement in the play's action".

Lady Macbeth says of the murdered Duncan

... If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt

(11.ii.54 - 56).

The pun on "gild" and "guilt" tells us a great deal about Lady Macbeth's character and attitude to the crime at this stage of her development: the pun also furthers the action, for her return to the murder chamber leads to her change in attitude that results in her somnambulism. Although she has been unnerved by the knocking at the gate, she finds a strength of purpose and determination in her desperate attempt to keep a hold over her

faculties and complete the practical details of concealing the murder.

The alliterative initial consonant /g/, the same vowel sound /i/, the similarity of the final /d/ - a voiced alveolar plosive and the final /t/ - a voiceless alveolar plosive draw attention to "gild" and "guilt": the immediate phonetic relationship between "guilt" and "gilt" is evident. I agree with Brooks (1971:34) when he points out that for Lady Macbeth, "there is no moral order: 'guilt' is something like 'gilt' - one can wash it off or paint it on. Her pun is not frivolous and it is deeply expressive".

The complete physical realization of Duncan dead is a terrible sight to Lady Macbeth: it is at this point that I consider her deterioration begins that leads to her fearful thoughts in the sleep-walking scene: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (V.i.37 - 38). Ultimately blood torments Lady Macbeth: Macbeth in his inability to clean his hands is immediately tormented.

Lady Macbeth fails to realize that murder leaves an indelible stain that cannot be erased by water: her myopic view of their guilt and her lack of understanding of the effects of murder are seen in, "A little water clears us of this deed" (11.ii.66). It is interesting to note that Lady Macbeth uses the word "deed" in place of blood: the deed is bloody but she avoids using the word "blood" in her attempt to self-deceive herself.

Macbeth, in contrast to Lady Macbeth, acknowledges that he is under strain and tension, "How is't with me, when every noise appals me?" (11.ii.57). He recognizes that "all great Neptune's ocean" cannot clean the blood from his hands and also that the hand will the "multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red" (11.ii.59 - 62). He sees "his actions as so irreparable that they will rather corrupt the world than work out their own expiation" (Evans, 1959:159).

The syntax and language used by Macbeth in reply to "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/Clean from my hand?" (11.ii.59 - 60) is not complex. With the exception of "multitudinous" and "incarnadine" that show the vastness of the seas by means of their polysyllables, the other words used are mainly monosyllabic:

... No, this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red

(11.ii.60 - 62).

Throughout the play, the redness of blood and the greenness of nature and youth are contrasted. Here, there is the same contrast in the imagery that heightens our awareness of Macbeth's realization of the heinous crime he has committed, and which makes his lying after the discovery of the murder of Duncan even more deplorable.

Macbeth's reaction to the "knocking" is that of a nervous system that can no longer endure pressure, especially the pressure of sound. The auditory assault is the knocking that makes Macbeth question, "Whence is that knocking?" (11.ii.56). It is both a figurative and a literal knocking. For Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, this knocking, emanating from the moral world, is an intrusion into the private hell that they have created for themselves. The knocking is also symbolically the knocking of their consciences: there is a link with the "horrid image" that "doth unfix my hair,/And make my seated heart knock at my ribs" (1.iii.135 - 136).

The knocking at the gate clashes with Lady Macbeth's already overstrained nerves, yet she finds sufficient strength to arouse and direct Macbeth's actions. In her desperation, she experiences a strength of purpose and determination again:

Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers. The sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil

(11.ii.51 - 54).

Lady Macbeth has to keep a hold over her faculties, for all would be lost if she collapsed under strain. She does not have strength for deeds she has not counted on: but for the deed she has planned she has strength: she must return to the murder chamber to mask their evil crime. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth preplan the murder and they are both in duplicity in their "masking" of the practicalities of the murder.

After the murder, when the "knocking" is heard, Lady Macbeth orders Macbeth to "Get on your night-gown, lest occasion call us,/And show us to be watchers" (11.ii.69 - 70). This literal and masking clothing image is used by Lady Macbeth in order to avoid suspicion: they must be in their night clothes, so that to all appearances they will be awakened from their sleep in their night attire like everyone else in Macbeth's castle. Lady Macbeth's suggestion that they put on their night clothes is an action that will mask their involvement in the crime.

The knocking in this scene is a link, for it continues into the following scene, where the Porter, symbolic of the Porter of Hell Gate, gives temporary relief from the bloody actions and tensions.

5 O! COME IN, EQUIVOCATOR

Elizabethan conventions allowed prose to be used by a clown, or those characters who are below the normal level of human reasons, such as "drunks": it is into this latter section that the Porter scene falls.

Structurally, the Porter scene is placed between the murder of Duncan and the discovery of the murder. It is between these two tense scenes that Shakespeare offers a relief that is paradoxical, for the relief only serves to heighten - not relax - the tension.

The Porter begins with no apology or apparent motive. Macduff must knock four times before the Porter appears and again six times before the Porter opens the gate, which is aptly referred to as the Hell Gate - in murdering Duncan, Macbeth has seen Hell: Macbeth's castle is a place of Hell.

The "knocking", a symbolic warning of death and doom in the play, demonstrates how a monotonous sound, if placed in a scene of the darkness of evil and tension, can evoke the realization of a major moral message.

Knocking terrifies Macbeth, whereas the Porter comically rages at the disturbance and he mimics the knocks: each knock brings a new phrase in the Porter's dialogue:

... Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, i'th' name
of Belzebub? - Here's a farmer, that hang'd himself
on th' expectation of plenty

(11.iii.3 - 5);

... Knock, knock. Who's there, i'th' other devil's
name? ... here's an equivocator

(11.iii.7 - 9);

... Knock, knock, knock, ... Faith, here's an English
tailor come hither for stealing out of a French
hose

(11.iii.12 - 14);

... Knock, knock. Never at quiet!

(11.iii.16).

The "farmer", the "equivocator" and the "tailor" all ironically refer to the various traits of Macbeth's character. Inherent in each of the three figures is the "fair is foul" motif that is applicable to Macbeth.

These opening lines of the Porter revolve around contrast and conflict. On the one scale is the man who could not equivocate to *heaven*: on the other, *Hell Gate*. Here "you'll *sweat*", here "you may *roast*" but "this place is too *cold for hell*", "that primrose way to th'everlasting *bonfire*". *God* is outweighed by *Belzebub*, the other *devil*, a possible reference to Macbeth, and *devil*-porter. In his imagination, the Porter admits into hell (for hell is created by the Macbeths) the key figure, Macbeth. (My italics.)

... Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear
in both the scales against either scale; who
committed treason enough for God's sake, yet
could not equivocate to heaven

(11.iii.8 - 11).

The second part of the Porter's speech begins with a riddle, "and drink, Sir, is a great provoker of three things" (11.iii.25).

Macd. What three things does drink especially provoke?

Port. Marry, Sir, nose-painting, sleep and urine.

Lechery, Sir, it provokes	and unprovokes:
it provokes the desire,	but it takes away the performance.

Therefore, much drink

it makes him,

it sets him on,

it persuades him,

makes him stand to,

in conclusion, equivocates

may be said to be an
equivocator with lechery:

and it mars him;

and it takes him off;

and disheartens him;

and not stand to:

him in a sleep, and, giving him
the lie, leaves him

(11.iii.26 - 35).

I agree with Professor Muir (1973a:xxvi) who points out that this passage, which refers to the effects of liquor that provoke the desire, but take away the performance "provides a valuable clue to one theme of the play": it is the contrast between desire and act that is repeated several times in the play. The Porter's speeches, with a high concentration of antitheses, also prepare us for more subtle but grotesque figures to come.

The Porter admits Macduff and in his reply to Macduff's comment on the Porter having been put to sleep by drink the previous night, the Porter retorts: "That it did, Sir, i'th very throat on me" (11.iii.37). The pun on "lie" is used by the Porter, for to lie on one's throat is to lie foully or infamously, as in equivocation, deception. Once again the Porter reinforces the theme of prevarication.

Professor Muir (1973a:xxviii) states that in these words of the Porter's speech on lechery, "we find one of the predominant characteristics of the general style of the play - it consists of multitudinous antitheses". The style of the Porter's speech, that suggests the paradox and enigma of the nature of man, possesses the antithetical characteristics of the verse, suitably "transposed for semi-comic purposes" and "in content as well as in style": the scene is powerfully linked with the rest of the play (Muir, 1973a:xxix).

I do not consider we suffer any "impatience", but rather there is an increase in our awareness of the horror of the situation - we are never permitted to forget that a crime has been committed which is about to be uncovered. I consider that the introduction of the so-called "comic relief" does not create a discordant effect, but rather heightens the tragic effect.

The key-word in the Porter's second speech is "lechery" - a way of living in debauchery or gluttony. One of the meanings of "debauchery" is the perversion from virtue or morality - and surely this describes Macbeth: "gluttony" surely reflects Macbeth's later abusive craving for power and shows his gluttonous desires: therefore lechery is personified in Macbeth.

In the first part of the Porter's speech, Macbeth was likened to a "farmer", "an equivocator", and an "English tailor": now he is equated with "lechery".

Macbeth's lechery both "makes him" and "mars him" - it makes him physically, but not spiritually, powerful. He is marred by his deeds that lead him to complete isolation: his desire for power persuades him to commit further horrific deeds, and yet he is "disheartened" - his despondency is shown in his weary statement, "I have liv'd long enough".

With "in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him", "in conclusion" echoes the end of the play when Macbeth, who has figuratively "wrestled" with his moral problems - "giving him the lie", is "tricked" into his final sleep by the ambiguous prophecies of the Witches - so that "sleep", which evades Macbeth, eventually comes to him through "equivocation".

I consider this latter portion of the Porter's speech ironically prepares us for the rest of the action of the play, by means of the comparison of Macbeth's ambitious desires to those of "lechery".

6 MOST SACRILEGIOUS MURDER

I consider Act 11 scene iii to be the most highly charged scene in which linguistic phenomena are skilfully used to portray prevarication, confusion and betrayal.

Storms, that accompany the central action of the murder of Duncan, emphasize the destructive and chaotic nature of the murder that Lenox describes giving vivid and concrete form to the disorder and destruction in Macbeth's soul:

The night has been unruly: ...

...

... strange screams of death,

...

... some say, the earth

Was feverous, and did shake

(11.iii.53 - 60).

Nature is imaged in the upheaval caused by the destroying of the central order that is necessary for the individual's existence in a state.

The atmosphere is black, foul, eerie and grim with a choking air of evil that echoes the milder form of thunder and lightning that accompanied the Witches at the beginning of the play. The storm described is a manifestation of evil overpowering the elements of nature. This tremendous upheaval of nature reflects the tempest roaring within Macbeth, for in reply to Lenox's description Macbeth merely remarks "Twas a rough night" (11.iii.60).

This is a complete understatement from Macbeth and not in keeping with his previous speeches on "Sleep" and those that follow in this scene. Perhaps this short non-committal sentence reflects Macbeth attempting to

be calm, prior to the storm that must break once the murder is discovered. His reaction is that of a man whose mind is preoccupied with more important matters, the main of which will be to disinform the court when Duncan's murder is discovered.

When Macduff discovers Duncan's murder, he announces that the murder has been committed. His language roars and thunders at the evil and is a recoil to the world of light and truth after the muted evil evoked by the language of the two prevaricators:

O horror! horror! horror!

...

Most sacrilegious Murther hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence
The life o'th'building!

(11.iii.62 - 68).

The use of the word "sacrilegious" is appropriate, for most of Shakespeare's audience would have accepted the widely held Elizabethan belief in the divinity of Kingship and consequently the killing of Duncan is more than a murder - it is the killing of, as it were, God's vice-regent. The knowledge of this is, I think, a pre-critical requisite that is necessary in order to see the link with the religious mixed metaphor that is used in the above passage. Professor Muir (1973a:63) comments on "the Lord's anointed temple": he says "Though the metaphor is mixed, it can be regarded as shorthand for 'the temple of the Lord's anointed'; and by putting it in this form, Shakespeare is able to recall both texts and to glance at the heinous sin of regicide ...". The regular rhythm reflects the stability of the speaker, Macduff. I consider Macduff's images to reflect honesty, whereas those used by Macbeth are not only dishonest, but also hypocritical.

Macbeth replies to Macduff, "What is't you say? the life?" (11.iii.68). Macbeth's intention here is that of devious prevarication: only too well does

he know that Duncan has been murdered. It is also significant that in his reply, Macbeth does not echo the main point of Macduff's announcement, that of a "Murther" that has been committed: Macbeth cannot utter the word "Murther": in his attempt to deceive he echoes one of the last words uttered by Macduff - "life".

On "hearing" of Duncan's death, Macbeth's false declaration of his mourning for the loss of Duncan is a passage that illustrates his ability to prevaricate consciously: there is the ambiguous presence of truth, unrealized by Macbeth, that also makes the passage ironical.

6.1 Had I But Died

On his return from the scene of the murder, where he has just killed the grooms in order to leave no loophole in his alibi and no doubt his consuming fear drove him to annihilate them too, Macbeth's deceptive words are ironies of studied hypocrisy:

Hăd ĭ bŭt díed ăn hóur běfóre thĭs chănce,
 ĭ hăd lív'd ă bléssĕd tíme; fór, fróm thĭs ĭnštánt,
 Thĕrĕ's nóthĭng sérióus ín mórtălĭtĭy;
 ăll ĭs bŭt tóys: řĕnówn, ănd grăce, ĭs deád;
 Thĕ wĭne ōf lífe ĭs drăwn, ănd thĕ mĕre lées
 ĭs left thĭs văult tŏ brág ōf

(11.iii.89 - 94).

I suggest that once again Macbeth's vivid imagination is evident. He begins this speech with a concrete declaration of his alleged grief: "Had I but died an hour before this chance,/I had liv'd a blessed time". This declaration develops into a speech that incorporates the larger universe, for "There's nothing serious in mortality" and the abstract concepts of "renown" and "grace" are incorporated. His prevarication in the first two lines, aided

by his alert and vivid imagination, then develops into a metaphorical comparison that is of "this world vaulted by the sky and robbed of its spirit and grace, with a vault or cellar from which the wine has been taken and the dregs only left" (Muir, 1973a:65).

Most of the lines are metrically sure, but the second line, line 90, does not present a simple metrical basis: after the semicolon, either "for" or "from" could take a stress. The line as a whole has twelve syllables and perhaps should be spoken as two lines, with a pause after the semicolon. It is after the semicolon that Macbeth utters a maxim that is ambiguously true for him, "for, from this instant,/There's nothing serious in mortality". Most of the words used by Macbeth are monosyllabic and the simple forms of the verbs used are "had" and "is": the abstract thought presented is therefore done by means of the metaphor that is used, and not by polysyllabic words or complex verbs.

