

Title: "Mortal Thoughts" and Magical Thinking in Macbeth
Author(s): MARINA FAVILA
Source: *Modern Philology*. 99.1 (Aug. 2001): p1. From *Literature Resource Center*.
Document Type: Critical essay

Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts ...

(Lady Macbeth)

Mortal thoughts haunt Macbeth. Evil spirits tend them; Lady Macbeth inspires them; the hero embraces them. But like everything else in Macbeth, the term 'mortal thoughts' is deceptive, ambiguous to say the least. Try to define them and you move quickly from thoughts of murder to murderous thoughts, killing thoughts, thoughts that can kill and thus magical thoughts. Lady Macbeth calls on unholy spirits and begs them to take away her mother's "milk o' human kindness" and fill her breast instead with thoughts of killing, thoughts that will magically rid her of remorse and prompt her to plan a murder. (Not surprisingly, two scenes later she swears by a mother who replaces maternal nourishment with a murderous whack to the baby's head.) In turn, Lady Macbeth feeds these "mortal thoughts" to her husband.(1) They flash like a lightbulb above his head in the image of a sword dripping blood--a magical mortal thought that will materialize as a killing reality in the next scene. But before the play is over, these mortal thoughts turn and rend the thinker. For Lady Macbeth, mortal thoughts become a killing conscience; for Macbeth, thoughts of mortality. His wish to become king is no longer enough. He must be king always. Mocked by Banquo's line of dynasty, stretching to the judgment day, Macbeth embraces mortal thoughts, magical thoughts, and kills and kills again.

The double definition of mortal thoughts in Macbeth characterizes the play's structure as a whole and unites two seemingly opposing readings of Macbeth in psychoanalytic theory. Early Freudian readings of Macbeth focus on the oedipal complex: the father/son struggle between Macbeth and Duncan and the fall of the heroes through a fatal conscience. When object-relations usurps the oedipal complex, Renaissance scholars like Murray Schwartz, Janet Adelman, Madelon Gohlke Sprengnether, and David Willbern switch focus to the mother/infant matrix in the form of maternal malevolence: Lady Macbeth and the witches versus the infantile Macbeth.(2) Both readings merge beautifully in the play because the link between these two viewpoints is the magic/mortal thinking so prevalent in the hero's mindscape. Consider the similarities between the loss of the pleasure principle (where object-relationships are born) and the creation of the superego (the consolation prize of oedipal desire). A quick recap of these two moments in psychic development will help illustrate Macbeth's position between them, for the play begins with the hero's temptation into the child's world of magical thinking, where wish informs the future and the superego has yet to be formed.

I. TWO WORLDS

The pleasure principle is born of the infant's wish fulfilled. A baby hungers and hallucinates being fed. The breast appears: he is fed. The mother's attentive care thus answers her baby's hungry musing and creates the illusion of magical thinking for her child. Stomach full and wish granted, the sated infant drifts off to sleep, secure in the thought that his environment bows completely to his will, as slave to master, subject to king. (Anatomy may be destiny, but the wish to rule the world is fed at the breast!) Of course, when the mother's attention is elsewhere (and the breast is missing), the reality principle is formed by kicks and screams. The baby attempts to transform his universe back into that of the original wish and learns in the process that action, and not thought, gives birth to consequence. Far from being in opposition to its predecessor, the reality principle is created to serve the pleasure principle. Real thinking must replace magical thinking, for magical thinking leads nowhere. Freud admits that any being that embraced the pleasure principle and completely ignored the "reality of the external world could not maintain itself alive for the shortest time."(3) Magical thoughts are in actuality mortal thoughts.(4)

Although the superego is probably the closest we come to an entity opposing the pleasure principle, its creation follows the same commonsense pattern of trial and error. The little boy wishes to take his father's place in his mother's bed. When denied his own personal primal scene, he must content himself with becoming his rival as opposed to killing him. Son identifies with dad, taking on his paternal eye and punishing himself as he thinks his father would. A conscience is created as the son waits for the time when he will marry the woman who doubles as his mother and become a father himself. Just as real thoughts replace magical thoughts, patience replaces impatience. The cycle of time, as always, is on the side of the son.

Growing up thus depends on the recognition of two worlds: the world of wish and the world of conscience, and the bridge that connects them both, time. A healthy play between each world is necessary for success. To ignore one in favor of the other is disastrous. Herein lies the plotline of Macbeth and its hero's fatal mistake, for Macbeth's fall parallels a psychic retreat to the past. Reclaiming the viewpoint of a child, he kills his royal parent, thinking he kills with him the super-ego. More than willing to "jump the life to come" (1.7.7), Macbeth weighs his decision to murder Duncan by the success of the endeavor. But success for Macbeth translates into an action without a consequence--that is to say, not getting caught!

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
 It were done quickly: if th' assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
 With his surcease, success; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all.

(1.7.1-5)

If Macbeth is concerned with not getting caught in the act, he seems equally concerned with not getting caught in the present. This is one of several points in the play where the natural progression of time is manipulated by the hero. He imagines a future act as a memory, his wish as an accomplished fact. The past participle of the verb "to do" is repeated three times, even though the doing has yet to be "done ... done ... done." (The word "done," in fact, echoes through the play thirty-seven times.) Macbeth attempts to "trammel up" the "doing" (the action itself) with the consequence thereof, the "blow" seemingly finished before it is started. The "be-all" is the "end-all" in the hallucination of his wish.

Of course, in the end, Duncan's murder will destroy both Macbeth's wish and conscience, his present and future. From the moment Macbeth kills the king, he is beset by anxiety, fear, guilt. His perspective on the world, without and within, splits: "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes" (2.2.56). The course of the play is determined by Macbeth's unsuccessful attempt to isolate the pleasure principle from the reality principle, to kill king and conscience all in one blow, and to use his wife's "mortal thoughts" (1.5.41) to fulfill the magic prophecies foretold by the witches.(5)

II. TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

Macbeth proves a change in direction for Shakespeare. Placed in chronological order, the preceding tragedies of Hamlet, Othello, and Lear play out in Freudian fashion the cycle of a man's life: Hamlet explores the lost harmony between a mother and son; Othello, a husband and wife; Lear, a father and daughter. The happy ending for all three plays would have deposited the hero back into his respective lady's arms. As it is, the roles of son (Hamlet), husband (Othello), and father (Lear) all prove fatal. As Freud concludes in "The Theme of the Three Caskets" (1913), the last woman in a man's life, the Goddess of Death, takes them one and all into her arms (12:301). Of course, Macbeth's fate will also lead inexorably toward his own demise, but his journey will move backward, not forward: from a failed father to a cowed husband to a gullible child to a greedy infant to what lies both before and beyond life, death.

