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Cosmic Order on the Anatomy Table

The aim of my text is to point out how the cosmic order appears when the Renaissance represented corporeality. I am using Shakespearean dramas, mainly *Macbeth*, to illustrate the stage representation of disorderly bodies in the Elizabethan era.

My text will be divided into the following points: first I will discuss anatomy in the light of the microcosm/macrocosm hierarchy, then I will touch upon the different levels of cosmic (dis)orders in *Macbeth*.

Based on the Medieval tradition of the microcosmic/macrocosmic hierarchy, as Helkiah Crooke wrote "onely man amongst all other creatures, was framed according to the fashions of the whole vniuerse" (Crooke 1615, Bk1 ChII, p5), public dissections presented the complexity of the universe and of the human body within it. The theological notion – that the human being was created after God's own image, as the most perfect image of himself on Earth (minor mundus) – has strengthened it (Cunningham 1997, 41). Perfection of the human body or as Crooke defines it, "the admirable structure, and accomplished perfection of the body, carrieth in it a representation of all the most glorious and perfect workes of God, as being an Epitome or compend of the whole creation" (Crooke 1615, Bk1 Ch1 p2) was taken as a starting point. The task of the scientist was to discover the secrets of the body, hidden deep under the skin. Searching for the essence of human nature, the anatomist looked inside, observing the body to realize the mechanisms of corporeality for a better understanding of human as such (Crooke 1615, Bk1 Ch2 p4). Let me borrow Banquo's words: it is the time when "our naked frailties" are *not* hid, but quite the opposite, they *do* "suffer in exposure" (M II, iii, 122–3). The harmony of the universe and the earthly living is the proof of the coherence of body and mind. Again, let me quote Crooke:

> The frame and composition which is vpright and mounting toward heauen, the moderate temper, the equal and iust proportion of the parts; and lastly, their wonderfull consent & mutuall concord as long as they are in subiection to the Law & rule of Nature: for so long in them we may behold the liuely Image of all this whole Vniuerse, which wee see with our eyes (as it were) shadowed in a Glasse, or deschipered in a Table (Crooke 1615, Bk1 Ch2 p4).

It also enables the sophisticated observer to read the body as the visual interpretation of the character or personality. The disharmony of the elements appears as the unambiguous bodily discrepancy. Reading from the body was important for the anatomist and the physician, and it also took part in the literary representation of characters. The body, believed to be the container of physical secrets must be opened for a closer inspection (Neill 1997, 122). Yet, it is also admired as a place of life, and it is even more so when it is the king's murdered body: "Most sacrilegious sacred Murder hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence / The life o'th'building!" (M II, iii, 66–8). Kent Cartwright links this picture with the tearing of the curtain of the *sanctum sanctorium* hanging before the Second Temple: "The rending of the curtain exposes the inner sanctum and thus echoes and completes the opening of the heavens at Jesus's baptism; thus Macduff's lines may bear a distant trace of the image of baptism, deepening the new connotations of Duncan's death" (Cartwright 2002, 231). Taking the anatomy theatre into account, if we add the meaning of theatre, which is "a place for seeing" – which is also true to the anatomy theatre as well –, we see that Macbeth's murder weapon and the anatomist's knife draw back the same curtain (the skin) for us to peep into the body suddenly opened in front of our eyes.

The phenomenon is most visible in the Elizabethan theatre, which could effectively mediate the knowledge gained in anatomical observations towards the audience because of the theatre's cultural coverage. In this sense, the role of the spectator is shifting towards the role of the anatomist, to understand the references made on bodily (dis)functions, the spectator needs to have some kind of knowledge – and the theatre could have been a place to pick up such knowledge. As a part of the Elizabethan cultural sphere, the theatre could be one place among others to transfer newly gained knowledge about the human body. The theatre could act as a mediator vehicle between the anatomy theatre and the spectator of the Elizabethan theatre-goer. Autopsy or 'anatomization' is often evoked in Shakespearean plays: as a means of a better understanding, to see behind the scenes as penetrating beyond the surface of the skin. King Lear demands to "let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart. / Is there any cause in nature, / that makes these hard hearts" (KL III, vi, 75–7) in the hope that a closer look might give Lear some clue why his daughters behaved so rudely towards him.

This practice slowly disappears by the time of Restoration. It is best visible in Davenant's 1664 version of *Macbeth,* which remained relatively true to the original play, shows some significant changes, undoubtedly having effect on the interpretation. The modernized text eliminated some minor characters, the royal couple's and Lady Macduff's role was elaborated on in greater detail, but more importantly, apart from these, Davenant's changes infected only the anatomical references of the original play, transferring them or cutting them out completely. Possibly, because the mediator role of the theatre was not necessary any more, most of Shakespeare's anatomist-analogies are missing from the Restoration play.[1]

Let us turn back to Shakespeare's *Macbeth.* As a play, *Macbeth* is a good example of the stage representation of anatomical knowledge. So, let us read from the events and characters of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from the perspectives of the bodily behaviour. *Macbeth* presents us with a world of riddles and double meanings ("Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (M I, I, 12)), where even the characters have difficulties to comprehend what is going on in a topsy-turvy reality. Think of Banquo's dilemma to identify the Weird Sisters' gender: "you should be women, / And yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so" (M I, iii, 43–5), or the same wish of Lady Macbeth for a genderless power "unsex me here / And fill me from the crown to the toe topfull / Of direst cruelty" (M I, v, 40–2).

I. Universal level

In the next part of my article I will discuss the different levels in *Macbeth* where order or rather disorder is visible for the spectator. *Macbeth* is such a play where the cosmos is seriously defective. The Macbeths' universe represented in the play is in serious need of mending and purification.