Macbeth attempts to avert suspicion, yet his words prove ironical, for the audience knows that what he says will in fact apply literally to him. After the murder of Duncan, Macbeth's life becomes a series of empty tomorrows, where "renown, and grace, is dead". Muir (1937b:139) points out that it is "only later that Macbeth realizes to the full the truth of his words, that instead of lying like truth, he has told the truth while intending to deceive".

The last two lines of this passage are disconcerting. The image of "wine" is usually associated with the colour "red" and is usually representative of the fullness of life: here "wine" is used paradoxically as a comparison of Duncan's life and blood being drawn.

I find that "and the mere lees/ls left this vault to brag of", not only very difficult on the ear, but also extremely difficult to say: it jars both aurally and orally, almost a riddle that must be unravelled. This jolting and disorder in syntax is not found in any other speech of Macbeth's, including

the passage that follows (lines 106 - 116), where Macbeth continues his lies, although in these latter lines, he is once more in control of his still disordered mind and thoughts.

I suggest that the disorder that is evident in these last two lines arises from the disorder in Macbeth's lying and guilty frame of mind. In his attempt to show his horror at the deed, false words tumble, in a jumble, from his mind: he is not in control of the situation and these two lines added, almost as an afterthought, show Shakespeare's intention of presenting a prevaricating Macbeth. This is emphasized by the bad poetic form that reveals complete chaos and disorder in a mind "full of scorpions". Shakespeare's intention to show this confused man is brilliantly illustrated.

In this scene, it is interesting to notice Macbeth's lengthy speeches in comparison with the short, horror-filled comments of the other characters: Macbeth shows that he needs to talk in order to attempt to vindicate his innocence. From when Macbeth and Lenox return, after Macbeth has murdered the grooms, until the end of the scene, there are fifty-five lines of verse: of these twenty-four are spoken by Macbeth: of these lines, two of his speeches have six and eleven lines.

Macbeth acknowledges that he killed the grooms, but he lies in maintaining that he does "repent me of my fury,/That I did kill them" (11.iii.104 - 105). At no stage during the play does Macbeth show repentance, least of all for his killing of the grooms that he intentionally murdered so as to ensure that no blame could fall on him for Duncan's murder. Macbeth is conscious of his words, and he intends the lies he tells.

As Malcolm and Donalbain enter, Donalbain questions "What is amiss?" (11.iii.95) and Macbeth chooses to answer them, again ironically, "You are, and do not know't" (11.iii.95). There is irony in Macbeth's words, for it is in fact Macbeth that is "amiss" and it is Macbeth that does "not know't".

Kott (1970:73) states that the "Macbeth, who has killed, is a new Macbeth and this is shown in the manner by which Macbeth tells Donalbain of Duncan's murder":

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd
(11.iii.96 - 97).

Shakespeare may well have used "life" in place of "blood": this would cause no change in the metre. The use of the word "blood" indicates Macbeth's thoughts: literally Macbeth wishes to tell Donalbain that Duncan is no longer alive: symbolically the use of "blood" echoes Macbeth's awareness of the blood on his hands that cannot be cleansed by "Neptune's ocean". Macbeth's reference to Donalbain's "blood" is a signal that shows "everyone in the play is steeped in blood: victims as well as murderers" (Kott, 1970:69).

As he is conscious of the importance of his words, Macbeth intends the monstrous hypocrisy in his apparent lament of Duncan: he has become the instrument of "the equivocation of the fiend/That lies like truth".

Macduff immediately questions Macbeth's action, and suddenly there is an awareness of the tension and distrust that has developed between Macduff and Macbeth.

In an almost hysterical tone, Macbeth plunges into a violent vindication of his action: the hypocritical "argument" reveals the depths to which Macbeth sinks in his attempt to convince the group of his sincerity and love for Duncan and for the justification of his action. In answer to Macduff's question, "Wherefore did you so?" (11.iii.105), Macbeth's rhetorical question contains a flow of adjectives that he has not previously used in his manner of speech, and that he does not equal again: in fourteen words, of which two are verbals, and two are conjunctions, there are six adjectives that follow one another or that are opposites joined by "and":

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment?

(11.iii.106 - 107).

Macbeth's language is swollen and puffed up as he lies - blatantly lies - his way through the interlude after Duncan's murder is discovered. The opposing adjectives - "temperate and furious" - and the opposing emotions that they depict, indicate the heights and depths of Macbeth's vivid imagination: the whole passage is a series of antitheses:

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
Th'expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. - Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood; 110
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore. Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart 115
Courage, to make's love known?

(11.iii.106 - 116).

With all the spiralling lies that Macbeth has uttered in his artful verbal deception, Lady Macbeth can endure the tension no longer, for how long can Macbeth continue in this hypocritical manner without his deceit being detected? Macbeth graphically relives the scene of the murder emphasizing that which unnerved him - the blood. With the exception of Banquo, murder is made terrible in the play through the ear; for "murthers have been perform'd/Too terrible for the ear" (111.iv.76 - 77).

Of all the adjectives that Macbeth uses in lines 106 and 107, there is not one that applies to Macbeth, and in fact, he is the opposite in nature to

each one. He is rash, fearful, ambitious to the degree of abusing ambition, disloyal and lacking in integrity. Above all he shows himself to be a prevaricator and a liar. "Violent", that marks great physical force, is not normally attributed to "love", but rather to hate and revulsion.

From line 109, Macbeth dramatically and pictorially recreates the murder chamber by describing the dead Duncan. Blood is the major symbol of the discovery after the murder of Duncan. In a sense, blood describes the rest of the play, for the survivors will "question this most bloody piece of work,/To know it further" (11.iii.126 - 127).

There is an interesting account by Murray (1966:42) about the nature and origins of the "golden blood" image. Paracelsus's medical book appeared about the time *Macbeth* was written and contained many "strange" ideas: one of these is that the blood of the dead is held in the hand of God after death. Duncan's blood "glows" after his death: therefore Murray concludes that Duncan's blood is golden, "for it is already in the hand of God" (p. 42).

Macbeth's vigorous speeches after the discovery of the murder reveal a mind that is prevaricating through the medium of speech. The hyperbolic language reflects upon Macbeth as well as the horror of the spectacle. Although he is lying in his effort to make others aware of his alleged "horror", he is involuntarily stating what is tormenting him: the macrocosmic significance of the bloody deed for which he was responsible. The metaphors are far-fetched in the above passage: there is little similarity between "lac'd", "golden", "blood", and "daggers", "breech'd", "gore". The agitated motion and the turgid imagery reveal Macbeth's struggle and obsession of not being discovered as the murderer.

The sickness and disturbance of Macbeth's mind is intentionally betrayed in the recurring strange, ill-suited metaphors. I consider Shakespeare's use of "weak" poetry as not bad poetry written by Shakespeare, but in this instance, bad poetry spoken by Macbeth. Shakespeare's intention is to

reveal Macbeth as a prevaricator, and in this passage, both in his attempt to conceal his murderous deed and his fear of being detected, Macbeth's utterances of bad images and falsity are a release mechanism that reaches near hysteria and expresses his overwhelming consciousness of sin.

Although he could not return earlier with the daggers, Macbeth can now return and kill the grooms, for his fear of discovery has been fired to histrionic heights. His cross-current of violent emotions is fired once he has returned and has seen the dead Duncan and the dead grooms.

Macbeth is a blatant prevaricator when he expresses his alleged love for Duncan, and vindicates his killing of the grooms because of this alleged depth of feeling: "Who could refrain, ... to make's love known?" His rhetorical question at the end of this speech echoes his earlier rhetorical question at the beginning of this passage: he attempts to establish the merit of his action by his depth of love for Duncan and his courage to carry out the killing of the grooms. He appeals to those assembled to admire his love and courage. This speech is a study in the language of a hypocrite: at this stage of the action, Macbeth has no conception of the meaning of the word "love": he is only concerned with abused power, ambition and deceiving those present.

I agree with Brooks (1971:24) when he says that he thinks "that Shakespeare's daggers attired in their bloody breeches can be defended as poetry". There is a conciseness and compactness about the image that is peculiar to Shakespeare's abilities. Perhaps it is fortuitous but surely there is a phonological echo of "breech'd" suggested by "breach in nature", which also relates to the clothing imagery.

The cohesion of poetic thought to image that is found throughout *Macbeth* is also evident in this passage.

Brooks's (1971:26) analysis of the clothing imagery in this passage shows an acute awareness: in this passage there is the direct reference of clothing

imagery to Macbeth, for as Brooks points out, "the oldest symbol for the hypocrite is that of the man who cloaks his true nature under a disguise". Macbeth, the prevaricator, cloaks his true evil nature under the disguise of alleged love and loyalty to the man he has murdered - "his violent love".

As Macbeth recalls the scene to the gathering, there are two aspects that he visualizes: his speech is therefore divided into two sections: the first that begins with "Here" and the second that begins with "there". These two sections are bounded by rhetorical questions. His separation of his description of "Here" for Duncan and "there" for the grooms is made so as to enlist the sympathy of the gathering.

The "golden" blood that Macbeth describes could well be his unconscious thoughts of the golden round to bind the brow of royalty, that will now be his. Metrically, it is only line 110 that is sure: line 111 has eleven syllables, and the rhythm of portion of line 112 - up to the colon - is unsure: this change in rhythm from the regular rhythm of line 110 reflects Macbeth's rashness and instability. The colon after "entrance" enforces a pause that dramatically gives Macbeth a break in his speech that heralds his change of thought to his vision of the "murtherers":

... there, the murtherers,
 Steĕp'd ín thĕ cólours óf thĕir tráde, thĕir dággĕrs
 Unmannerly breech'd with gore

(11.iii.112 - 114).

Macbeth has described Duncan's body that is clothed in the most precious of garments, his own blood: now he describes the grooms and their daggers, that are also clothed in the same clothing as Duncan - Duncan's blood. As they enter Duncan's chamber, Macbeth and Lenox find the daggers clothed to play a part in a terrible "masquerade": the dishonest daggers are not sheathed, but dressed in Duncan's blood: the daggers that have been falsely masked by blood by Lady Macbeth resemble Macbeth who is attempting to disguise his hypocrisy. The daggers are compared to

"unmannerly" men who are naked except for the red breeches, that are the tips of the blades that have been dipped in Duncan's blood. The red-handed grooms, "Steep'd in the colours of their trade" are dishonestly marked: they will rest in peace, but Macbeth will find the murders "sticking" to his hands, and Lady Macbeth will not be able to remove the "damned spot" or the "smell" of blood. The irregular rhythm and eleven syllables of line 113 reflect Macbeth's lying and his state of instability.

The description of the murderers "Steep'd in the colours of their trade" signals Macbeth's weary description of himself:

... in blood
 Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er
 (111.iv.135 - 137).

The grooms are dead and surrounded by blood: Macbeth will feel surrounded by blood yet alive: symbolically he is engulfed by the blood he has caused to flow. There is an understatement in his use of "tedious", for there is deepest pain in the series of "to-morrows": he realizes that the endless continuing weariness adds added weight to that which is already unendurable. In contrast to his excited hypocritical description of the grooms, who are surrounded by blood, here Macbeth reveals his feeling of hopelessness and in the last line he negates any idea of repentance.

Returning to the passage, "Here lay Duncan", I agree with Brooks (1971:30) when he states that although vivid, the figure is fantastic yet "the metaphor fits the real situation on the deepest levels": the dishonest Macbeth will "assume the robes of Duncan - robes to which he is no more entitled than are the daggers to the royal garments which they now wear grotesquely". The daggers are not honestly clothed, for they are disguised by the murderers "with gore" that signals the "gory" locks of Banquo's ghost.

I am puzzled by the use of the plural form of "colours", for surely blood - redness - is the "colour" of their trade: I can only suggest that having referred to "silver skin" and "golden blood" - although silver is not related to blood but to skin - Shakespeare uses the plural form to suggest the confused state of Macbeth's mind.

In a lecture, Professor J.A. Venter suggested that "colours" may refer to symbolic membership, as pertains to horse racing colours: if this is so, "colours" would link up with the horsemanship image from "or heaven's Cherubins, hors'd/Upon the sightless couriers of the air" (1.vii.22 - 23).

I agree with Dr. Johnson's (Muir, 1973a:66) comments on this passage: "It is not improbable that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy and the natural outcries of sudden passion. The whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgement, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor".

This statement of Dr. Johnson's verifies my attempt to show that Macbeth's speech after the murder - a sudden outcry of natural passion - differs both in style and language from the hypocritical speeches after the murder - the studied language of prevarication.

6.2 Help Me Hence, Ho!

After Macduff has discovered the murder, he is considerate to Lady Macbeth:

O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell

(11.iii.81 - 84).

In context these lines set off a chain reaction of dramatic ironies: yet out of context they would not be remarkable. Can one find a more ungentle lady - one whose terrible invocations to the evil spirits to unsex her are yet so fresh in the reader's mind?

She faints: "Help me hence, ho!" (11.iii.117). I believe her fainting is a hypocritical feigned faint: it is a digressive manoeuvre, so that attention may be temporarily diverted from Macbeth whom she knows is lying lie upon lie upon intrigue. Her "masked" behaviour enables Macbeth to stop his "masked" simulated horror.

Banquo uses the "covering" image after Duncan's murder:

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further

(11.iii.124 - 127).

Brooks (1972:29) interprets this passage as "When we have clothed ourselves against the chill morning air, let us meet to discuss this bloody piece of work". Macbeth already takes Banquo's suggestion in the ironic sense for he replies: "Let's briefly put on manly readiness" (11.iii.131). The "frailties" also refer to weaknesses and it is to this meaning that Macbeth replies: his "scorpion"-filled mind is still aware of Lady Macbeth's taunting of his manhood to which he earlier replied: "I dare do all that may become a man;/Who dares do more, is none" (1.vii.46 - 47). He has dared to do more, and this begins his descent, that he recognizes, from a human being to that of a "bear-like" (V.vii.2) beast.

After Macbeth's speeches, Shakespeare squeezes in the asides of Malcolm and Donalbain that illustrate complete honesty - in contrast to the prevarication that is evident in Macbeth's speeches: Malcolm's aside to Donalbain shows this honesty:

Why do we hold our tongues, that most may claim
This argument for ours?

(11.iii.118 - 119).