But let us begin at the beginning. Our first view of Macbeth is as an impressive adult. Rumor paints him as a legendary general and loyal thane. His head, heart, and hand defend his court from the bloody broils of war. We, as an audience, wait for Macbeth to enter, as do the witches, Duncan, Scotland herself--like children waiting for their favorite grown-up to come play with them and take care of them. Even the war waits for Macbeth's superior hand to decide its fate: "Doubtful it stood, / As two spent swimmers that do cling together / And choke their art" (1.2.7-9). The winning "stroke" will be Macbeth's:

The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
 Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
 Confronted him with self-comparisons,
 Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,
 Curbing his lavish spirit; and to conclude,
 The victory fell on us.

(1.2.53-58)

No grandam's tale, no "woman's story at a winter's fire" here (3.4.64). War is an either/or reality: you win or lose, die or triumph. The battlefield is a place of violence and death. In Shakespeare's universe, it is also the birthplace of manhood. Macbeth and the not-so-distant Coriolanus celebrate their martial fame in terms of violent birth images. Adelman and Gohlke Sprengnether suggest that the natal imagery and lionized masculinity reflect man's need to escape his female origin and consequent dependency on woman. Macbeth "carv'd out his passage" on the battlefield (1.2.19), recreating himself as a warrior, reborn in an all-male/mail womb.(6) But perhaps this bloody rite of passage transgresses more than gender boundaries; indeed, perhaps the Renaissance was not completely naive in defining war as the demarcation between a boy and a man. For a soldier must recognize death on the battlefield and face it down, even if it is not his own.

As adults, Macbeth and Banquo abide in a world ruled by death and time, a present structured by past choices, their choices already chosen. They are the good sons and trusted servants of the realm, their ambition to "memorize another Golgotha" (1.2.40), already memorialized by the soldier's retelling of the battle. But their stories, though glorious, are half over when the play begins. Life patterns have solidified for these men: partners chosen, families begun, expectations met and careers set--that is, until they walk away from the battleground. If Macbeth and Banquo face death in war, what do they face in the swirling mist on the heath? And why does the fearless Macbeth now start with fear?

Scenes with the weird sisters precede and follow the bloody account of Macbeth's victory and thus present another world running parallel to the heightened reality of battle. It is a forgotten world that we, as adults, have blasted from our memories, a world full of

magical spirits, bubbling cauldrons, and prophecy. More important, it is a world of promise, where wishes, even the most primitive ones, say, of becoming king, can come true. One has only to hear the words, hailed like an invocation, echoed from a vanishing spirit, and the desires that had died in manhood become, so to speak, "unmann'd" (3.4.72). A child's world welcomes Macbeth and Banquo. The former will be "rapt" (1.3.142) within it, carried out of himself with both horror and elation at the news of his future promotions; the latter will stand back, more skeptical, more rational, more adult.

But before looking closer at the double reaction of Macbeth, it is important to understand the world that will betray him. This is the world of the 'double'. Freud adopts Otto Rank's definition of the double as the first soul and links it with animistic modes of thought.(7) Though it begins as a multiple of self (one's shadow, one's dream, one's reflection), the double is later projected onto the outside world in the form of a guardian angel, an attending spirit (good or bad), or a ghost. Either way, it is a symbol of immortality and therefore an attempt to enlarge the individual's spirit: I am here, and here, and here. Freud links this view with the child's perspective, perhaps because a child has still so many possibilities. Consider the moment in *Wuthering Heights* when Lockwood finds the windowsill scratched with three names: Cathy Earnshaw, Cathy Linton, Cathy Heathcliff.(8) These are the dreams of a young girl, the possible roles she may have in the future. At the time of the carvings, she may have desired them all, which is childhood's privilege. She may have played out each role before breakfast, fantasizing a double for each possibility. But in the end, as testified by the prints on the windowsill, it is her desire that is immortalized, not her choice or her life. Macbeth is likewise invited back into this world of choice, the world of the child where anything is still possible. What has seemed to be set for Macbeth (Thane of Glamis, defender of the realm, loyal subject) may now be doubled (Thane of Cawdor, the realm's defendant, king). As Freud explains in "The Uncanny" (1919), although the 'double' later develops into an agency which can stand apart, criticizing and censoring the ego as a separate identity (that is to say, the conscience), it also incorporates "all the unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling in phantasy, all the strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed, and all our suppressed acts of volition which nourish in us the illusion of Free Will" (17:236).

Here finally is the connection between the pleasure principle and the superego. They are, in fact, doubles of each other. The former tries completely to control the world through wish. The latter tries completely to control the ego through reason. When the child graduates from one to the other, he has not really relinquished the belief in his omnipotent power as much as he has redrawn the boundaries of his magic realm from outside to inside. Perhaps that explains why we can never really rid ourselves of a belief in magical thinking, no matter how old we are. We practice it every day in the elevated form of conscience. This connection is particularly pertinent to Macbeth. When the hero's superego is finally overthrown in favor of desire, the usurpation is dependent on a belief in magical thinking.

III. TURNING THE CLOCK FORWARD

Again, there are two worlds in Macbeth, the world of wish and the world of conscience. The former attempts to control the world through magical thinking; the latter attempts to control the self through ethical thinking. In Macbeth's case, it is a tussle between Scottish rule and self-rule. When faced with the witches' reading of his past (Glamis), present (Cawdor), and future (king), Macbeth faces a civil war within, affecting his understanding of both himself and time.

[Aside.] 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.

(1.3.130-42)

"Cannot be ill; cannot be good"? Of course it can. Macbeth's conflicting emotions of joy and fear illustrate the cross connection between the pleasure principle and the superego in the adult psyche. In "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), Freud argues that "the dominance of the pleasure principle can really come to an end only when a child has achieved complete psychological detachment from its parents" (12:220), but when is anyone completely detached from his or her father or mother? The formation of the superego is surely proof of that. As Lady Macbeth so astutely observes and fears, her husband's milky nature will attempt to bridge both worlds of desire and conscience and thus may foil her plans to be queen: "What thou wouldst highly, / That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false, / And yet wouldst wrongly win" (1.5.20-22). Macbeth would wish it, yes, will it, of course, but not think to act upon it.