This speech balances the hypocrisy of Macbeth's, "Who can be wise, amaz'd,
temperate and furious,/Loyal and neutral, in a moment?" (11.iii.106 - 107).

The prolixity of Macbeth's speeches is obvious in contrast with the brief, stunned remarks of horror expressed by the other characters: words, and the length of the speeches are a means of illustrating the contradicting attitudes of the characters in this scene.

At the end of Act 11 scene iii, Donalbain says, "There's daggers in men's
smiles: the near in blood,/The nearer bloody" (11.iii.138 - 139). Literally he refers to Macbeth, but symbolically from now on, the macrocosm becomes steeped in blood.

After the murder, Rosse and the Old Man refer to the unnatural events that have taken place in the macrocosm:

Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage: by th'clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

(11.iv.5 - 10).

This is a typical example of the concise use of images: in this disrupted chaos, although it should be light and daytime, the sunlight - "the travelling lamp" - has been figuratively and literally murdered - "strangled" - by night, reflecting the results of the literal murder of Duncan. The natural world is likened to a "bloody stage", for the warm blood of Duncan has

flowed and caused the heavens to be "troubled" by Macbeth's unnatural action. By means of imagery and symbolism, character is explicated in relation to nature and action.

In the chaos caused by the murder, not only does Macbeth sink below his natural level, but Nature's order has been broken: day has become night: and even the animals are unnatural, for they eat each other and make "War with mankind" (11.iv.18) whom they were created to serve.

The cohesive force of the imagery is shown by the linking of the symbolic associations of blood and darkness - symbols that are referents to Macbeth. The confusion is centred on Macbeth, for in his pursuit of his ambition, he has placed both the world and state in a chaotic horror. The last line of the passage, "When living light should kiss it?", is a rarity in the play, for it reflects life in its normal ease and lightness.

7 A DEED OF DREADFUL NOTE

7.1 I'll Request Your Presence

In Act III scene i, Macbeth no longer needs Lady Macbeth as a "crutch": he "proposes" plans for himself and Banquo for "to-morrow", whilst alone he has planned Banquo's murder for "tonight". In the encounter between Macbeth and Banquo, Macbeth's blatant prevarication continues through much of the discussion, and time words are the central hinge around which his evasiveness turns. Many of Macbeth's speeches take the question form, for he wants to elicit Banquo's movements, so as to ensure the success of his murder plans. Macbeth invites Banquo to the banquet. His speech to Banquo is more formal than it has earlier been:

To-night we hold a solemn supper, Sir,
And I'll request your presence

(111.i.13 - 14).

This invitation to Banquo begins the second phase of the murder action. Hunter (1972:17) points out that it is "with considerable skill he (Macbeth) extracts from Banquo, in the stream of false flattery, the basic facts necessary for the murder". In his reply, Banquo outdoes Macbeth in his formality:

Let your Highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit

(111.i.15 - 18).

In Banquo's formality there is an ominous undertone. When Banquo says that his duties are knit by an "indissoluble tie" does he not perhaps refer to his knowledge of Macbeth's connections with the Witches? The service that

Banquo may afford Macbeth is therefore not the type of service a King will welcome.

In the dialogue that follows, Banquo answers Macbeth's questions each time calling him "Lord". Banquo's attitude to Macbeth has changed from the early, friendly one of comradeship: he is determined (a) to tell Macbeth as little as possible and (b) to leave Macbeth as soon as possible:

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?

(So that it will be possible for me to have you assassinated.)

Ban. Ay, *my good Lord*.

Macb. ... but we'll take to-morrow.

(Macbeth blatantly lies, for there will be no "to-morrow" as he is planning Banquo's death "to-night".)

Macb. Is't far you ride?

(Where must the assassins be sent in order to commit the murder?)

Ban. As far, *my Lord*, as will fill up the time

'Twixt this and supper: ...

(Macbeth has ascertained the time the murder must take place.)

Macb. Fail not our feast.

(Macbeth ensures Banquo's "presence" for the assassination.)

Ban. *My Lord*, I will not.

(Banquo keeps his promise: his "I will not" is a determined reply.)

(111.i.19 - 28;

my italics).

Macbeth, the prevaricator and liar, uses blood symbolism. He discusses the departure of Malcolm and Donalbain, whom he refers to as "our bloody cousins":

We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd
 In England, and in Ireland; not confessing
 Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
 With strange invention. But of that to-morrow

(111.i.29 - 32).

Macbeth's reference to his "bloody cousins" is a deliberate lie: he implies that they are the murderers, whilst he knows that he is the bloody murderer. This implication is not sufficient: he blatantly attempts to disinform by saying that they refuse to confess their "cruel parricide" whilst he is fully aware that it is he that refuses to confess his evil regicide. It is not Malcolm and Donalbain that fill their "hearers/With strange invention", but Macbeth that equivocates. He has been questioning Banquo so as to finalize the plans for his murder, and yet flagrantly falsifies by saying, "But of that to-morrow", when it is "to-night" that the murder will take place. Macbeth's final question to Banquo is, "Goes Fleance with you?" (111.i.35). Macbeth now has all the relevant information for the assassins that he has hired, for Banquo's answer is: "*Ay, my good Lord*" (111.i.36). Banquo then dismisses Macbeth, with "our time does call upon's" (111.i.36): he implies that he has more urgent matters than that of talking to Macbeth, the king.

In this encounter, Macbeth elicits the necessary information to plan his tactics for the murder of those he fears, Banquo and Fleance: he prevaricates by calling Malcolm and Donalbain "bloody cousins". Macbeth now knows that not only can he kill, but that he must kill in order to

secure his power and security: "To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus" (111.i.47).

In *Macbeth* Shakespeare's use of darkness is dramatic and meaningful. At the end of Act 111 scene i, the link of the light of "to-morrow" will not exist for Banquo because of Macbeth's hopes for the darkness of "to-night". Macbeth is becoming an accomplished murderer, and his corrupt means of implementing murders is becoming a way of life. No longer does he wrestle with his conscience: he plans, he lies, he wades deeper into "darkness" and "It is concluded": "Banquo, thy soul's flight,/If it find Heaven, must find it out to-night" (111.i.140 - 141).

7.2 Thus Did Banquo

After Duncan's murder, Macbeth starts on his desperate series of futile murders, for he realizes that he wears a "fruitless crown" and wields a "barren sceptre". He perspicuously states his awareness of what he has done and his realization that he has to continue his path of prevarication:

... If't be so,
 For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;
 For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd;
 Put rancours in the vessel of my peace,
 Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
 Given to the common Enemy of man,
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
 Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
 And champion me to th'utterance!

(111.i.63 - 71).

Macbeth still requires an alibi for murder and a need to keep blood remote: he suborns the assassins in order to "mask" the business from the common eye and to keep the deed at a distance. He conspires and plans Banquo's

murder with the hired assassins, and although he is not physically present we are reminded of his involvement in the murder:

1 *Mur.* But who did bid thee join with us?

3 *Mur.* Macbeth

(111.iii.1 - 2).

Once Banquo has departed, Macbeth immediately sends for the assassins. By chicanery he leads them to believe that the murder is for their own good, for it is Banquo who is the cause of all their suffering:

... - know

That it was he, in the times past, which held you

So under fortune, which you thought had been

Our innocent self? ...

...

... 'Thus did Banquo'

(111.i.75 - 83).

He lays the blame for all the unhappiness suffered by the body politic on Banquo, when he knows he is the cause. Macbeth then uses the typical pattern to induce them to kill, as Lady Macbeth had used on him: he asks them if their patience is so "predominant in your nature,/That you can let this go?" (111.i.86 - 87). He incites them with the taunt that they are too religiously minded to pray for, rather than attack, this man Banquo that has caused them so much ill.

Most of the animal imagery used is significant of ill-omens, fierceness or ugliness. Macbeth appeals to the manliness of the murderers:

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;

As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,

Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are cleft

All by the name of dogs

(111.i.91 - 94).

Professor Wilson Knight (1972:145) points out that not only are the unpleasant suggested animals presented, but "we have animals, like men, irrational and amazing in their acts". Duncan's horses eat each other and wish to make "War with mankind" (11.iv.18). Through Shakespeare's use of animal imagery, "we are made aware of a hideous abnormality in this world: and again we feel its irrationality and mystery" (p. 146).

Macbeth reminds the villains that "Both of you/ Know, Banquo was your enemy" (111.i.113 - 114) and he acknowledges that his fears in Banquo "stick" deep:

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life

(111.i.115 - 117).

The assassins are given the details of where the murder should be performed and Macbeth insists "for't must be done to-night" (111.i.130). Prior to his murdering of Duncan, Macbeth wrestled with his moral values: now he plots and plans Banquo's murder with no moral thoughts and in a cool, calm and determined manner.

The much disputed Third Murderer presents an interesting addition to both distrust and mistrust. Referring to Macbeth, the Second Murderer protests "He needs not our mistrust" (111.iii.2). I suggest that Macbeth, who is so accustomed to double-dealing, has to ensure that his plot with the Murderers is "safe" and to this end enters into the second complot with the Third Murderer.

The assassins will return to make Macbeth's banquet bloody with Banquo's blood. Macbeth recoils with revulsion: "There's blood upon thy face"

(111.iv.13). Initially, Macbeth had only contemplated one murder. Now with four murders behind him, murder is becoming natural to him; yet he can no longer bear to look upon the blood that unmans him. By the time Macbeth plans Banquo's murder, he has established himself in his evil ways: he no longer requires Lady Macbeth's "spur". Be it that his soul is blackened by damnation, he does not wish his hands to be fouled with blood.

7.3 Why Do You Keep Alone?

I suggest that the reversals of character found in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth occur after the murder of Duncan, and there is a steady deterioration in the relationship between Macbeth and his wife. From their early close, intimate relationship, "my dearest partner of greatness" (1.v.11), the relationship is emphasized by the closeness of the murderers in the murder scene, to Macbeth's severing himself from the rest of humanity that also severs the bond between him and his wife. From the time of Banquo's murder, there is a breakdown in confidence between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck" (111.ii.45).

Macbeth's descent into his arid world of darkness is now rapid. He realizes that he cannot undo what has been done, and since he has severed the bonds of nature, the only power that now governs him is - political, personal power. He rapidly strips himself of humanity and his shrewd assessment of his situation is "To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus" (111.i.47).

At this stage of the play, we find a reversal in the attitudes adopted by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth has adopted Lady Macbeth's earlier attitude, whereas Lady Macbeth's vision changes to one that is concerned with things unseen:

Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
 Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy
 (111.ii.4 - 7).

In Lady Macbeth's speech, the epigrammatic couplets, with despair reflected in the regular rhythms - "Nóught's hád, áll's spént" - where each word is stressed, illustrate the hopelessness of the situation which should have brought joy. The opposing meaning in "Nought's" and "all" is balanced by the verbal opposites of "had" and "spent" and conveys despair. The rest of the speech is characterized by the regular, monotonous despairing rhythm. The repetition of the verb "destroy" in the varied noun form "destruction", heightens the emphasis of the contentment and joy that has been lost by the destruction of life.

This reversal and change of attitude in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is stylistically evident, in that after Duncan's murder Lady Macbeth becomes the one to use the interrogative statement. She shows concern for matters that cannot be evaluated pragmatically and exhaustion is evident in the tone of her short statements. In Act 111 scene ii, from when Macbeth enters, there are forty seven lines of verse, of which only eleven are uttered by Lady Macbeth, and of these, five are in question form. She is uncertain and insecure: what does the future hold?

Shakespeare created a dramaturgic challenge for himself, by making it impossible for Macbeth the villain to speak his free heart to others, for others are not to know what deceitful and perfidious thoughts Macbeth entertains and causes to be executed. Shakespeare has Lady Macbeth complain to her husband about his increasing withdrawal, that is indicative of the severance of "trust" in duplicity that had existed between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. We are prepared for the character change in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. We are prepared for the character change in Macbeth caused by the actions he has committed and is committing:

How now, my Lord? why do you keep alone,
 Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
 Using those thoughts, which should indeed have died
 With them they think on?

(111.ii.8 - 11).

This separation of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is a separation caused by guilt and loss of trust. Macbeth's life becomes meaningless, lonely and arid, as does Lady Macbeth's life, and likewise does all Scotland suffer privation. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer a condign punishment, for finally neither has mate nor friend.

Lady Macbeth reveals Macbeth's isolation, and when he tells her of "A deed of dreadful note" (111.ii.44) that is about to be committed, she wearily and helplessly questions him: "What's to be done?" (111.ii.44). Not only is her weariness and exhaustion revealed in the simplicity of the language used in her question, but we also become aware of the lack of confidence and communication between husband and wife.

I do not believe Macbeth is trying to spare Lady Macbeth another involvement in murder: his prevaricating reply is indicative of the deterioration in their relationship. Macbeth no longer needs Lady Macbeth's support for he has sufficient confidence to plan the second murder - that of Banquo - on his own. With sophistry he conceals his knowledge of the plot:

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
 Till thou applaud the deed

(111.ii.45 - 46).

Macbeth's relatively long, vivid and dominant speeches and Lady Macbeth's short and weary questions contrast with the reversed situation, when Lady Macbeth was planning Duncan's murder.

The shedding of blood has loosed chaos: both Macbeth, the "monarch of a nightmare realm" (Wilson Knight, 1972:127), and Lady Macbeth suffer nightmares, and Macbeth would rather have the world fall apart, than suffer these dreadful nightmares. Since Macbeth has murdered sleep and hospitality, his punishment is a life devoid of sleep and peace: their punishment is to suffer these terrible nightmares, whilst Duncan "sleeps well" after "life's fitful fever" (111.ii.23). After the banquet, Lady Macbeth says that Macbeth's ills are caused by his lack of sleep, "You lack the season of all natures, sleep" (111.iv.140). Perhaps one of Macbeth's worst terrors is his loss of the soothing balm of sleep.

Macbeth's reaction to the results of his actions is confined to what he directly and privately feels - an extraordinary physiological reaction. His hair is unfixed (1.iii.135), his seated heart knocks at his ribs (1.iii.136) and throbs (IV.i.101). His troubled soul is that of "hurt minds" that need a "balm" (11.ii.38) and is weighed down with "perilous stuff" (V.iii.44 - 45). We notice that he is subject to fits and starts, and dreams of terror "shake" him nightly (111.ii.18 - 19). He is "tainted" by fear (V.iii.3): he has experienced "the taste of fears" (V.v.9) and he is "bound in/To saucy doubts and fears" (111.iv.23 - 24). His mind is "full of scorpions" (111.ii.36). His strongest mental torture and distress he explains by using the image of his body on a rack:

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
 In the affliction of these terrible dreams,
 That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
 Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
 Than on the torture of the mind to lie
 In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
 After life's fitful fever he sleeps well

(111.ii.16 - 23).

"In restless ecstasy" is a perfect term for his torment, as it makes his connection with Banquo certain. His explanation for his torture of mind is simply "We have scorch'd the snake, not kill'd it" (111.ii.13).

The images of sickness and disease appear in the last three Acts of the play: it is significant that these images appear after Duncan's murder and after Macbeth has been crowned king. Macbeth is the source of the disease that spreads through Scotland. Macbeth considers life a "fitful fever" and through his unnatural act he is tortured by fear "In restless ecstasy": the disease imagery conveys Macbeth's pain and struggle.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth now become victims of the torture of unending time, and under the stress of this torture, their love disintegrates. No longer does Macbeth plot his horrific actions with the aid of his wife: their ways are disjointed. Finally, Macbeth endures: Lady Macbeth collapses. Both of them are harnessed to the "here and now". Although Macbeth knows it is better to be with the dead, he realizes that there is an impassable chasm that divides him from his conception of death. The nightmares, "... these terrible dreams,/That shake us nightly", that the guilty pair suffer, symbolize the haunting of the present by the past. This symbolic theme of the present being haunted by the past is again evident in Banquo's return from the grave during the banquet scene.

Macbeth knows that his words to Lady Macbeth about Banquo's presence at the banquet cannot be realized, for he has just plotted his murder and yet he disinforms her by telling her

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo:
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue
(111.ii.30 - 31);

and adds that they must mask themselves by means of hypocrisy:

And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are

(111.ii.34 - 35).

Shakespeare uses a most powerful image that appeals both aurally and tactually in "O! full of scorpions is my mind" (111.ii.36). The repetition of the harsh /s/ sounds aided by the roundness of the vowel sounds "o" and *full* that indicate plumpness and plenty - give a force to this image that shows Macbeth's mind being stung and poisoned by the lashing, thrashing and striking scorpions. Shakespeare is not using imagery as a decoration but as an intrinsic part of the horror he conveys.

Perhaps the most cold-blooded speech in the play emanates from Macbeth, when he tells Lady Macbeth that Banquo and Fleance still live and are subtly the cause of the "scorpions" in his mind:

There's comfort yet; they are assailable:
Then be thou jocund. Ere' the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung Night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note

(111.ii.39 - 44).

Like Macbeth, the bat is a bloodsucker: the beetle adds to the atmosphere in that it is diabolical and Armstrong (1946:18 - 24) points out that it belongs to an image cluster that includes "crow", "bat", "night", and "deed".

There is danger in relaxing alertness: sinister sound conveys the supineness of darkness when Macbeth summons night for Banquo's murder: "Ere the bat hath flown ... A deed of dreadful note". The language is heavy and loaded with nouns having an adjective often onomatopoeic as "Night's yawning peal".

In his ambitious rise to power, Macbeth must sever the natural bond that ties him not only to the rest of humanity, but also to God. Macbeth echoes Lady Macbeth's invocation to darkness to conceal the second murder:

... Come, seeling Night,
 Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day,
 And, with thy bloody and invisible hand,
 Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond
 Which keeps me pale!

(111.ii.46 - 50).

In this short passage, Shakespeare links three symbolic ideas together: "darkness", "blood", and "sleep" in "night", "scarf up", "bloody", and "pale". An echoic link of bloody hands plucking out of the eyes is found in the image of "bloody and invisible hand" in conjunction with "tender eye" that cancels and tears to pieces. Macbeth appears to be more aware of the physical horror of sight than of moral implications. What Macbeth sees in the outer world of nature pertains to himself. His own bloodstained hand is recalled in the "bloody hand" of the night: the use of "invisible" reflects Macbeth's wish that his bloodstained hand should become invisible to him. Darkness is functional in a thematic way, for the backdrop of portentous darkness hides from the eye of earth and heaven:

... Light thickens; and the crow
 Makes wing to th'rooky wood;
 Good things of Day begin to droop and drowse,
 Whiles Night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
 Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
 Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill

(111.ii.50 - 55).

This description is the symbolic setting for the murder, in which darkness is paralleled with light, evil with goodness, in a sensuous, concrete manner

where "poetically vague and the poetically specific meet" (Wellek & Warren, 1968:203) in the line "Good things of Day begin to droop and drowse" (111.ii.52). The two lines

Good things of Day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles Night's black agents to their preys do rouse
(111.ii.52 - 53)

make the sinister foreboding of the passage clear. Like the creatures that are hunted and slain at night, so are Macbeth's "black agents" about to set upon their prey. I agree with Dowden (*n.d.*:244) when he says that we may take the line "Good things ..." as a motto of the entire tragedy, for *Macbeth* is "the tragedy of the twilight and the setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul".

In line 50, "thickens" is forceful, for it links and echoes the concept of the thickening of blood in Lady Macbeth's plea to "make thick my blood" (1.v.43). The light that "thickens" - the twilight - reflects Macbeth's state at this stage - his soul is in the twilight state. Like the change that is taking place within Macbeth, the "Good things" of the outer world "begin to droop and drowse" as the twilight takes over. With the advent of the darkness of night, "night's black agents" - and Macbeth is an agent of the dark - turn to their prey as Macbeth's thoughts turn to his prey. This image is rooted in the totality of the play: the darkness of the play is reflected in the blackness of desires and actions. Throughout the play, there is the contrast between the symbolic powers of light - harmony - and darkness - discord - and the "Good things of Day" are contrasted with "night's black agents".

7.4 Thou Canst Not Say I Did It

When the second banquet starts, we find Macbeth assuming the role of masculine leader once more, but this is only temporary. As the feast

progresses, sexual reversal again comes to the fore, and with the appearance of Banquo's ghost, Macbeth is once again "unmann'd". Lady Macbeth asserts her dominant role, "What! quite unmann'd in folly?" (111.iv.72). Only with the ghost's final exit can Macbeth once again say, "I am a man again" (111.iv.107). The second banquet shows (a) that Macbeth has committed crimes that are not related to the sign of manhood: he "is none" and (b) that there is growing estrangement between husband and wife that will finally lead to their isolation. Lady Macbeth is no longer the immoral spiritual force that triggers Macbeth to evil action: he can achieve this on his own. The contrasting parallels indicate the changes in the characters of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

At the second banquet, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth attempt to establish their now corrupt order. Macbeth attempts to preserve the settled order of Scotland and in welcoming the lords to the banquet, he insists that they know their "own degrees" - the social order that is a part of the natural order:

You know your own degrees, sit down: at first
And last, the hearty welcome

(111.iv.1 - 2).

Macbeth notices that the table is seated symmetrically: "Both sides are even" (111.iv.10) and this symmetry is symbolic of order. Because of the disorder of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the feast, which was to have been an ordered occasion, degenerates into madness and confusion. With Macbeth's "strange" behaviour, caused by the vision of Banquo's ghost, Lady Macbeth orders the nobles to leave:

... At once, good night:-
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once

(111.iv.117 - 119).

Dramatically this reflects that because of Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's inner corruption and disorder, they cannot participate in any ritual that pertains to an orderly society.

Macbeth is tortured through the "eye" by the sight of Banquo's ghost and it does not lead him to reflection of his guilt that caused the murder: we are only aware of his total isolation from the rest of humanity.

The nature of the vision makes him try to have those present share in his suffering, but what he sees cannot be shared by others for it is uniquely his. Coldly, Lady Macbeth echoes her earlier taunts "Are you a man?" (111.iv.57) and his reply is that he is a "bold one, that dare look on that" (111.iv.58). She reduces the nature of seeing by telling him he sees but a "stool" (111.iv.67). Macbeth's only answer is a plea to her sight and vision, that she should *see*: "Pr'ythee, *see* there! *Behold! look! lo!* how say you?" (111.iv.67 - 68). Lady Macbeth will suffer a torment of a different nature, that will in turn isolate her from society. (My italics.)

Whether or not Banquo's ghost is a ghost, or a vision, or an hallucination, I do not consider vital, but what is important is that in Banquo's ghost - a sight that only Macbeth sees - the past returns to haunt the present in Macbeth's world. Banquo is an imperspicuous and frightening ghost: "he" is bloody but assured: confident, silent, but victorious in his urbane ironic discernment of the situation. The action shows Macbeth cornered. By means of the second banquet, the theme of time, "the time has been" (111.iv.77), is linked with the theme of order and disorder.

In *Macbeth*, poetic imagery links the parts of the play structurally. The Old Man and Rosse discuss the unnatural disorder that accompanied the murder of Duncan:

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,

A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
 Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd
 (11.iv.10 - 13).

I consider these remarks a choric comment on Macbeth's character: initially he is an eagle among sparrows: in the next Act, after the heinous crime, he has degenerated and is likened to a "mousing owl" that has killed, in an "unnatural" way, the royal "falcon". The unnatural animal happenings in nature on the night of Duncan's murder are reflected by the essential unnaturalness of the murder. The falcon image is echoed when Macbeth faces Banquo's ghost: with terror he says

If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury, back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites
 (111.iv.70 - 72).

There are many references to birds associated with darkness, violence and evil.

Macbeth has just spoken to the hired assassins and he knows that Banquo cannot be present, for he has been murdered and is in a ditch. He presents a false front, and initiates the grim, ironical entrance of Banquo's ghost. Macbeth's first words to the ghost, a ghost that is not black and white but a "coloured" one, with its "gory locks" are "Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake/Thy gory locks at me" (111.iv.49 - 50). We are made aware of the concrete image of hair. There is no pleasant association of bouncing, clean, shiny hair, but rather a picture that reflects the play: hair that is matted with blood.

Although Macbeth did not personally kill Banquo, he planned his murder and lured and falsely persuaded the assassins to commit the murder. The Witches bring to Macbeth a "strange intelligence" (1.iii.76) but the

phenomenon of the sight of the ghost commands a different type of respect, for Macbeth sees it as "more strange/Than such a murder is" (111.iv.81 - 82), and it is the most harrowing sight that he endures.

The "cold" bloodiness of the ghost recalls to Macbeth the excessive brutality of the deed. The lifeless animation of the ghost makes it a "horrible shadow!/Unreal mock'ry" (111.iv.105 - 106): the bones are marrowless and there is no "speculation" of life in the eyes it "glares" with (111.iv.93 - 94). The silence of the spectre, in its sinister craftiness of manner, affords no opposition to Macbeth's hysterical challenges and protests: it merely nods, shakes its "gory" locks at Macbeth and later smiles. Macbeth knows the threat the ghost poses, for he alone sees Banquo's ghost. Banquo has always been the master of irony and there is maximum irony in the manner in which he responds to Macbeth's command invitation. He appears late, not dressed for the banquet, but assured with urbane decorum as he takes Macbeth's place at the table: he even leaves the banquet when so ordered.

I consider Macbeth's words, "Thou canst not say, I did it" (111.iv.49), show Macbeth's inability to be honest with himself: Banquo would be at the banquet in his "alive" state had Macbeth not planned his murder. Macbeth is not only a public prevaricator, a liar to others, for he also cannot practice "to thine own self be true" (Hamlet, 1969:1.iii.78). Macbeth causes blood to shed, not only so that he may become King, but also to reassert himself.

Macbeth's falsity causes ironical repetitions of the ghost's appearance. Shakespeare's presentation of these scenes, in a deliberately identical manner, reveals Macbeth's inability of saying purposefully what he does not mean: Macbeth's appearance does not reflect his reality.

When he hears at the beginning of the banquet scene that although Banquo has been killed, Fleance has escaped, and consequently testifies that evil

will be opposed, Macbeth realizes his position: "But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in/To saucy doubts and fears" (111.iv.23 - 24). The hardness of the alliterative use of the plosive /k/ in "cabin'd", "cribb'd", "confin'd" and the final repetitive past participle /d/ present clipped, staccato sounds that reflect the narrowing and closing in of the external world around Macbeth, who finds that he is "bound" by "doubts and fears".

After Banquo's murder, there is an echoic use of "done", where a play of meaning again recurs. Lady Macbeth, who cannot see Banquo's ghost for it only appears to the guilty Macbeth, attempts to calm Macbeth by saying "When all's done,/You look but on a stool" (111.iv.66 - 67). Here, Lady Macbeth intends "When all's done" to mean "after all, when all is said and done", yet unbeknown to her, there is dramatic irony in her words, for Banquo's murder has been "done" and the First Murderer's words are echoed after the murder of Banquo: "Well, let's away,/And say how much is done" (111.iii.21 - 22). Fleance has escaped, so that "all" is not "done". Lady Macbeth's final use of "done" is in the sleep-walking scene, where terror and pity mingle to reflect a tragic effect in her changed character as she utters, "What's done, cannot be undone" (V.i.64). The truth of these words apply to Lady Macbeth, for she can never again be free from her guilt.

The night of Banquo's murder is a turning point of the play. Macbeth's worst discomfort is seen in his direct lie to a knowing ghost. Macbeth asks Lady Macbeth "What is the night?" (111.iv.125). Her reply connotes more than the time hands of a clock and is one of the few references to light that does, in fact, contrast and refer to darkness: "Almost at odds with morning, which is which" (111.iv.126). "Which is which" links with the paradoxical idea suggested in "fair is foul" and reminds one of a nightmare that is growing and becoming frightening. In the struggle between light and darkness, "which is which"?

Our involvement with Macbeth is partly due to style, for we participate and share with him in the horrible image he presents of himself. At the end of the banquet he realizes that "blood will have blood" (111.iv.121) and he wearily admits that symbolically he is

... in blood

Stepp'd ín šo fár, thát, shóuld Ĩ wáde ņ móre,
Rětúrning wére š fediůs ás gő o'ér

(111.iv.135 - 137).

The image elicits our involvement: we are personally moved by Macbeth's feeling of wading knee-deep in blood that reflects his feeling of hopelessness. "Stepp'd" and "wade" are two verbs of physical action that are at variance with the simpler verb "am". I agree with Brown (1970:126) when he points out that "the adjective 'tedious' also stands apart in this context, an almost domestic word, an understatement expressing deepest pain: it also has a positive statement of lengthening time, the realization of a continuing predicament in which weariness adds its weight to the already unendurable". The regular metrical pattern is accentuated by the use of rhyming couplets and this draws our attention to the quintessence of his weariness and fatigue, that is reflected in the long vowel sounds of "no more" and "go o'er".