Yet in a world where witches can predict the future, this hero's ambition seems to have taken on a life of its own. "All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!" (1.3.49). Macbeth barely has time to process the thought before he is, indeed, Thane of Cawdor. For one brief moment we return to the pleasure principle, where wishes are fulfilled instantaneously by thought. It is not the wish to be king that

ultimately betrays Macbeth, but the image of the wish fulfilled. Psychoanalytic criticism has focused on the witches as malignant mothers feeding reckless ambition and false security to an infantile Macbeth.(9) D. W. Winnicott assures us that a mother who always instantly fulfills her child's wish soon appears a witch!(10) But perhaps it is more important to stress Macbeth's role in this scenario. His wish to be king precedes the prediction, just as the baby's hunger precedes the mother's breast. The witches' magic message merely tempts him back to the belief that he may have his wish simply by wishing it: "Chance may crown me, / Without my stir" (1.3.143-44).

But when? Macbeth is an adult. He lives in a world of time. Like the baby hallucinating on his wish, a frustrated desire leads immediately to action--an action to effect the wish. Macbeth as well realizes that a very specific action could effect his wish: murder. The acknowledgment of such a thought paralyzes not only any action but the thought process itself. Macbeth's psyche splits between the hallucination of Duncan's murder and the revulsion at such a "horrid image." Pyrrhuslike, he stands momentarily paralyzed--"function ... smother'd in surmise"--at the thought of murdering a king. Banquo notes that he is "rapt withal" (1.3.57), caught in a time warp where tomorrow swallows today and "horrible imaginings" of the future usurp "present fears." Play time is suspended as well. The convention of the aside works to freeze all plot development in order to allow the character to reveal his thoughts. For thirteen lines the audience is "rapt withal" Macbeth just as he is "rapt in the wonder of it" (1.5.6), trapped in a world of conflicting emotions. He is a child again, hallucinating the image of his wish fulfilled, and an adult, horrified at his shaken "state of man."

Most editions identify the "murder" in this passage as the imaginary murder of Duncan that consumes Macbeth's vision, but perhaps the murder could also be read as the murder of the thought itself: "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical." This thought, this "mortal thought," which unfixes his hair and knocks at his heart, should be murdered, erased, refuted, repressed. The very fact that he has yet to murder this thought, that he is still considering it, that he cannot get rid of it, is what keeps his heart knocking at his ribs. Like Hamlet, Othello, and Leontes, Macbeth discovers that a thought once thought cannot be unthought. Reality is obliterated with the thought of Duncan's murder. In his eyes, "nothing is, but what is not."

IV. DOUBLE TIME

The idea that nothing is but what is not returns us to Freud's concept of the double. Critics have noted and explored the multiples of doubles in Macbeth. The structure of the play seems almost built on a foundation of pairs. Macbeth houses two kingdoms, two traitors, two sets of rivals (Macbeth and Banquo, Macbeth and Macduff). Scenes are divided between the forces of men and the forces of the supernatural. Double-sexed spirits "palter with [Macbeth] in a double sense" (5.8.20). The play, in fact, embraces a doubling sound through the use of hendiadys, alliteration, and rhyme; the word 'double' is "doubly redoubled" a dozen times throughout the text (1.2.38). Even the "raven" "croak[ing]" Duncan's "fatal entrance" (1.5.38-40) into "Hell Gate" (2.3.2) will be later paired with the "obscure bird" prophesying "th' woeful time" to come (2.3.59). Marjorie Garber links this doubling pattern to castration fears; Willbern, to infantile fears of being engulfed by the mother. What these essays leave untouched is the changing face of the double. In "The Uncanny" (1919), Freud argues that "the 'double' was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an 'energetic denial of the power of death' ... and probably the 'immortal' soul was the first 'double' of the body.... Such ideas, however, have sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man. But when this stage has been surmounted, the 'double' reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death" (17:235).

For Freud, maturity is equated with an acceptance of mortality. Time passes, choices are made, lives end. But the concept of the double is born of earlier feelings of immortality, possibility, and omnipotence. Once viewed through adult eyes, the double can only reflect back our assured fate: death. Though Macbeth may be patterned with pairs, the plotline recreates the two-faced mask of Freud's double. Predictions of success double-turn to reveal disappointing truths; fame circles round to infamy; eternal blessing is traded for damnation. Before the play is through, even Lady Macbeth will recognize the vicious irony: "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" (3.2.4-7).

More than the story line unites opposites in this play. The witches who provide the impetus for all action prove doubles of themselves: they are on the earth, but not of the earth; women, but bearded ones; they conjure yet are controlled by superior spirits. They speak in antonyms: days are foul and fair; battles lost and won; Banquo shall be "Lesser than Macbeth, and greater. / Not so happy, yet much happier" (1.3.65-66). They spoon-feed Macbeth with a fantastic future that seems to promise immortal fame: "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!" (1.3.50). But like the double, their pronouncement closes by predicting the death of his family line. Banquo "shalt get kings," but Macbeth will not (1.3.67).

But if the witches represent some supernatural maternal malevolence, Lady Macbeth is the queen mother of doubles. As a gracious hostess, she plans a banquet and a burial for her guest of honor. As a loving wife, she invokes demons to unsex her, drain her of womanly compassion, and replace the life-giving milk in her breasts with gall. The mother of mortal (if not magical) thinking, she calls upon those "spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts" (1.5.40-41) to fill her with the same. She likewise fills Macbeth: "Hie thee hither, / That I may pour my spirits in thine ear, / And chastise with the valor of my tongue / All that impedes thee from the golden round, / Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem / To have thee crown'd withal" (1.5.25-30). More important, she too vaults time: "Thy letters have transported me beyond / This ignorant present, and I feel now / The future in the instant" (1.5.56-58). But unlike her husband she will not be immobilized by her picture of the future. Instead, she uses this imaginative ability to spur her on to the plotting and planning of the deed at hand.