Banquo's ghost brings to the foreground what Macbeth refers to as his "strange and self-abuse" (111.iv.141). I suggest the most vital connotation of "strange" is that of distressing, ominous events or possibilities. In the pre-murder terror that accompanies Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth warns Macbeth to "mask" himself for in his face "men/May read *strange* matters" (1.v.63). He becomes "strange" to himself when those present at the banquet do not share his horrifying vision, for he says, "You make me *strange*/Even to the disposition that I owe" (111.iv.111 - 112; my italics).

When Lady Macbeth places the cause of his affliction on his lack of sleep, Macbeth shows that he knows the cause:

Cóme, wé'll tó sléep. Mý stránge ánd sélf-ábúse
 Ís tĕe ĩńtĭáte feár, thát wánts hărd úse:
 Wé áre yét bŭt yóung ĩń déed

(111.iv.141 - 143).

Macbeth shows that he is aware that he and Lady Macbeth share and are in the same predicament: he uses her simple word "sleep", uses "we" the first person plural, and invites her to join him in "Come". Mutual deception is implicit in the words, for neither of them will sleep - the echo of "'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder Sleep, - the innocent Sleep" (11.ii.34 - 35).

In lines 141 and 142, the rhythm is regular and the stressed syllable falls on the second syllable: the crucial line is the last one that follows the decisive couplet: the rhythm alters for the stress falls on the first syllable so as to emphasize and bring attention back to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth is aware that "blood will have blood": he is aware that he is "in blood/Stepp'd in so far", and this last line, the concluding words of the scene, shows ambiguous relevance.

Macbeth's mental torment affects him physically. When his guilt and motives are about to be exposed, he is subject to agitated "shaking" and "starting" of the body - symbolizing his state of hysteria. At the banquet he mendaciously excuses his affliction as "*a strange* infirmity, which is nothing/To those that know me" (111.iv.85 - 86; my italics). An oblique statement, for who "knows" Macbeth?

Macbeth knows he was the instigator of Banquo's murder: he knows that Banquo has been murdered: he knows that Banquo's ghost has just appeared to him. With this knowledge only a conniving liar, as Macbeth now is, could propose a toast to "our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss" (111.iv.89) and only a calculating liar could add "Would he were here!" (111.iv.90).

Although Lady Macbeth does not know of the plot for Banquo's murder, she covertly defends her partner in crime. She falsifies to the assembled group, not only on her own behalf, but also on Macbeth's behalf. I suggest that through previous duplicity she knows the symptoms of Macbeth's reaction to guilt, and womanly intuition leads her to suspect evil of her husband. She takes attention away from Macbeth and excuses his "strange behaviour", not by a feigned faint (11.iii), but as something customary. She lies as she says, "My Lord is often thus", and to endorse her prevarication she adds, "And hath been from his youth" (11.iv.52 - 53). I consider this endorsement to be a lie invented on the spur of the moment by Lady Macbeth, for up to this stage no mention has been made of Macbeth being prone to a fit "from his youth".

When Macbeth hears that Fleance has escaped, his immediate reaction is, "Then comes my fit again" (11.iv.20). Perhaps there is a measure of truth in that he is "often thus": the "fitful fever" does not literally come upon him as a fever or epilepsy. I consider the "fit" to be an escape mechanism when he is under emotional stress - stress that always emanates from actions resulting from his guilt caused by prevarication.

8 DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE

8.1 In Defence of Hecate

Hunter (1966:2) points out that the defenders of Hecate are the exceptions and that general opinion leans against authenticity. I am aware that Professor Kenneth Muir is a dangerous man with whom to disagree. In his introduction to *Macbeth*, Muir (1973a:xxxi) says, "Mr. Nosworthy is surely right, and I believe that the Hecate passages (111.v:IV.1.39 - 43) and (IV.i.125 - 132) were all written by an anonymous writer not without poetic ability, who was instructed to explain and introduce the two songs and the dance which had been interpolated from *The Witch*". Later in Muir's discussion of the Witches, he says "that Lamb had no reason to suppose that the Hecate scenes were spurious - as they doubtless are" (1973a:xxxiii). In a footnote, Muir substantiates his point of view, with reference to a quotation from D.L. Chambers, *The Metre of "Macbeth"*: quoted Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Workshop*, pp. 36 - 7, "... The fact that the speeches of Hecate and the First Witch (111.v.4 - 33; IV.i.39 - 43, 125 - 32) are in iambic measures creates, I think, a strong presumption against their Shakespearian authorship ..." (1973a:xxxiii).

Hunter (1972:2) points out that "a sensible middle opinion is represented ... by Nosworthy who ... accepts the songs as Middleton's: and thinks that the Hecate speeches were written to introduce and justify the appearance of that lady in the songs. He does not exclude the possibility that they may have been written by Shakespeare".

Jones (1971:196) also discusses the Hecate scene, Act III scene v: he accepts Nosworthy's arguments for the authenticity of Hecate's passages, that they were added by Shakespeare some time after the first performance. However, Jones does not discuss them any further, for he says "since even if they are Shakespeare's, they remain (it seems to me) regrettable excrescences" (1971:196). With due respect to Jones, I find this

statement of his a kind of ostrich and sand attitude.

I agree with, and am delighted to read that Godshalk (1973:120 - 121) states, in opposition to the critics who regard Act III scene v as spurious, "and if Shakespeare did not plan the scene, he should have". I shall attempt to prove that Shakespeare did plan this scene.

Brown (1970:22 - 28) makes an interesting analysis of form in *Macbeth*, in which he traces various analogies in *Macbeth* to his History and Miracle plays. He comments on the style used by Shakespeare in the Hecate scene: he states that "the metre is different and less well-handled than in the rest of the witch-scenes, and the style is stiff and rudely simple" (1970:12). Of Act III scene v, he says interpolation "can be suspected but not proved" and that the extraordinary general authenticity of the folio collection of texts may bias us in favour of accepting the whole text of *Macbeth* (except some of the stage directions and Middleton's version of the songs) as genuine" (1970:13). I do not intend to argue about the stage directions or the little ditties. I shall attempt to argue that the first two appearances of the Witches are balanced by their later appearances in Act III scene v and Act IV scene i.

By their prophecies, the Witches motivate the action and provide structural continuity: they are instrumental in indicating the character change in *Macbeth*.

Structurally, I consider the Hecate scene essential. In Act I scene i, the Witches prepare for Macbeth's entrance, and in Act I scene iii, they reappear so as to ignite the evil within Macbeth. The information they give Macbeth is eventually exhausted. In order that the action may again be motivated and reignited, and that his increasing fears may be temporarily allayed, Macbeth returns to the Witches so as to solicit further information of his future: this Macbeth does in Act IV scene i. Therefore, like Act I scene i, I consider Act III scene v to be a preparatory scene for Macbeth's visit to the Witches in Act IV scene i.

In Act III scene v, Hecate prepares for Macbeth's probing fears, when she instructs the Witches to be at the pit of Acheron, for "thither he/Will come to know his destiny" (III.v.16 - 17). We are given a warning of the cause of Macbeth's insecurity: he wants to know his destiny. He has prevaricated: he has murdered: what does the future hold - if anything? This scene links Macbeth's last appearance in Act III scene iv - "We are yet but young in deed" (III.iv.143) with his appearance in Act IV scene i: the Hecate scene is the bridge that prevents our asking, why Macbeth is returning to the Witches.

From a technical point of view, Shakespeare's stage-directions, costuming, decor are always incorporated in the text: the Hecate scene is therefore also essential to prepare the Witches (and the producer) to have all their "equipment" necessary for their meeting with Macbeth:

Your vessels, and your spells, provide,
Your charms, and everything beside
(III.v.18 - 19).

My argument for the importance of this Hecate scene therefore rests on:

- 1 The structural balance it provides with regard to Act I scene i.
- 2 The technical requirement, so as to warn the Witches of the "equipment" they will require in order to brew their potions that will give rise to the Three Apparitions.
- 3 The "recollection" or recall technique.

At a crucial stage of the play, by poetic means, Hecate reminds us that Macbeth is merely the instrument of evil, who, through his own evil intentions is disinformed: she chastises the Witches for paying attention to Macbeth who

Hath been but for a wayward son,
 Spiteful, and wrathful; who, as others do,
 Loves for his own ends, not for you

(111.v.11 - 13).

With "not for you", we are reminded that the Witches are the embodiment of disorder and evil in the play. Hecate prepares the reader for the fate that will befall Macbeth. She also warns that Macbeth will be misled by the prophecies to come: he will be misled through his own misconceptions, not because any lies will be told:

And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
 Shall raise such artificial sprites,
 As, by the strength of their illusion,
 Shall draw him on to his confusion.
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear

(111.v.26 - 31).

There is one further point that I wish to make in my defence of the Hecate scene. We are reminded that all that is of importance to Macbeth is "security" in what he does: moral status becomes irrelevant: when he hears that Fleance has escaped, he says

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect;
 Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
 As broad and general as the casing air:
 But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
 To saucy doubts and fears

(111.iv.20 - 24).

In the scene that follows, Hecate explicitly states the protagonist's progress that will be exhibited in Act IV, for "He shall spurn fate"

(111.v.30). She also reminds us of what "security" is:

And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy

(111.v.32 - 33).

In Elizabethan times, "security" meant the culpable absence of anxiety, that man should be "secure" or confident about the most important aspect of his life - his salvation. This final couplet heightens our awareness of Macbeth's future actions: he does not care that his success is being bought by damnation.

8.2 Something Wicked This Way Comes

As the Witches stir their "broth", they incant

Double, double toil and trouble:
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble

(IV.i.20 - 21).

I find an interesting echoic parallel of "double" to Lady Macbeth's welcome to Duncan:

All our service,
In every point twice done, and then done double

(I.vi.14 - 15).

This "service" - "toil" to the Witches - did lead to "trouble": sacrilegious trouble. After Duncan's murder, "fire" figuratively burned in the lives of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth. Their minds bubbled with fear: insecurity; the plotting and planning of other evil deeds by a prevaricating Macbeth; and the disintegration of their personal lives. "Bubble" also recalls an echo back to Banquo's reaction to the appearance of the Witches in Act 1: "The

earth hath bubbles, as the water has,/And these are of them" (1.iii.79 - 80).

By means of diction, the Witches conjure up the most terrible and revolting images and so create a sinister impression and atmosphere. Into a brew that is made nauseous by the addition of sections of familiar animals go

Sćale ōř drágoň, tóoth ōř wólř;
 Wítchěs' múmřy; máw, aňd gůlf,
 Őf the ráviň'd sált-sěa šhark;
 Róot ōř hémloćk, dígg'd iřth'dark;
 Lívěř ōř blašpřemřng Jěw;
 Gáll ōř góat, aňd slřps ōř yěw,
 Slřvěř'd ín the móon's ěclřpse;
 Nóse ōř Turk, aňd Tárťár's líps;
 Fřngěř ōř břřth-sřranglěd bábe,
 Dřřtch-dělívěř'd bý ř dráb,
 Máke the grůěl thřćk aňd sláb

(IV.i.22 - 32;
 my italics).

Shakespeare's use of alliteration in this passage draws attention to all the horrible ingredients: the alliterative /s/ draws attention the "salt-sea shark", and a shark ravages its unsuspecting prey - as Macbeth has done: the /g/ alliteration draws attention to "gall of goat" and there is perhaps an echo here of Lady Macbeth's "And take my milk for gall" (1.v.48): the alliterative /t/ in Turk and Tarter draws attention to them, in that they were considered "unchristened" like the babe at birth and were therefore valuable ingredients in a brew - there is also the idea of cruelty in the reference to "nose" and "lips" - the idea of the desecration of the human body, which again refers back to Macbeth's slaughter: the alliterative /b/ and /d/ in "birth-strangled babe" and "Ditch-deliver'd ... drab" draw attention to the sordidness and darkness of the "ditch" and "drab", and with horrible irony the "new-born babe" is recalled (1.vii.21). It

is interesting to note that the metrical stress in the line "finger of birth-strangled babe" falls on strangled, recalling the strangling of moral values by heinous crimes. The concept of darkness implied in "ditch" is enforced in "slips of yew,/Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse"; "yew" recalls the bleakness of a churchyard, and the cutting of a slip of "yew" was done at the blackest stage of night, when an abnormal element in nature occurred - a moon's eclipse. The moon, that lights up the darkness of night, is eclipsed and occult darkness engulfs the world devoid of moral values. The reflection of the moral "darkness" that prevails in the play is caused by the murdering of moral "light".

In each case, either the part or the whole of the ingredient is revolting and by his choice of ingredients, known to us, Shakespeare creates a brew that is horrifying. The style of speech of the Witches is heavy and foreboding; the even chant makes their 'song' more ominous.

We are repulsed, yet fascinated, by the Witches as they concoct their "ingredience of our cauldron" (IV.i.34). All the ingredients are disgusting, and the resulting indigestible brew reflects the cumulative evil actions that have been committed by Macbeth, that are now bubbling and boiling in the evil cauldron of Macbeth's mind.

As they did in Act I scene iii, so too in Act IV scene i the Witches appear waiting for Macbeth. His first appearance was heralded by a drum, now however, there are no heroic suggestions, for when Macbeth is about to appear the second Witch equates him with "something wicked":

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes. - (*knocking*)
(IV.i.44 - 45).

The signal of "knocking" immediately reminds us of the previous interruptions caused by "knocking" - the scene after the murder of Duncan,

when Lady Macbeth and Macbeth were harassed by "knocking": the "knocking" that introduces the Porter scene, that brings temporary relief from tension, but that simultaneously recalls the themes of the play.

In Macbeth's greeting to the Witches, he aligns his complicity with these symbols of darkness and deceit referring to them as "secret, black, and midnight hags!" (IV.i.48). In answer to Macbeth's question, "What is't you do?" (IV.i.49) with his echoic usage of "it" and "do" the Witches answer in ambiguous terms: "A deed without a name" (IV.i.49). This equivocal language should be "understood" by Macbeth. This nameless deed covertly liaises the evil of the Witches with that of Macbeth. This reply, given by all the Witches, shows that they exist beyond the bounds of "normal" language and reality, but their deceptive words play a vital role in inciting Macbeth who is ripe for disinformation. The Witches lack a moral vocabulary of light, and Macbeth by his own choice, is attuned to these instruments of Darkness. Early in the play, Macbeth exclaims with anguish his recognition of his own evil, "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself" (11.ii.72).