The hallucination of Duncan's murder briefly paralyzes Macbeth. Lady Macbeth will replace that "horrid image" with something far worse and free him from his ambivalence to make his image real: "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me: / I would, while it was smiling in my face, / Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, / And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn / As you have done to this" (1.7.54-59). A now familiar regression in time occurs as we explore these two halting images. It does not take a Freudian critic to argue that the hallucination that earlier froze Macbeth for thirteen lines is the oedipal fantasy: a son killing a father. After all, Macbeth identifies the king's subjects as Duncan's "state children" (1.4.25), and Lady Macbeth will later admit that she herself is unable to kill Duncan due to his likeness to her father (2.2.12-13).⁽¹¹⁾ The moment thus parallels the struggling formation of the superego: the impulse to kill the father is questioned from within, with horror immediately replacing desire. The second of these "horrible imaginings" returns us to the pre-oedipal bonding of mother and child. Lady Macbeth's projected scenario begins as a recreation of the pleasure principle: the baby nursing at the breast. Here, however, it is the mother who hallucinates the infant to fulfill her own desire, not the other way around, and her desire is to render Macbeth a manchild, full of reckless purpose and daring, but void of fear and remorse, void of the superego. To do this, she replaces the image of a son killing an aging father with the image of a mother killing an infant son. Her horrific vision tops Macbeth's hallucination and turns his honor-bound duty to the king into the dishonor of breaking a vow to his wife. The terrifying image unites husband and wife in the act of murder: If I could kill our son, surely you can kill your father, Lady Macbeth seems to say. With all family ties cut, to the past and to the future, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth will belong only to each other: "From this time / Such I account thy love" (1.7.38-39). Schwartz argues that Macbeth's immediate response, "If we should fail?" (1.7.59), illustrates his understanding of this new family dynamic.⁽¹²⁾ Oedipal and pre-oedipal fantasies merge, creating a mother and lover in Lady Macbeth and an obedient son and magical destroyer in her husband.

This unholy union also achieves the symbiosis needed between mother and child to create what Freud calls the illusion of "omnipotence of thoughts." Lady Macbeth cannot grant Macbeth's wish herself, but she so presents her plan that he is inspired to "be the same in [his] own act and valor, / As [he is] in desire" (1.7.40-41). Macbeth's earlier hesitancy is due to fear, caution, honor (1.7.12-28), but he loses out to his wife's winning hand. She has conceived of a plot to "trammel up" the consequence with the action. Her plan, in fact, replicates her horrifying image. She will lull Duncan and the grooms into a heavy sleep with wine. Drunk and disoriented, all three will be slain when they are as vulnerable as infants.

V. COURTING THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

The progression of these images moves us backward in time from the superego to the pleasure principle. In the first instance, Macbeth's thoughts attempt to control his desires. As Banquo notes, he starts with fear at news so fair. In the next instance, Lady Macbeth teaches him by example to let his desires control his thoughts, perhaps even to create his thoughts. Duncan's actual murder is born of a hallucination:

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.

(2.1.33-47)

The mechanics of the pleasure principle now govern Macbeth's actions. He hallucinates the murder weapon, which then leads him to the scene of the crime. The illusion works! This "dagger of the mind" appears "in form as palpable" as the dagger that appears in his hand three lines later. As Lady Macbeth might observe, he "feel[s] now / The future in the instant" (1.5.57-58). Of course, as soon as the killing instrument is securely grasped, this "false creation" drips blood. The future act is placed in the past; the blade and handle become ensanguined by the deed. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are later haunted by this bloody consequence: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (5.1.39-40); "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (2.2.57-58). The pattern seems to be set: Macbeth's hallucinations match the effects of his actions, magical thinking escaping from a "heat-oppressed brain" (2.1.39).⁽¹³⁾ Even seconds before he performs the murder, Macbeth seems locked in some time-defying hallucination. By mixing past and present verb tenses, he describes his future act as an accomplished fact: "I go, and it is done" (2.1.62).

Strangely enough, the murder itself creates for the audience the same illusion of magical thinking. We experience through Macbeth his hallucination of the murder, his hallucination of the dagger, but we do not see the murder, only the aftereffects, the consequences of the act. Like the earlier Macbeth, we vault over the "doing" and only see the anticipated murder as a memory in Macbeth's mind. Could this

be one of the reasons Shakespeare decides not to stage the murder? We can safely rule out the playwright's fear that he would horrify his audience: any author willing to present the blinding of Gloucester or even the murder of Macduff's son in front of his mother is not concerned with the sensitivity of spectators. James Calderwood argues that by placing the murder outside the playing arena, Shakespeare transforms the audience into "Macbeth's imaginative accessories and thus [they] share his guilt and forfeit in some degree [their] right to judge him." (14) Yet while Macbeth falls prey to his imagination, he is condemned only for his actions: "Thoughts are no subjects, / Intents but merely thoughts" (Measure for Measure 5.1.453-54). Likewise the audience cannot be condemned for their imagination nor forced to acquiesce their right to judge Macbeth for the murder of Duncan. My own reading is more in line with Willbern's argument that by removing the murder, Shakespeare creates the ultimate scene of terror as it is left to our imagination. (15) Though one might disagree with this generous assessment of the audience's power of fancy, our inability to see the murder in some small way allows us to share the same imaginative space as the hero. We do not see the murder or murder victim, and thus we cannot bury the horrendous image in our mind. Macbeth himself suffers from the same problem. He cannot bury the image or escape the thought. For Macbeth, the "murder yet is but fantastical" (1.3.39). A strange reversal of magical thinking has taken place. The deed is done, but the thought still continues. Macbeth remains trapped in the same hallucinatory state that led to the murder in the first place. Even the practical-minded Lady Macbeth recognizes her husband's problem as one of thought, not action: "These deeds must not be thought / After these ways; so, it will make us mad" (2.2.30-31). She later chastises Macbeth: "You do unbend your noble strength, to think / So brainsickly of things" (2.2.42-43). Shortly thereafter she urges him to "Be not lost / So poorly in your thoughts" (2.2.68-69). Macbeth himself seems to fear the thought more than the action: "I'll go no more. / I am afraid to think what I have done" (2.2.47-48).

Lady Macbeth's grand attempts to cast her husband as desire incarnate, drained of "th' milk of human kindness" (1.5.17), to embrace the pleasure principle without the reality principle, are completely unsuccessful. Macbeth is left in a completely vulnerable position, for killing the father is not the same as killing the superego, which is, instead, the essence of the father passed on to the son. (16) This essence rises up to haunt Macbeth in a variety of aural hallucinations. Voices from sleeping chambers cry out, "Macbeth does murder sleep" (2.2.33). Common noises appall him. The act of murder separates him further from the Father. When he hears or thinks he hears a sleeping guest cry "God bless us," he cannot respond in kind: "But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'? / I had most need of blessing" (2.2.28-29). The Macbeth we waited for in the opening scene--the warrior of renown and heroic action--is dying. His conscience has split off from his consciousness, and he no longer recognizes which is which: "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes" (2.2.56). This line echoes Matthew 18:9: "And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire." Macbeth fears he is about to be punished but doesn't recognize that it is he himself who reaches to do the punishing.

VI. TO CATCH THE CONSCIENCE OF THE KING

Living in a nightmare world where the dangers outside him mirror the dangers inside him, Macbeth is forced to protect himself with elaborate defense mechanisms. To manage the world of wish, he repeats the action that made his wish real: murder. Banquo and Fleance are the obvious targets as they have been promised the royal line, but a closer look at his comrade-in-arms suggests another reason that Banquo must be Macbeth's first victim:

Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares.
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear: and under him
My Genius is rebuk'd, as it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Caesar.

(3.1.48-56)

If Macbeth is to keep his wish alive, to be king safely, then he must not only murder all who stand in his way but also that part of him that still clings to guilt, honor, and remorse. And so he kills the double of himself: Banquo, his past reflection, who responded to the witches as a suspecting adult, not as a gullible child. Unlike Macbeth, Banquo will act in safety. He will wait for chance to crown his son king, if not himself. He is Macbeth's superego: his "dauntless temper of mind" would not have played "most foully" (3.1.3) for the kingship. He recognizes the witches' prophecies as devil snares to betray man in "deepest consequence" (1.3.126) and prays to be saved from the "cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose!" (2.1.8-9). His "royalty of nature / Reigns" over himself (3.1.49-50).

Perhaps the emphasis should be placed on "nature." Macbeth has embraced the supernatural world of the weird sisters and their pricking thumbs. He is constantly trying to "jump," "mock," "master," "beguile" time, cheating the present to get to the future (see the following passages in the play: 1.7.7, 1.7.82, 3.1.40, 1.5.63). Banquo embraces the natural progression of time and the cycle of generation. He passes down his royal nature to his child. Macbeth steals that nature from his royal father. The allusion to Mark Antony proves more than apt: this Roman hero is also beaten by a better strategist as well as seduced into the world of the pleasure principle by an Egyptian "witch" (Antony and Cleopatra 4.12.47).

Macbeth and Banquo double each other in Freud's sense of the term as well. Where Banquo shines as an image of immortality, his line

"stretch[ing] out to th' crack of doom" (4.1.117), Macbeth is the face of death, murdering cycles of parent and child. Even Banquo's ghost represents the two faces of Freud's double: for the murder of his rival is the first step toward Macbeth's securing of the throne for his own future descendants; however, Banquo's ghost will also represent the end of Macbeth's line: he sits in Macbeth's chair at the royal feast, mocking his "barren sceptre" and "fruitless crown" (3.1.60-61) as well as Macbeth's more imminent future: the king of Scotland is soon to become a ghost himself.(17) Here "mortal thoughts" translate into thoughts of mortality--Macbeth's.

Though Banquo's murder does not completely deaden Macbeth's conscience (indeed it rises in the form of Banquo's grinning ghost), Macbeth is well on his way to psychic death. By the end of the play, he will be sated by his own "slaughterous thoughts" (5.5.14), "supp'd full with horrors" (5.5.13) that deaden him to all compassion and pity. Even so, killing the superego is only half the problem. He must escape earthly judgment as well as self-judgment. He turns to the witches to manage his fear of retribution in the future. As always, he is unable to rest in the present: he is "bent to know, / By the worst means, the worst" (3.4.133-34).

VII. RACING THE FUTURE

The witches know the future, and they never lie. They merely betray Macbeth by reflecting him, and in that way they do resemble the dark mirror of Winnicott's "good-enough mother." When Macbeth first meets with the witches, he asks them what they are. They respond by telling him who he was, is, and will be. (Lady Macbeth does exactly the same thing by greeting her husband with "Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor! / Greater than both, but the all-hail hereafter!" [1.5.54-55].) At the second meeting, the witches do the same. Their bubbling cauldron reflects the hero's psyche. Indeed, the ingredients so closely resemble Macbeth's mindscape in the preceding act that one is tempted to say that the witches too are a hallucination in his mind. Macbeth's use of animal and reptilian imagery takes physical form in their distasteful brew.(18) Their "tooth of wolf," "tiger's chaudron," and "maw and gulf" (stomach and gullet) of a "ravin'd salt-sea shark" (4.1.22-33) are seasoned metaphors for Macbeth's ravenous hunger for power and security. Bits and pieces of a murderer and murder victim, a baby strangled by his mother, and a sow who has killed her nine farrow round out this stirring reflection of the killer of parent and child alike. Circles of death swim here, stomachs that cannot be filled. It is a poisonous "hell-broth" (4.1.19) opposing anything living, a menstrual womb of aborted possibilities and dead babies.

Surely Macbeth could be labeled as one of those aborted possibilities. The prophecies emerging from the cauldron project a magical future for the hero, only later to reveal themselves as forecasts of doom. Blinded by the promise of omnipotence, Macbeth eagerly misreads the second prophecy, and who could blame him? Here the possibility seems probable: "Be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn / The pow'r of man; for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" (4.1.79-81). He seeks out the witches to find an antidote for "doubtful joy," seeking security for an uncertain future. He leaves thinking he leads a charmed life. The illusion of the pleasure principle once more unfolds. He looks to find his wish in the witches' cauldron and thinks he does.

The witches only reflect his past, present, and future, but for Macbeth, that natural progression will prove an inversion: his past adulthood, present reversion to childhood, and future nonexistence--death. The first apparition of the cauldron is an armed head. This double of Macbeth "knows [his] thought" (4.1.69) because he is the old Macbeth, a warrior who would have acted with more soldierly caution than the boy he has become. He warns Macbeth of Macduff--appropriately so, for it will be Macbeth's head that will be raised in triumph by the victorious Macduff. The second apparition is a bloody child, prophesying Macbeth's seeming invulnerability. Often read as an image foretelling Macduff, the baby untimely ripped from his mother's womb, it also doubles Macbeth as a child who has bloodied his innocence with his rebirth into the past and easily believes he is invincible. The third apparition is a crowned child holding a tree, the key to Macbeth's destiny. As Macbeth is king, this should be his double, a son to carry his line into the future: "What is this / That rises like the issue of a king, / And wears upon his baby-brow the round / And top of sovereignty?" (4.1.86-89). The crowned child with a tree in his hand seems to promise Macbeth the safety he yearns for: "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until / Great Birnan wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" (4.1.92-94). Macbeth rejoices. That a tree could "Unfix his earth-bound root" (4.1.96) is of course ludicrous to Macbeth, even though metaphorically that is exactly what he has done in murdering Duncan. He has extirpated all bonds tying him to community and family lines.

Although the image of a prince holding a tree will quite literally herald Macbeth's downfall, the metaphor is inherent in the story. Duncan opens the play as a royal gardener, welcoming Macbeth home: "I have begun to plant thee, and will labor / To make thee full of growing" (1.4.28-29). Malcolm closes it the same way: "What's more to do, / Which would be planted newly with the time, / As calling home our exil'd friends abroad" (5.9.30-32). But King Macbeth "plant[s]" only death in Scotland (3.1.128), creating but a "grave" of his garden (4.3.166).