Macbeth uses a language of a startled yet inquiring nature in Act I scene iii, when he meets the Witches for the first time and hears the prophecies. However, in Act IV scene i, equating with his changed character, Macbeth addresses the Witches with a style of language that has a weird incantatory quality, that resembles that of the Witches. Now, when prevarication and intrigue are a way of life to him, he demands boldly, and the change in his character is shown in his forceful approach to the Witches. He almost orders the Witches to give him insight into the future:

I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me
(IV.i.50 - 51);

and

... answer me
To what I ask you

(IV.i.60 - 61).

The second group of prophecies are more complex than the first, but they once again motivate the action. To Macbeth, the First Apparition appears straightforward, for the prophecy is, "beware Macduff;/Beware the Thane of Fife (IV.i.71 - 72). These lines are a reference to equivocation. In Macbeth's attempt to destroy Macduff and his family, he sets into action a sequence of events that result in his own destruction.

The prophecy of the Second Apparition, a bloody child, is

... laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth

(IV.i.79 - 81).

In a sense, this prophecy is also equivocal. Transformed in meaning and appearance "bloody", which reinforces the imagery of blood in the play, refers both to the "bloody" murder of Macduff's son and the bloodiness of Macduff having been untimely ripped from the womb of his mother. Revenge for blood, caused by murder, will bring Macduff back to Scotland in search of Macbeth's blood.

After the two previous symbols of destruction, the Third Apparition, "a child crowned, with a tree in his hand", dispels Macbeth's fears, for once again by disinformation it assures Macbeth that he

... shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him

(IV.i.92 - 94).

Macbeth misinterprets the Third Apparition, for it is in fact Malcolm that is "crowned" and the tree is a sign of the uprooted tree that is used as camouflage from "Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill". Once again, what at first appears to be so "fair" for Macbeth is in fact "foul".

When Macbeth demands to know of the Witches whether Banquo's issue will ever reign, he is answered more emphatically than before, that they will. It is interesting to note that Macbeth, whose words are ambiguous, can only see by halves. As much as the first prophecy of the Witches seemed favourable to Macbeth, this second prophecy is unfavourable to him and he curses "this pernicious hour" (IV.i.133).

Macbeth throws in his lot with the Witches, and he is confident that these forces will never boomerang. He accepts the prophecies of the Witches, that he will not be overthrown until Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane, as a guarantee of earthy protection. The play's strong symbolism describes its full circle when this prophecy is fulfilled by apparent, not real, violations of order.

Shakespeare uses a type of rhetoric of indirection in the language of witchcraft. The certain-sounding predictions illustrate the ultimate use of language to cloak reality. Their existence is beyond the bounds of reality and language, but their deceptive words play a vital part in disinforming Macbeth and inciting and encouraging Macbeth's horrific deeds.

9 I'LL MAKE ASSURANCE DOUBLE SURE

The first two sets of murders instigated by Macbeth set a precedent for the third set of murders. Macbeth has developed into an accomplished murderer. His woodenness and bloody-mindedness are one of the sources of his self-deception, and consequently he assesses a situation in terms of preconceived notions whilst ignoring any contrary signs. He acts according to desire and does not consider the facts or possible consequences. His overriding passion has led to corruption and suicidal folly. Lady Macbeth, his initial partner in crime, does not even appear in these scenes as she had done at the banquet and during Duncan's murder. Macbeth needs no support.

Macbeth deliberates with himself and argues for and against the murder of Macduff. Macduff holds no fear for Macbeth, but the now accomplished murderer decides

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of Fate: thou shalt not live
(IV.i.83 - 84).

When Macbeth hears that Macduff has eluded him, he once more turns to the horribly proliferated "deed". In his attempt to secure his position, Macbeth's approach to the third murder is one of savage ruthlessness. Macbeth's prevarication ends when he no longer has any need to lie. When he orders the murders of Macduff's family, he does so without any thought of an alibi. The speed with which he degenerates is marked by the speed with which he decides on the third murder:

Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand
(IV.i.144 - 148).

The image of pursuit makes one aware that the "flighty purpose" cannot catch success. However, Macbeth has to take the risk for he cannot stop at this stage. All those that stand in Macbeth's path, "That trace him in his line" (IV.i.153), must be annihilated. Macbeth, in his sterile state, makes war with Macduff's children which is a sign of his weakness:

Seize upon Fife; give to th'edge o'th'sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line

(IV.i.151 - 153).

In the murder scene that follows, Macduff's son symbolizes a force which threatens Macbeth: it is a force which he is unable to annihilate. The youth defies the murderers: good will overpower evil forces: "Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!" (IV.ii.83).

Part of the Witches's prophecy is that although Macbeth should have the crown, the crown will pass to Banquo's children, and it is the latter part of this prophecy that worries Macbeth. Macbeth attempts to war with the future, a future over which he has no manipulating powers. Macbeth's murder plan of Banquo and Fleance becomes meaningless, for Fleance escapes: he fears Banquo's children. It is therefore appropriate that the counsel he seeks is revealed through the two Apparitions of the crowned babe and the bloody babe, for the "babe signifies the future which Macbeth would control and cannot control" (Brooks, 1971:35).

Imagery and language indicate violent turbulence throughout the play. Rosse tells Lady Macduff of the chaotic world where no one knows anyone else. He speaks for all the "fair" characters of the world and of the evil that he fears:

But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,

But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move

(IV.ii.18 - 22).

The agony of the chaos in man is reflected in the violence of the sea: in his disturbed state man is pitched to and fro. The storm imagery obscures all light and darkness prevails. It is part of a wider disorder symbolism, that embodies earth, sun, air, animal and above all Macbeth.

There is harmony in Malcolm's description of the holy king of England, who is a health giver, as opposed to Macbeth the tyrant who breeds evil. England's king is full of grace:

He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace

(IV.iii.157 - 159).

Immediately after this, Rosse brings the news of Macbeth's most dastardly crime - the murder of Lady Macduff and her children. There is a vivid and pregnant contrast between the supernatural grace of the King of England, and the dark supernatural evil of Macbeth. It is Scotland that needs medicine to cure the wounds caused by Macbeth's destructive rule, and Malcolm suggests

Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief

(IV.iii.214 - 215).

It was believed that kings, good and bad, fashioned their countries in their own image. Scotland is infected by the feverishness of the tyrant "whose sole name blisters our tongues" (IV.iii.12). In the play, a contrast is suggested between the King of England, Edward the Confessor, who

possesses the King's touch, "The healing benediction" (IV.iii.156), and who rules by miraculous healing, and Macbeth who infects and destroys.

Macduff's penalty for helping to save Scotland is the savage slaughter of his wife and babes. Macduff's reactions to the slaughter are necessary to enhance the chaos under the tyrant Macbeth, who is the cause for the good things of day to suffer. Good is temporarily powerless and the land itself is bleeding: "Bleed, bleed, poor country!" (IV.iii.31).

Macduff's silence and restraint that follows after he has heard the news of the murder of his family, is indicated by Malcolm:

What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:
Give sorrow words; the grief, that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break
(IV.iii.208 - 210).

Malcolm describes Macduff's silence as a natural symptom that expresses the extent of his grief. The pause also gives the audience time to reflect on the immensity of the atrocity that has been committed: perhaps it also gives the audience, and definitely the reader, cause to reflect on the contrasting mode of reaction between Macduff now, and Macbeth's earlier hypocritical rhetoric after the discovery of Duncan's murder.

When Macduff hears that his wife and children have been murdered, by means of simple, emotion-packed questions he elicits the information:

My children too?
...
My wife kill'd too?

(IV.iii.211 - 213).

As he realizes the horror of the deed, his use of simple questions continues, and the repetition of "all" increases the horrific deed. Not one of his dear ones remains:

... All my pretty ones?
 Did you say all? - O Hell-kite! - All?
 What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
 At one fell swoop?

(IV.iii.216 - 219).

The simplicity of his speech creates a depth of emotion that reveals his honest reaction, as compared with Macbeth's dishonest ebullient outburst when the murder of Duncan is discovered. Macbeth reveals that he is indeed not "young in deed" (III.iv.143). He intends to make "assurance double sure" (IV.i.83). As Macbeth rises higher in the physical world of power, so does he sink deeper into evil on the spiritual level, until he is finally destroyed - physically and spiritually.

Symbolically, Macbeth's progress reflects the operation of evil in both the inner and outer action, and the other characters in the play contribute either positively - the Witches and Lady Macbeth - or negatively - Malcolm and Macduff - in the action of the hero. When Shakespeare presented the green boughs of Birnam Wood against the almost impregnable fortress of Macbeth, he created a great image of the victory of life over death and consequently of mercy over justice. The youths, who carry the boughs of Birnam Wood before them, bear the promise of life.

10 IMPLOSION

10.1 Will These Hands Ne'er Be Clean?

Lady Macbeth's final appearance is in the sleep-walking scene. Bradley (1971:336) states that Shakespeare adheres to custom in the sleep-walking scene, for prose is generally used to indicate an abnormal condition and since somnambulism is an abnormal condition, Shakespeare assigns prose to Lady Macbeth as her state of mind is abnormal. The rhythm of verse would not adequately express a mind that has lost its balance.

Lady Macbeth declines from a vital, passionate woman to a languid, exhausted woman. After the banquet scene, her sentences are pallid: they decline to the mutterings of the sleep-walking scene. In this scene, she reveals that she retains a trace of the forces of life that had once been so real and potent, for the dominant thought that her speech leaves is that she still "loves" her husband.

The Gentlewoman in Act V scene i, refuses to repeat what Lady Macbeth has said in her somnambulant behaviour and consequently both the Doctor and the audience listen more carefully. Shakespeare uses this as a device to enforce and demand the audience's attention.

Although Lady Macbeth uses only sixteen muttered statements, five of these take an interrogative form. She recalls the past crimes and atrocities in a disordered sequence. This disordered sequence reveals the disordered and unbalanced state of her mind. Earlier, Lady Macbeth had spoken in positive terms, "what's done is done" (111.ii.12). Now in her disordered state of mind she ruefully speaks the truth in negatives: "What's done cannot be undone" (V.i.64).

In her confused state, Lady Macbeth goes back into the past and chides Macbeth's lack of courage: "Fie, my Lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard?"

(V.i.34 - 35). This compressed and staccato question echoes her earlier taunting of Macbeth's courage and manhood:

... Art thou afeard
 To be the same in thine own act and valour,
 As thou art in desire?

(1.vii.39 - 41).

She continues in the same strain that follows in Act 1 scene vii: she questions her earlier confidence: "What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to accompt?" (V.i.35 - 37). This is reminiscent of her reply to Macbeth's queries about their being thought guilty of Duncan's murder, for then she replied with force: "Who dares receive it other" (1.vii.78).

She immediately switches her thoughts back to the horror after the murder. Her rhetorical question recalls the terrible sight she witnessed on returning to the murder chamber: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (V.i.37 - 38). In her disturbed state, Lady Macbeth oscillates through time: she recalls the most recent murder: "The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?" (V.i.40 - 41). This question immediately arouses the need for the washing of her hands again. This time, as Lady Macbeth moves back into the present, there is exasperation in her plea: "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" (V.i.41).

The rhetorical questions Lady Macbeth uses in the sleep-walking scene, show her returning to her severest moments of guilt. Here, I think, for the first time we pity her. In each of her short staccato speeches and questions, her memory stabs her conscience that cries out and tortures her. We see a broken woman who thought, that with one tremendous effort of repressing her conscience, she could attain and maintain "sovereign sway and masterdom" (1.v.70). Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking scene, aided by rhetorical questions that recall the heinous acts, reflects the play's action that has been a walking nightmare.

Lady Macbeth cannot remove the symbolic stain of blood from her memory and we are shown her - in her lonely agony - trying to deal with the "spot", which a little water was to have cleaned and cleared. Exasperated, she continually washes her hands during the sleep-walking scene, for her obsession is uncleanness. She uses a ratiocinative question, that reveals her emotional struggle with her conscience and blood that has been her undoing: "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" (V.i.41).

Duncan's murder and the incredible spread of blood haunts her in her sleep-walking. However, it is not only the stain of blood that she cannot remove, but she is also plagued by the "smell" of blood: "Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!" (V.i.47 - 49).

Symbolically, Lady Macbeth is completely enveloped in blood. She can see it on herself: "Out, damned spot!" (V.i.33). She sees blood flowing in her awful memory, "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (V.i.37 - 38). She smells the staleness of the blood that she cannot "sweeten" with her feminine use of perfume, for there is nothing that can camouflage the conscience's smell of the dead that clings to her brain. She visualizes her husband's hands covered in blood, and orders him to "Wash your hands" (V.i.58). Blood surrounds her: on herself, and on those of whom she thinks - Macbeth, who cannot loosen the feeling he has of "His secret murders sticking on his hands" (V.ii.17), Duncan, Banquo and Lady Macduff. The part she has played in the shedding of blood is the symbolic cause of her state, for "blood will have blood" (111.iv.121).

Lady Macbeth has seen blood expanding as she sees Macbeth turn into a bloody tyrant, who attempts to keep her "innocent" of the knowledge because he fears those who share a secret lest they betray him. Lady Macbeth is aware of the hopeless realization that she was part of the duplicity that results in the now estranged Macbeth going into motion. I suggest her hopeless question, "What's to be done?" (111.ii.44), is the clue to her collapse and the implosion of her being, that leads to her suicide.

Because of "a great perturbation in nature", Lady Macbeth cannot give rest to her agonised consciousness. Blood is sensory in *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth imagines a union with her estranged husband by means of their joining of their bloody hands, "Come, come, come, give me your hand" (V.i.63). Her final words, "To bed, to bed, to bed" (V.i.64 - 65) echo the need for sleep that has been poisoned by evil acts. Shakespeare's repetition of "come" and "bed" shows Lady Macbeth pleading for, and desperately needing the nearness of her partner in crime, as she slides down into the vacuity from which she cannot escape: a void caused by her actions.

Finally, Lady Macbeth's "unnatural deeds" - her prevarication, cunning, shrewdness, slyness and hypocrisy together with the evil actions - have brought about the spiritual darkness in which she exists. Her command is that "she has light by her continually" (V.i.21), yet this light does not allow her sight, for even with light to guide her, she finds hell is more "murky" than she had imagined:

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense are shut

(V.i.23 - 24).

Figuratively, this is the true Lady Macbeth who, as a prevaricator, obliquely hid the truth and who now reveals her guilty secrets. To the Gentlewoman's statement "Heaven knows what she has known" (V.i.46), one might add "and hell knows too".

Physically she has sight, but spiritually she is in darkness. She called on "thick night" to envelop her and this has brought her the extreme agony of a living nightmare. Lady Macbeth endures a sleep that is not the balm of hurt minds, and an endless night because of her participation in, and her persuasion of Macbeth to commit the murder. As her husband grows more powerful through crime, she becomes more lonely, frustrated and dwindles in significance.