The rootless, ruthless Macbeth may rejoice at the last prophecy, but the apparition seems to unearth his fears of Banquo's family tree and its place foretold in Scottish royalty. He demands that the witches answer the question uppermost in his mind: Will Banquo's sons be kings? The dumb show of Scotland's royal line, doubling Banquo's image, betrays a world of reality and time to Macbeth. He responds as a stubborn child, meeting any opposition to his wish with pure denial: "Infected be the air whereon they ride, / And damn'd all those that trust them! ... / From this moment / The very firstlings of my heart shall be / The firstlings of my hand. And even now, / To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done" (4.1.138-49). If he cannot crown his children, he will crown his thoughts. His thoughts will become his children, and they will reverse the prophecy by arresting time. In some ways, Macbeth has regressed to infancy. He embraces the immediacy, if not the illusion, of magical thinking. He no longer possesses the need for a mother figure to aid or even encourage his desires, be she witch or wife. He and he alone will meet his desires, merging thought and deed into one royal entity. Holding on to the prophecies as magical protection, Macbeth thinks he is safe.

But of course he is not--despite his fiery will, profound faith, and suspicious repetition of the first prophecy. (Adelman argues that Macbeth repeats the phrase as an apotropaic charm.)(19) But though Macbeth reads the demon-doubles rising from the cauldron as manifestations of his own wishes, the parade of Banquo's line proves the only real double in a man's life is his son--a double that both grants the father immortality and heralds his oncoming death. For when a son is old enough to double his father by fathering a son himself, death is not far for the man who sired him. Banquo's doubles will prefigure Macbeth's death figuratively as they foreshadow the line of Scottish forces waiting to usurp his throne and literally as they carry Banquo's blood into the future. There will be no story for Macbeth. The barrenness of the Macbeth marriage proves not only the seat of their hostility but a punishment for attacking the cycle of life.(20) (Akira Kurosawa's famous film version, *Kumonosu jo* or *Throne of Blood* [Japan, 1957] presents a pregnant Lady Macbeth who miscarries in the end.)(21) Generation is Macbeth's target from the beginning, as seen in his response to Duncan's son after the murder of his father:

Donalbain. What is amiss?
 Macbeth. You are, and do not know't.
 The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
 Is stopp'd, the very source of it is stopp'd.

(2.3.97-99)

Of course, it is really Macbeth who is amiss in this play and does not know it. The "fountain of his blood" will be stopped at the "very source." The witches' last prophecy that ensured Macbeth would "live the lease of nature, pay his breath / To time" (4.1.99-100) finally reveals that time, for Macbeth, is up. Birnan Wood comes marching. The trees Macbeth would have felled with a swoop just to know his future rise up a walking wood. "Nature's germaines" that he would have "tumble[d] all together" (4.1.59) return in a lined formation to surround his castle. The fathers, mothers, children that he killed are doubled now, tripled, multiplied into all of Scotland's children.(22) Of course, Macbeth will be neatly killed by Macduff in a replay of the first battle--only now we wait for Macduff, defender of the realm, to behead the traitor Macbeth.

VIII. THE LAST DOUBLE IN A MAN'S LIFE (ABORTING THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE)

Macbeth's death, however, is not as simple or as satisfying as one would have thought. By the closing act, he desires death as fiercely as he denies it. Here perhaps Freud doubles Shakespeare, for Macbeth's enigmatic attitude reflects the greatest double in psychoanalytic history: the changing face of the pleasure principle. It began as a part of the life force, as our libido asserting itself. Freud's model of the hungry infant, hallucinating on the breast, concludes with a happy sated baby drifting off to sleep in some magical daydream of his own omnipotence. Here everything shines in a positive light. Food and sleep represent the chief nourishment for the young and for the living. Desire and security merge in the mother's loving embrace. But Freud's later additions to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922) recast the pleasure principle as a double of itself. Looking like a positive force, it is suddenly revealed as part of the death instinct. Pleasure is equated not with the discharge of tension to a low-level hum, but with zero tension or death. The original wish to sleep is reread as a wish to die.

Although a reading of the play through Freud's controversial notion of a death drive may be overstepping the bounds of psychoanalytic criticism, the parallels with Macbeth seem to me rather startling. That Macbeth is seduced back into the world of the pleasure principle has, of course, been the subject of this essay. He is a child courting magic at the hands of the witches, hallucinating the world as his own world of wish. His hunger for power and belief in the witches smacks of infantile rage and reason. And his longing for sleep, the sleep he has murdered, is based on the recognition of its all-healing, life-affirming power: "the innocent sleep, / Sleep that knits up the ravel'd sleave of care, / The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath, / Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, / Chief nourisher in life's feast" (2.2.33-37). But by the close of the play, Macbeth will have changed from a little boy playing king to a "poor player, / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more" (5.5.24-26). The infant fed and full of dreams rolls over to become a man who has "lost the taste of fears," "supp'd full with horrors," his mind "full of scorpions," gall fed by his wife's demon "spirits," "top-full of direst cruelty." He lives in "doubtful joy," his life a "fitful fever" (see the following passages in the play: 5.5.9, 5.5.13, 3.2.36, 1.5.40, 1.5.42-43, 3.2.7, 3.2.23). Twice kept from his own banquet table and tormented with "terrible dreams" (3.2.18), he stands accused of robbing his country of bountiful feasts and nights of tranquil slumber (3.6.34-45). Security and pleasure elude him.(23) His longing for sleep, "the death of each day's life," is finally transformed into a desire for death itself: "I have liv'd long enough: my way of life / Is fall'n into the sere" (5.3.22-23); "I `gin to be a-weary of the sun, / And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone" (5.5.48-49).

Macbeth is not the first tragic hero to long for death. Romeo, Othello, Brutus, Antony will take their lives nobly. Hamlet must wait for providence to end his life, though he too dreams of suicide. Given Macbeth's weariness and "wish" to undo the world, one may wonder why he does not just crumble Lear-like at the thought of his own despair. Why does he defy the death he claims is the object of his desire?

Perhaps because he is already dead. The hero who adheres solely to the pleasure principle, following his passion by the most direct route, jumping the life to come regardless of consequence or lives spent, is, in the end, successful. By the closing curtain, Macbeth achieves the ultimate goal of the pleasure principle: he feels nothing, no tension, no surprise, no remorse, no connection with the outside or inside world. He has killed the superego, and he has killed desire.