Shakespeare uses the Doctor and Gentlewoman as a means of explicating what the "normal" world thinks of the now "abnormal" Lady Macbeth, and also for indicating Lady Macbeth's change in life style. We are likely to be unprejudiced by the Doctor's report of Lady Macbeth, for in his professional capacity, he is called in to treat the "perturbations" of Lady Macbeth. In his detection of her sickness of soul, he says: "This disease is beyond my practice" (V.i.55). He refrains from prescribing for her "infected" (V.i.69) mind, for he realizes that, "More needs she the divine than the physician" (V.i.71). The Doctor diagnoses the nature of Lady Macbeth's sickness, and once again we are made aware of Lady Macbeth's character. The dialogue used by the Doctor in his description of her reveals her changed mental condition:

Not so sick, my Lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest

(V.iii.37 - 39).

Although the Doctor is distressed by his diagnosis of her state, he is concerned about the welfare of Lady Macbeth. He has no wish to expose what she has said, and he pleads with the Divine Physician to guard her and mankind:

God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her

(V.i.72 - 74).

The use of long vowels and the repetition of God slow down the tempo of the verse. In his plea to remove annoyances from Lady Macbeth, the Doctor hints and prepares us for her suicide.

The Doctor is consistent when Macbeth questions him about the cure for his wife:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
 Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
 Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
 And with some sweet oblivious antidote
 Cleanse the stuff'd bosom

(V.iii.40 - 44).

Macbeth's gestures are spasmodic and he realizes he is completely engulfed. His belief that universal confusion and congestion is past cure is shown up in his use of imagery:

What rhubarb, cyme or what purgative drug,
 Would scour these English hence?

(V.iii.55 - 56).

None of these will help.

Lady Macbeth's personal confusion, anguish and disorientation can be traced directly to the conflict within her that results in a cataclysmic implosive shudder. The once prevaricating, dynamic and proud woman slowly disintegrates both physically and spiritually, and then implodes to her end. I agree with Wilson Knight (1972:152) when he says of Lady Macbeth, "she is left shattered, a human wreck who mutters over again in sleep the hideous memories of her former satanic hour of pride".

10.2 I Have Liv'd Long Enough

Muir (1973b:149) summarizes *Macbeth* when he says that "the subject of the play is murder, and the prevalence of blood ensures that we shall never forget the physical realities in metaphysical overtones".

Angus comments on Macbeth, when he uses the terrible bloodless metaphor: "Now does he feel/His secret murders sticking on his hands" (V.ii.16 - 17). Like Lady Macbeth, Macbeth is enveloped by the blood he has caused to

flow and he realizes this after Duncan's murder when he says:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand?

(11.ii.59 - 60).

Macbeth can neither temper nor mask the flow of blood he has caused and desperation is his only recourse. He admits that he is wading in blood, an image that in Elizabethan times had the connotation of a brutal, savage purpose. He is a uniquely disillusioned bloody tyrant, for not only does blood merely stick to his hands, it is also the element surrounding him in which he moves. For both Lady Macbeth and Macbeth hands are important, and as the spots and smell are terrible for Lady Macbeth, so is the sticking quality of blood horrific for Macbeth. Macbeth is not showing compassion for Macduff when he says:

Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already

(V.viii.4 - 6).

I consider this a spiritually implosive desperate outcry from Macbeth, who is spiritually satiated with blood, and who must now physically confront the death-bringing man of blood, as Macduff appeared in the Apparition.

Macbeth is correct when he foresees that "blood will have blood" (111.iv.121), for finally Macbeth, the "bloodier villain" (V.viii.7) is slain by Macduff who "was from his mother's womb/Untimely ripp'd" (V.viii.15 - 16). Nature, whose order has been disturbed by Macbeth, revenges itself against Macbeth through Macduff, who was born by a "bloody" and unnatural process.

At the close of Act II, Macduff, who has doubts with regard to Macbeth's

character and his honesty, decides against going to Scone and hopes Rosse and the Old Man will see things "well done there" (11.iv.37), and adds ironically: "Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!" (11.iv.38). Macduff's parting words to Rosse leave no doubt as to his attitude towards Macbeth, for although Macbeth is temporarily successful with his first murder, he has alienated himself from Macduff's affections.

In the last Act, both Cathness and Angus speak of Macbeth's rule in relation to ill-fitting garments. Cathness says:

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule

(V.ii.15 -16).

The alliterative /b/ of "buckle" and "belt" emphasize the relationship between a buckle and a belt. Related to the "buckle" is Macbeth's "distemper'd cause" and similarly is "belt" related to "rule". Therefore, as a buckle is a part of the belt, so too is "his distemper'd cause" relative to his "rule". All the evil deeds Macbeth has committed cannot be hidden by his "stolen clothes".

In his reply, Angus continues the image, and the clothing imagery reaches its climax:

... now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief

(V.ii.20 - 22).

Through his evil deeds, the brave hero has descended to the "dwarfish thief", "a small ignoble man encumbered and degraded by garments unsuited to him" (Spurgeon, 1968:326). I partly agree with this statement of Caroline Spurgeon's, but I consider the garments are not "unsuited", but

rather "stolen" garments. I would suggest Macbeth be compared with "an evil ignoble man encumbered and degraded by stolen garments of his own choice".

Clothes represent the mere borrowings, sophistications of nature, and of corrupt civilized man: they must be discarded.

Macbeth accepts that in the battle between him and nature, nature has won and deceit has lost. In Act V, Macbeth, the prevaricator, reflects on the cloaked loyalty dressed in hypocrisy that has been afforded him, and with mournful eloquence of his hopeless future he voices the empty loneliness that is a result of his actions:

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

(V.iii.24 - 26).

These attributes that should accompany him in his "old age" he did once have: he won honour and acclaim in battle: his King loved and honoured him: obedience was afforded him: and he had many admirers. However, his overriding ambition, that led him to lies and underhand means of achieving his aims, has resulted in his isolation.

The question that opens the main action of the play is: "What bloody man is that?" (I.ii.1) and Macbeth's "answer" is his hand "will rather/The multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red" (11.ii.60 -62), thus showing evil spreading through the universe. The terrible deed reflected in the bloody hand will contaminate the waters of the earth. However, since evil cannot triumph permanently, we find that finally the "youth", the "green" boughs of Birnam, will rise up against and triumph over the evil of Dunsinane.

Shakespeare unifies the plant and clothing imagery when the Messenger reports to Macbeth:

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move

(V.v.33 - 35).

Macbeth, the prevaricator, responds by calling the Messenger a "Liar, and slave!" (V.v.35). As the youth and greenness of Birnam Wood advances towards Dunsinane, Macbeth begins to doubt his security and safety. He begins to have slight doubts about the prophecies:

I pull in resolution; and begin
To doubt th'equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth

(V.v.42 - 44).

Macbeth is correct when he speaks of the "equivocation" of the "fiend", but he is incorrect when he says that they "lie" "like truth". They did not lie - they were ambiguous. He chose to be disinformed and to interpret the prophecy in the light of what he would wish to happen. Macbeth, who has staked his hopes on the Witches's prophecies, "has the trick turned against him" for, as Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane, "the garment which cloaks the avengers is the living green of nature itself, and nature seems, to the startled eyes of his sentinels, to be rising up against him" (Brooks, 1971:37).

As Macbeth begins to be aware of the sun, his view of life narrows and he blindly defies military safety and caution:

... Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back

(V.v.51 - 52).

What he risks militarily is trivial in comparison with what he spiritually risks in "Blow wind! come, wrack!", for he desperately invites destruction, and one is reminded of his conjuring of the Witches: "Though you untie the winds, and let them fight/Against the Churches" (IV.i.52 - 53). Macbeth's most disturbing utterances emanate from his spiritual symptoms of despair. Lady Macbeth has a physical and spiritual implosion: Macbeth has a spiritual implosion.

The steady marching rhythm is noticed in the speeches made by members of the forces of good in Act V.ii.25 - 29:

Wéll; márch we ón,
Tõ gíve óbédíence whére 'tiš trůlý ów'd:
Měet we thě méd'cíne óf thě sícklý weál;
Aňd wíth hím pour wě, ín ous countrý's purge,
Eáč dróp óf ús.

In contrast to the steady marching rhythm of the military scenes, Macbeth's scenes in Act V show nervous excitability. They are abrupt and at times show convulsive movement. Macbeth is divided in mind and purpose, and this distraction is evident in his speech:

Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it. -
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff. -
Seyton, send out - Doctor, the Thanes fly from me. -
Come, sir, despatch. - If thou couldst, Doctor, cast
The water of my land

(V.iii.47 - 51).

In this disjointed speech, Macbeth reveals himself to be a man with a mind "full of scorpions". His thoughts are divided between his addresses to the Doctor and those to Seyton.

The speed of the action causes the scenes to move quickly. In the last Act, although the action moves with overwhelming speed, the Act is planned minutely as the forces of good surround and envelop Macbeth. The only slow scene in the Act is Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking scene, and this is a preparation, for it adds to the illusion of swiftness that follows.

Through the compact dialogue of Menteth, Cathness, Angus and Lenox an urgent note is indicated. This dramatic impetus is continued in the following scene, as Macbeth hurls undisciplined and angry questions at his servant that are indicative of his agitated and distracted mind:

Where gott'st thou that goose look?

...

Geese, villain?

...

Go, prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,

Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?

Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine

Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

(V.iii.12 - 17)

Macbeth's angry, short manner temporarily abates with "I am sick at heart" (V.iii.19) that shows his awareness of new perceptions, for he realizes his helplessness and his state of isolation. His waves of temporary weariness appear to spark him alive with new vigour, for with determination he prepares to fight: "I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd" (V.iii.32). Like a caged animal, Macbeth begins to defend himself. His mind, that paces up and down, is reflected in his angry shout at his servant to remove his armour, "Pull't off, I say" (V.iii.54). His annoyance is reflected in "I say", and as the "caged" Macbeth stalks off, he growls at his servant to follow with his armour, "Bring it after me" (V.iii.58). The interrupted comments to both the Doctor and servant indicate Macbeth's irritable and near frenzied state of mind.

The changing pace and tempo of the dialogue reflects Macbeth's actions that vacillate between rashness and stillness. He is at war with his surroundings and the storm raging in his racing mind.

His waves of spiritual weariness ebb and flow. As he reaches the depth of physical and spiritual exhaustion, he is suddenly physically kindled to revived endurance. However, the depth of his isolation becomes lower with every wavelet, until he implodes in his dispirited "To-morrow" speech. Physically he is again renewed to face the end, but spiritually he has imploded.

Macbeth's despair is sounded in his reaction to the news of his wife's death, and this is the final lull prior to his frenzied attack to prevent his kissing of the ground "before young Malcolm's feet" (V.viii.28). Macbeth willingly embraces damnation, and after he has given his "eternal jewel" to the "common enemy of man", disorder degenerates into lifelessness and a virtual negation of life, that is given expression in Macbeth's "To-morrow" speech. He reveals that he knows his life to be meaningless because he has brought about his own damnation by his crimes and he fights for his physical life. Macbeth cannot repent, and initially he refuses to fight Macduff. When he realizes that he must do so or be "baited with the rabble's curse" (V.viii.29), he opposes Macduff with satanic defiance. We see Macbeth as a man terrible in his desperation and in his sense of isolation. In his despair, that recalls and contrasts with his former valour, he departs with a sense of loss. He significantly compares himself to a bear tied to a stake, for "bear-like, I must fight the course" (V.vii.2).

Sleep is accepted as being the privilege of the good and innocent: it follows that since sleep is murdered, goodness, symbolically, no longer has a place in Macbeth's life. This hideous murdering of sleep is the central act of the play, and results in Macbeth's ultimate weariness and isolation both of his spiritual and physical being.

Macbeth acknowledges the autumn of his life and the autumnal image is poetically apt, for the "yellow leaf" evokes visual and tactile responses that dramatize his sense of brittleness and his dying, ambitious hopes. Most of the plant imagery is used by those who have not committed unnatural deeds. The only growth imagery used by Macbeth relates to decay: the "yellow leaf" and the darkening effect of the "summer cloud". This is appropriate, for Macbeth infects and destroys - he does not generate.

As Macbeth's long reign of terror and evil draws to a close, bright daylight dawns on Macbeth. He recognizes himself as a tyrant: regains a partial integrity of his soul: and from a state of secrecy, hypocrisy and prevarication, he resigns himself to an honest relationship with his environment and surroundings:

I have liv'd long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf

(V.iii.22 - 23).

In this moment of clear self-recognition, Macbeth echoes his emotions that he expressed in the phrase "I am in blood/Stepp'd in so far" (III.iv.135 - 136). He faces up to his course of life squarely. In his weary statement, "I have liv'd long enough", he acknowledges his separation from the world in which his "way of life/Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf".

The weariness and slowing of the pace of his life is reflected in the sonorous vowel sounds, that are frequently lengthened by final consonants /v/ in "liv'd", /f/ in "life", /ŋ/ in "long". The final word endings indicate a prominence of the breathed labio-dental fricative /f/, the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/, and the remaining word endings are the voiced alveolar resonant nasal /n/ and the voiced velar resonant nasal /ŋ/:

I have liv'd long enough: my way of life
 Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf
 (My italics).

There are seventeen words in these two lines of verse, of which six have a voiced alveolar lateral /l/. The formation of the lateral /l/ with the tongue touching the teeth-ridge tends to slow down the pace of the passage, and enforce on us the weariness that Macbeth experiences.

This weariness, that is found in the sound texture in this passage, comes from the cohesive linkage of several types of phonological repetition: the repetition of the lateral /l/, of the breathed and voiced labio-dental fricatives /f/ and /v/, of the nasal resonators /n/ and /ŋ/ and of the diphthong /aɪ/ in "I", "my", and "life" and /ɪə/ in "sere".

The pararhyme of "life" and "leaf" links "his way of life", that is now "the yellow leaf", and heightens our poetic awareness of the image. The varied grammatical repetition of "liv'd" and "life" - from verbal to noun - adds cohesion to the concept of weariness and exhaustion. His "way of life" has caused his hopelessness reflected in "I have liv'd long enough".

The strangeness of the change in time describes the time-medium in which Macbeth lives. Macbeth's hearing is assaulted by the cry, without words, offstage and he queries: "What is that noise?" (V.v.7). He is told that it is the cry of women. The uncanny cry echoes and is as mysterious as the voice he heard during the murder of Duncan. He comments on his inability to react emotionally to the horror of the cry, which I consider indicates his pre-implosive state, where his nerves are virtually dead to the cry of humanity:

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
 The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
 To hear a night-shriek

(V.v.9 - 10).