Or has he? Perhaps he leaves the play, leaves his life, as he began it, still straddling the worlds of wish and conscience. On the side of wish, he is all bravura, laughing at the "gashes" that "do better" on his enemies (5.8.2-3), defying any "man that's of a woman born" (5.7.14). On the side of guilt, perhaps he is indeed responsible for his own death. For the man who could not give birth to a son gives birth to the man who will kill him.

IX. THE LAST DOUBLE IN MACBETH'S LIFE (COURTING THE DEATH DRIVE)

Macduff is often played as a man whose sensibilities suit him most for the battlefield. He is dedicated to establishing the rightful heir on the throne of Scotland, seemingly at the expense of his family. Even his wife laments his unnatural decision to fly to Malcolm's side and leave his family unprotected: "to leave his wife, to leave his babes, / His mansion and his titles, in a place / From whence himself does fly? He loves us not, / He wants the natural touch" (4.2.6-9). Macbeth will change all that. He has no real reason to kill Macduff's wife, children, and servants, who offer no threat to his throne. The only thing they do affect is the character of Macduff. One might even argue that Macbeth mothers Macduff into Scotland's main vehicle of revenge in much the same way Lady Macbeth mothered her husband's confidence to kill the king. That is to say, Lady Macbeth's horrifying image of a murdered baby is actualized and multiplied into the reality of a household massacre: Macbeth's murder of Macduff's family. Of course, Macduff is not forced to watch, but he must imagine it, and the image itself is described as fatal: "Your castle is surpris'd; your wife, and babes, / savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner, / Were on the quarry of these murder'd deer / To add the death of you" (4.3.204-7). Stunned and enraged, Macduff (like Macbeth before him) vows to kill the king: "But, gentle heavens, / Cut short all intermission. Front to front / Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself, / Within my sword's length set him; if he scape, / Heaven forgive him too!" (4.3.231-35). Macbeth has "untimely ripp'd" (5.8.16) this "child of integrity" (4.3.115) from the womb of Macduff's future (his wife and children). Macduff is born anew: "pity, like a naked new-born baby, / Striding the blast" (1.7.21-22) now seeks revenge for Macbeth's crimes.

Strange as it may seem, Macbeth has hacked Macduff into a suitable double of himself. By the end of the play, both soldiers will be bereft of wife and children, fueled by a fury unmatched by anyone else in the play, and abiding the moment when each can destroy the other. Macduff replaces Banquo as Macbeth's nemesis, and the play closes as it began, pairing an adult mind with a childish one, reading and refuting the witches' prophecies. Still, the difference between these two rivals is more than intellectual and is best illustrated by each one's response to the loss of a loved one. When news of the death of Macduff's family arrives, this soldier will feel his loss as a man:

Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.
Macduff. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man.

(4.3.220-21)

On hearing that his wife is dead, Macbeth feels nothing:

Seyton. The Queen, my lord, is dead:
Macbeth. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. 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. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(5.5.16-28)

On the surface, the images of time presented in this passage follow the same pattern as Macbeth's psychological backtrack. "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow" seemingly stretch not to the future but to the present "day to day" and then back further to past "yesterdays," leading us, ironically, back to death. The death that lies ahead is a death we have left behind, covered in the dust, waiting in the dark for our return. But of course, the movement of time--backward or forward--proves but an illusion. Macbeth is caught in the sameness of any day, past, present, or future, that lights our way into darkness.

Yet Macbeth is not just caught in a time warp where every day is the same day; he is trapped once more in the future. Tomorrow takes the place of today, indeed acts as if it is today. Macbeth uses the present tense to describe time's movement: tomorrow "creeps" from day to day, living and dying before it is born. The whole passage is suggestive of a life already lived. Macbeth, again, sees the "future in the instant" (1.5.58).

Macbeth now lives in the hereafter, the "hereafter" promised by the witches (1.3.50), the "hereafter" promised by his wife (1.5.55).(24)

He has paid a heavy price to get there: jumping the life to come; mocking, beguiling time and friends; strutting and fretting his hour upon the stage. The "hereafter" is finally here; now, like some cruel joke, Macbeth cannot escape its "petty pace." Life for this hero is a slow, creeping death, one syllable at a time. Those magical hallucinating thoughts that allowed Macbeth to vault himself into his dreams were, when all was said and done, "mortal thoughts," leading his tomorrow the way of yesterday.

Given the play's thunderous finish, perhaps this nihilistic pose is but one more of Macbeth's defensive positions; his furious battle with Macduff, but one last attempt to deny reality. The last scene of the play replays Macbeth's emotional time line to the past in a matter of seconds. We are treated to a lightning storm of flashing contradictions. Upon meeting Macduff, he is jolted into the memory of what he once was. Macbeth refuses to fight with what almost appears as adult remorse: "Of all men else I have avoided thee. / But get thee back, my soul is too much charg'd / With blood of thine already" (5.8.4-6). When Macduff refuses to let him pass, Macbeth retreats to the magical realm of the child, wielding his prophecy like a magic sword or sorcerer's wand: "Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests, / I bear a charmed life; which must not yield / To one of woman born" (5.8.11-13). When Macduff counters with his Cesarean-section birth, Macbeth admits that the knowledge has "cow'd [his] better part of man" (5.8.18) and retreats further still to sheer infantile will. His last line closes the play with a strange echo. Lady Macbeth once called upon those horrifying "spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts" (1.5.40-41) to free the constraints upon both her and her husband's ambition. Nothing would stop them, she prayed, not her female "passage to remorse" (1.5.44) nor tender woman's breast; not Macbeth's "milk of human kindness" (1.5.17) nor sense of fair play; not even "Heaven peep[ing] through the blanket of the dark, / To cry, 'Hold, hold!'" (1.5.53-54). Such a wish to break all human boundaries, gender ties, and religious vows gave birth to the last days of Macbeth. Despite the odds, Macbeth will never give up: "Lay on, Macduff, / And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'" (5.8.33-34).

In both instances, "hold" means "stop," that is, keep a thought from turning into a deed; return to the realm of fantasy and hold the thought there, where it can harm no one. (25) Heaven would cry "hold" to Macbeth's murder of Duncan; for Macbeth to cry "hold, enough" now, in battle with Macduff, would be to listen to heaven, to stand and be punished, to ask for forgiveness as the first traitor did, to surrender to reason and, perhaps, to the adult Macbeth who began the play. Even so, this last line is rich with ambiguity. At first, it seems as if Macbeth has finally destroyed guilt: he would damn himself before relinquishing hold on his murderous course of action and strangely damns his enemy should he do the same. Yet perhaps the irony of the hero's last line illustrates Macbeth's continuous struggle between the pleasure principle and the superego. He wishes to kill Macduff at the same time he wishes that Macduff will kill him. Or could this stirring exit line be the last version of Macbeth's desire to crown his "thoughts with acts, be it thought and done"? Here, finally, the act usurps the thought. Now is everything for Macbeth. At the moment of his death, the hero vaults himself out of the future and into the present moment: he holds onto it, like a sword. His inability to imagine an alternative future, an alternate action, ensures his death. Pleasure be damned, the principle remains. Successful in destroying the world of wish and the world of conscience, all that is left in Macbeth is the drive to go on.