Macbeth is aware that time has dulled his ability to fear, for he realises that there was a time - "the time has been" - when such a shriek would have "cool'd" his senses. The musical setting sets the scene for Macbeth's major human experience, and for the sinister manner of Lady Macbeth's death. His comment on life that is "full of sound and fury,/Signifying nothing" (V.v.27 - 28) is truer to tangible experience than to abstract imagery.

Macbeth's reaction to his wife's death - his original partner in crime - is also indicative of his estrangement from the world, and although his words "She should have died hereafter" (V.v.16) are ambiguous, what is certain is his wearied reception of the news of her death. His reaction shows a hopeless vision of the future, that has no vital meaning: a succession of meaningless days that result in futility brought about by his crimes. Shakespeare's use of the stylistic repetitive device indicates Macbeth's boredom with the meaninglessness of his life that is a series of

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
 To the last syllable of recorded time

(V.v.19 - 21).

The monotony of the repetition of "to-morrow", followed by the comma that enforces a pause, and then joined by the conjunction "and" to another "to-morrow", conveys the idea of an endless conveyor belt of the meaningless monotony of life. The sonorous vowel sounds of "to-morrow" and the tediousness of Macbeth's meaningless life are captured and reflected in the endless monotony of "from day to day", and in the long vowel sound of "creep" /kri:p/ that indicates the action of a dragging, slow motion.

This speech is given its terrible force by its contrast to the volume of what has preceded it and by the contrast within itself. The rhythm of the music of the speech is mournful and slow indicating Macbeth's

hopelessness, and the diction shows his lugubrious bitterness in his denial of everything in life that gives meaning or hope.

The weariness and exhaustion is captured in his phrase "petty pace" - the unimportant, trivial matters that are measured by a slow and regular gait. Shakespeare may well have substituted "trivial" for "petty". His use of "petty" draws attention to his alliterative use of the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/, and the voiceless quality of the plosive endorses the weariness that persists from "day to day,/To the last syllable of recorded time". In these three lines, Macbeth has dealt with the endless to-morrows and meaninglessness of the future.

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death

(V.v.22 - 23).

Macbeth now considers the past - the "yesterdays". He is aware that all his "yesterdays" - his past deeds and crimes, his prevarication, deceit and lies, have been the cause and reason for his present despondent state, and he includes himself among the "fools". The alliterative /d/ in "dusty death" enforces his realization of the finality of the end - death. The choice of "dusty" recalls "dust to dust", and by means of this compactness of thought contained in the conciseness of "dusty death", the whole futility that Macbeth expresses is revealed. He realizes that his equivocation and deceitful guises have led to an emptiness and void of living and partly living.

Macbeth, who has been a hypocrite, sadly reflects on the hypocritical loyalty that is shown to him: he likens life to a walking shadow. Macbeth's lack of feeling and emptiness expressed in "Life's but a walking shadow" is the essence of his tragedy. Through unnatural evil deeds his life, which he had hoped would be so full, is but a simulacrum:

... Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more: ...

(V.v.23 - 26).

In his despondent state, he sees people - and himself - that make up life as "poor players". The stage imagery is continued, for the player - as he has done - "struts and frets his hour upon the stage". He has played a part - a prevaricator and liar, a murderer and a hypocrite - that was full of "sound and fury" and that now signifies "nothing".

Leech (1974:151) points out that although "at face value, this purports to be a series of definitions of *life* ... they are plainly not the definitions for that term we would expect to find in a dictionary". In literal terms life is not a walking shadow. Leech (1974:151) states that with the metaphoric use of a clause structure based on the verb *to be*, we actually understand "life is, *as it were*, a walking shadow". Through metaphor, the tenor and the vehicle appear to be identical: yet as Leech continues, "Macbeth's very words are appropriate (though not his sentiments): 'Life' may seem to be a mere 'shadow' of the inner reality captured through metaphor". In this speech the falsity of appearances is revived, for Macbeth shows his awareness of the deceitfulness of life.

At this stage of the play, the fineness of the reflective poetry and of the thoughts conveyed give Macbeth the opportunity to reflect on his past wicked and evil ways, and temporarily slow down the very fast pace of the last scenes of Act V.

The change of pace is signalled, not only by the philosophical thoughts, but by the language, and the punctuation. The semicolon after "Life's but a walking shadow; ..." enforces a pause that is necessary after the quiet long vowels. In the staccato, hard spluttering of "struts" and "frets", by

which the effort of the battle to live is illustrated, there is a brief pause, the comma after "stage", and then follows the contrast of "And then is heard no more: ...". After the sonorous vowels of *no* and *more* and the resonators /n/ and /m/, there is a pause: the colon after "more" allows for the emptiness, vacuity, and futility to be assimilated.

In this speech, Shakespeare gives expression to Macbeth's tormented vision by means of verbal music that describes his unmitigated gloom and ripeness for his spiritual implosion. Finally, the hypocrisy and deceit comes to an end, for life is

. . . a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing

(V.v.26 - 28).

Macbeth likens life to a tale that has all the pounding of "sound and fury" - all the noise and cross-currents of violence - but which in the final instance is only a tale "Signifying nothing". Shakespeare makes use of a short line that emphasizes the shortness and futility of the tale and shows a despondent bitterness. The foregrounding of the resonant corresponding present participle suffixes of "ing" in "Signifying nothing" culminates Macbeth's epitaph to his wife, and summarizes his thoughts of the valuelessness of all he has done. He compares man's ambitions and short-sighted attempts to flickering candles, "Out, out brief candle!" that light this short, brief and tedious journey to an ignoble end: an end that signifies emptiness and nothingness. Macbeth's image of the candle links and echoes Lady Macbeth's walking in her sleep with "light by her continually", for that "brief candle" also flickered and died.

Macbeth's deceitful ways culminate in his bitter awareness that while he was deceiving others he, through his own fault in taking their information and allowing himself to be disinformated, has been deceived himself by the Witches:

And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
 That palter with us in double sense;
 That keep the word of promise to our ear,
 And break it to our hope

(V.viii.19 - 22).

The Witches have been "juggling fiends" to Macbeth due to his own volition. Macbeth was receptive to their prophecies: Banquo rejected them. Macbeth refers to the Witches paltering with him in a "double sense": the prevaricator Macbeth was not able to see the equivocation presented to him by the Witches. They could "palter" with him in a "double sense" only because he allowed this, and because he was far too occupied in planning and plotting his heinous deeds. He was too busy paltering in a "double sense" when he hired the assassins and falsely persuaded them to kill Banquo: he lured them into believing that Banquo was their enemy. Macbeth's "double" dealings were actual and intended: the Witches's "double sense" was misinterpreted by Macbeth.

In the last two lines, Shakespeare stylistically shows the expectancy of hope balanced and dropped by disillusionment:

That keep the word of promise to our ear,
 And break it to our hope

(V.viii.21 - 22).

Line 21 indicates the longing of "hope", whereas in the following line hopes are dashed: "promise" is a word that is binding in connotation - however, it is an assumed and implied "promise", for at no stage did the Witches "promise" Macbeth anything. He assumed the "promise". The verbal opposites "keep" and "break" add cohesion to the poetic thought.

The Witches are a part of the disorder in the play: they are symbols of external evil that take advantage of internal evil. It is only at the end of the play that Macbeth realizes this, and he echoes the content of Banquo's

description of the "unnatural hags" who "palter with us in a double sense" (V.viii.20). I consider Macbeth's spiritual implosion takes place when he realizes what he has done and what the consequences are. Saint James (Holy Bible, 1982:290) summarizes Macbeth's realizations:

But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition
in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the
truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven
but it is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you
have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and
every evil practice.

The structural device of acceleration and deceleration, and the audience's emotional response to this variation of tempo and emotion, is completely exhausting. Macduff's triumphant entrance with Macbeth's head in the last scene announcing the "the time is free" (V.ix.21) brings the play to a close. I agree with Styan (1967:228) when he says that "a relentless agglomeration of horror" has been played out "until retribution finds Macbeth all but as distracted and stampeded as the spectator".

11 CONCLUSION

After the doom that results from the widespread violence ending in the Implosions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth heard in the beat of Chopin's "Funeral March", there is a place for rebirth in Grieg's "To the Spring", in that the living green, that cloaks youth who advance on the prevaricating and deceitful environs of Dunsinane, overpowers the evil forces. The survival of good and truth is now possible and plausible.

To a large extent, we are aware of the darkness and evil in the hushed ominous music of the verse and in the incantatory rhythms used by the protagonists in their invocations that create the mood of the play. Although other characters describe darkness with alien horror, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are an intimate part of the darkness, and are contributors to the physical and moral darkness - the untruths and deception.

Macbeth disinforms himself that the changes he instigates will somehow pass by undetected, and that nothing will shake his framework and political structure. He confidently hopes the future will continue as the present, but a bleaker vision comes into being in the nightmare scenarios. A quotation from the *Confessions* of St Augustine summarizes what Macbeth's hopes are (Turner, 1971:128): "Those two times therefore, the time past and the time future, how are they: since the time past is now no more, and the time future is not yet come? And as for the present, if it could be for ever present and not pass on to become time past, truly it should not be time but eternity".

From the evil action in the play, the moral criteria are: even in the most ruthless of people, evil will produce its own punishment: ambition will court evil if it is achieved at the expense of other people: and that evil is equated with disorder - evil can never produce order. Therefore, the composition of evil is found in reversal of values, unnatural disorder and

deceitful appearances. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare exposes what is within each one of us, what Banquo calls our "naked frailties" and I suggest, that to a greater or lesser degree, each one of us is guilty of nuances of prevarication.

Shakespeare does not allow Macbeth the heroic gesture of suicide, for as Ribner (1969:167) states: "His spiritual destruction must be reflected in an ignominious physical destruction, and the play ends with the gruesome spectacle of the murderer's head held aloft in triumph". Macbeth's spiritual destruction is reflected in his physical destruction, and the wheel must turn back to order and harmony. I agree with the conclusion Ribner (1969:167) draws with regard to the universality of *Macbeth*: "One man has been damned. But when we reflect upon the play in its totality we see that in spite of this there is order and meaning in the universe, that good may be reborn out of evil. We experience that feeling of reconciliation which is the ultimate test of tragedy".

The peaks of the waves that initiate evil within Macbeth are the Witches's scene, Macbeth's letter to Lady Macbeth, the murder of Duncan and the discovery of the murder, Macbeth's plan to murder Banquo, the feast attended by Banquo's ghost and the murder of the Macduff family. Through the analyses I have made, I have proved that there is a marked coefficient of correlation between the style and imagery and the nature of character and action in the arch-hypocritical prevaricator and betrayer, Macbeth, and his Good Lady, his partner in crime.

Macbeth's evil path ploughs through three main waves with each one obliterating earlier events and replacing them with a new way of life that is inconceivably evil. Initially, Macbeth ponderously queries and needs an assured alibi for the murder of Duncan: his murder of Banquo is a planned acceptance: finally, with the savage slaughtering of Lady Macduff and her family, murder becomes a way of life. The "To-morrow" for which he committed all his crimes will never exist, for he has no way

of thinking of to-morrow - no constructive way to prepare for the future and to change the present.

Styan (1969:121) states that real "coherence is possible because good dramatic impressions possess some quality of synthesis": in *Macbeth*, this synthesis is found in the tightly wrought pattern of poetic truth and untruth. "*Macbeth* is a play compact of transitions to provoke the audience into imaginative alertness" (Styan, 1969:130), and through the integration of the close-packed verbal imagery, the events and actions, the characters, and Shakespeare's use of language - that is the instrument he uses in communicating his ideas that reverberate through our being - we are made aware of the unified symphony of the balanced harmony of the play.

Macbeth is a rhythmically orchestrated (Styan's term) composition in which prevarication is the current used for furthering ambition that motivates the action of the drama. The play is a symphony of truth and deception, confusion, chaos and discord.

12 SUMMARY

I have proved that prevarication is a current that initiates the evil actions that are committed.

I have traced some of the oblique, dishonest euphemisms used by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in their language in their attempt to deceive themselves and others of their intentions. This linguistic device sharpens our awareness of their prevarication and avoidance of facing the truth, and their attempt at self-deception and equivocation. They enter into physical and spiritual duplicity.

The Witches are structurally important and function in contributing to the ambiguous action of the play, and initiate the symbolism of darkness and evil that prevails. Macbeth's echoic diction links him to the forces of equivocation. Banquo dismisses their information, whereas Macbeth's empathy with the Witches and his ripeness for corruption result in the same information becoming disinformation to him.

Macbeth's prevarication continues in order to secure his position obtained through heinous crimes and his lack of integrity in a world where it is difficult to distinguish appearance and reality.

Lady Macbeth reveals she is in corrupt collusion with Macbeth, is a prevaricator by means of obliquity and mutual intrigue, and shows her shrewdness and hypocrisy towards Duncan. She undermines logic, imagination and metaphysics and overpowers Macbeth's indecision to commit the murder, as she acts as a "thorn" to his conscience challenging his manhood and courage. Macbeth is coerced into acceding to the murder as a result of Lady Macbeth's bombastic exposure of the frailties violated by evil.

The images of blood and sight merge when Macbeth sees his horrific hands

after the murder - a murder that symbolically "murders" sleep. Shakespeare uses the Porter to indicate the "equivocator" is synonymous with Macbeth, the prevaricator.

Storms accompany the central action of the murder of Duncan, and the tremendous upheaval of nature reflects the tempest roaring within Macbeth. Macbeth's swollen, puffed up, deceptive language in his false declaration of his mourning for the loss of Duncan, illustrates his ability to prevaricate at his best. After Duncan's murder, Macbeth continues to secure his power and security by his desperate series of futile murders, which he commits without a moral self-catechismal examination of his conscience: he prevaricates with impunity.

From their earlier close intimate association there is a deterioration in the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: their ways have separated through guilt and lack of trust. Lady Macbeth declines to a languid, exhausted woman in the sleep-walking scene, as she recalls her past crimes and atrocities. Her personal confusion, anguish and disorientation result in a cataclysmic shudder that leads to her physical and spiritual implosion. Macbeth remains physically aggressive. His tactics for his physical confrontation with death are irrevocable: he suffers an isolated spiritual implosion in his virtual negation of life.

I have shown that *Macbeth* is an orchestrated composition in which prevarication is the tool used for furthering ambition that motivates the action of the drama.

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