(1.) William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 1.5.40-41, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 1316. All references to Shakespeare's plays will be to this edition, cited parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line number.

(2.) See Murray M. Schwartz, "Shakespeare through Contemporary Psychoanalysis," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Janet Adelman, "Escaping the Matrix: The Construction of Masculinity in *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*," in her *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Madelon Gohlke (Sprengnether), "'I Wooed Thee with My Sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms," in Schwartz and Kahn, eds.; and David Willbern, "Phantasmagoric *Macbeth*," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 520-49.

(3.) Sigmund Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1953-74), 12:220, n. 4. All further Freud references will be to this edition, cited parenthetically in the text by volume and page number.

(4.) The idea that a baby experiences a sense of omnipotence due to the loving ministrations of her parent originates in a footnote to Freud's "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911; 12:218-26). Though Freud's theories do not focus on this brief period of illusory omnipotence, he does extend his analysis of magical thinking in other texts, primarily *Totem and Taboo* (1913; 13:1-162) and "The Uncanny" (1919; 17:217-52). Sandor Ferenczi extends the idea of magical thinking to child development in "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality," in his *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth, 1952), pp. 213-39. British School analysts Michael Balint, D. W. Winnicott, and Melanie Klein focus on the baby's illusion of omnipotence in their respective studies of object-relations. See Michael Balint, *Thrills and Regressions* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959); and D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1971). For a readable explication of Klein's theory, see Hana Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (New York: Basic Books, 1964).

(5.) Daniel Schneider also deals with Macbeth's seduction into the world of magical thinking. See his concluding pages in "On How to Write a Play--Analysis of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*," in *The Psychoanalyst and the Artist* (Easthampton, N.Y.: Alexa Press, 1950), pp. 283-92. See also Arthur Kirsch, *The Passions of Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 88-91.

- (6.) Adelman explores the play's double pun on male/mail and mettle/metal in *Suffocating Mothers* (p. 139). See also Gohlke (Sprenghether), pp. 175-77.
- (7.) Freud's analysis of the double is widespread in psychological literary criticism. In *Macbeth* criticism alone, see Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 87-123; and Willbern.
- (8.) William Kerrigan uses this passage in *Wuthering Heights* to talk about the freedom of wishing and choice provided by childhood in his introduction to *Opening Texts: Psychoanalysis and the Culture of the Child*, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. xvii.
- (9.) Criticism has explored the feminine world in *Macbeth* in terms of a powerful but dark maternal force. For several key examples, see Schwartz; Adelman; Willbern; and David Barron, "The Babe That Milks: An Organic Study of *Macbeth*," in *The Design Within: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Shakespeare*, compiled by M. D. Faber (New York: Science House, 1970), pp. 253-79.
- (10.) See D. W. Winnicott's "The Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship," in his *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (New York: International University Presses, 1965), pp. 51-52.
- (11.) For a summary of oedipal readings of the play, see Norman Holland, *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 219-30.
- (12.) See Schwartz (n. 2 above), p. 29. Bennett Simon and Adelman also look at the psychological effect of this horrific image that unites husband and wife. See Simon's essay "A Tale Told by an Idiot: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*," in his *Tragic Drama and the Family: Psychoanalytic Studies from Aeschylus to Beckett* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 149; and Adelman (n. 2 above), p. 138.
- (13.) Linda Woodbridge views *Macbeth*'s hallucination as a piece of magical thinking; the hallucinated dagger proves but "an anthropomorphosed weapon to whom he talks" (*Scythe of Saturn: Shakespeare and Magical Thinking* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994], p. 100).
- (14.) James Calderwood, "Macbeth: Counter-Hamlet," *Shakespeare Studies* 17 (1985): 103-21.
- (15.) Willbern (n. 2 above), p. 520.
- (16.) Both A. C. Bradley and Simon O. Lesser explore the role of the conscience in *Macbeth*. See Bradley's *Lecture IX on Macbeth in Shakespearean Tragedy*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 353-60; and Lesser's "Macbeth: Drama and Dream," in *The Whispered Meanings: Selected Essays of Simon O. Lesser* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), pp. 212-34.
- (17.) I thank my student John Rukstalis for pointing out to me that Banquo is a symbol of death for *Macbeth* as he sits in the king's place at the banquet.
- (18.) Caroline Spurgeon argues that the ferocious animal and reptile imagery invades the audience's mind; see *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 335.
- (19.) Adelman, p. 131.
- (20.) For Freud's analysis of *Macbeth*, see "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work" (14:318-31).
- (21.) Alice Fox supports Kurosawa's portrayal of a pregnant Lady *Macbeth*. Her argument is largely based on Shakespeare's use of birth imagery, the language of obstetrics, the sleepwalking scene, and early modern "science": see her essay "Obstetrics and Gynecology in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Studies* 12 (1979): 127-41.
- (22.) For a positive reading of the killing of *Macbeth*, see Woodbridge (n. 13 above), pp. 123-24: *Macbeth* is killed for the fertility or purification of the country.
- (23.) William Kerrigan argues that *Macbeth* is the hero and/or victim of Freud's "forepleasure principle": each move *Macbeth* makes to secure his royal position, each murder to hold the crown, prompts but another move/murder to secure the last one. He represents hunger without satiety, movement without rest, power without security. See "Macbeth and the Renaissance Mechanism," *Hellas* 3 (1992): 15-29.
- (24.) For an interesting analysis of the echo of "hereafter," see George Walton Williams, "'Time for Such a Word': Verbal Echoing in *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Survey* 47 (1994): 153-59.
- (25.) William Kerrigan suggested that the echo of "hold" in *Macbeth*'s last line focuses, once more, on the difference between thought and action.

MARINA FAVILA
James Madison University

FAVILA, MARINA

Source Citation: FAVILA, MARINA. "'Mortal Thoughts' and Magical Thinking in Macbeth." Modern Philology. 99.1 (Aug. 2001): p1. Literature Resource Center. Gale. McKinney Public Library. 9 Dec. 2009 <<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=LitRC&u=txshrpbl00250>>.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A78726973