[1] For instance, Macbeth's decisive exclamation to fight until the very end: 'I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked' (M V, iii, 33) has been completely cut out of the text. Also, in the description of the battle Macbeth's behaviour is told by Seyton; importantly, the following Shakespearean lines are omitted by Davenant: [CAPTAIN] 'Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel, / Which smoked with bloody execution, / Like valour's minion / Carved out his passage till he faced the salve, / Which ne'er shook hands nor bade farewell to him / Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops' (M I, ii, 17– 22). Without these lines, we are left with Davenant's inserted comments, such as 'brave Macbeth' (DM I, i, 29, DM I, i, 68), or 'noble Macbeth' (DM I, i, 84). The result is not the valiant but at the same time butcher Shakespearean character we would have in front of us. In Davenant's version the change in Macbeth's behaviour is sudden, lacking the brutality of his nature. I discussed it further in detail in my "Corporeality in Shakespeare's and Davenant's Versions of Macbeth" article, printed in Pavel Drávek et al., eds. *Shakespeare and his Collaborators over the Centuries.* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.) 119–128. Extracts from the Davenant's version of *Macbeth* is referred to as DM.

The whole country/macrocosm shows an imbalanced state and order, which both need to be restored. Hospitality of the king turns into a slaughter which radically changes the fate of the country – and people's lives with it. Mirroring the universal disturbance, Nature's order on Earth is turned upside down: "The night has been unruly; where we lay, / Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say, / Lamentings heard i'th'air; strange screams of death, / And, prophesying with accents terrible / Of dire combustion, and confus'd events, / New hatch'd to th'woeful time, the obscure bird / Clamour'd the livelong night some say, the earth / Was feverous, and did shake." (M II, iii, 53–9). Ross confirms this cataclismic imagery by adding that

> Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and certain) / Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race, / Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out, / Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make / War with mankind (M II, iv, 14–8). Animals attack each other because of the urge of pride: 'A falcon, towering in her pride of place, / Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd' (M II, iv, 11–2).

The audience cannot miss the references made on unnaturally preying animals; and pride as a reason behind the events – they are the exemplary imageries of Duncan and Macbeth.[2]

Macbeth's castle is Hell itself, the underworld, as the Porter remarks it, and he is guarding the Hell Gate: "If a man were Porter / of Hell Gate, he should have old turning the key" (M II, iii, 1–2).

II. The royal bodies

On the bodily level, the microcosm is just as defective as the universe. Not only the genderless world of Lady Macbeth and the Weird Sisters, but corporeality and the corporeal experience of the surrounding world is just as illusory as any other magic the Weird Sisters do: "what seem'd corporal, / Melted, as breath into the wind" (M I, iii, 79–80). If man's body is "Royall Temple and Image of God" (Crooke 1615, Bk1 ch1 p3), then the king's sacred body is more so. Yet, we see violent interference into the sanctity of human temple several times in *Macbeth*, when royal bodies suffer. The plural is not a mistake, Duncan, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth all experience the disorder of the body. It starts with the legitimate king, Duncan's murder:

> Most sacrilegious Murther hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence / The life o'th'building! (M II, iii, 66–8), where we can peep into the sanctity of the royal corpus for the first time: 'Here lay Duncan, / His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood / And his gash's stabs look'd like a breach in nature, / For ruin's wasteful entrance' (M II, iii, 107–10).

Macbeth's blasphemy has disturbed the body of the lawful king, and the country and the universe is disturbed with it just as much.

Dissected, raw flesh is presented to us in the play. The tortured body appears in the first battle scene: "Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel, / Which smok'd with bloody execution, / Like Valour's minion, carv'd out his passage, / Till he fac'd the slave; / Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, / Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th'chops, / And fix'd his head upon our battlements" (M I, ii, 18–23). The dissected and opened body is an important imagery, the defeated tyrant's fate foreshadows Macbeth's own fate. It is for sure the same end Macbeth will receive, the 'reward' all Cawdors get for turning against the actual king. Both bearers

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[2] Old Man: 'Tis said, they eat each other. Ross: They did so; to th'amazement of mine eyes, / That look'd upon't' (M II, iv, 20–1). All references from Shakespeare's plays other than *Macbeth* are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blackmore Evans.

of the title Thane of Cawdor die as treasonists, their bodies forcefully opened up in front of us. Obviously, the tyrant's dismemberment is the ultimate punishment ordered by the new sovereign. Moreover, like the former Thane of Cawdor, whose title, possessions and as it turns out, his fate Macbeth inherits, he also dies the *same* way Macdonwald did. Macdonwald was beheaded, they "fixed his head on the battlements", (M I, ii, 23) and similarly, Macduff refers to Macbeth's decapitation: 'Behold, where stands / Th'usurper's head: the time is free' (M V, ix, 20–1). However, Macbeth's heroic movement, which saved the battle for Duncan is doubled in the Caesarian birth of Macduff: "Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd" (M V, viii, 15–6), but it signalizes more of a twisted analogy than a reassuring ending for us.

The tyrant couples' bodies undergo more traumas. The new king's head, the microcosm for the country, and the microcosm of man is dysfunctional in both cases. Macbeth is an unruly king, and the macrocosmic disturbance is clearly echoed in his head. When he hallucinates about a dagger before killing Duncan, he regards it as the twisted game of his mind, resulting from his overstrung ambition: "Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible / In feeling as to sight? Or art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?" (M II, I, 36–9). Hallucination is a frightening experience for Macbeth, he cannot deal with the ghost of Banquo coming back from his death: "when the brains were out, the man would die, / And there an end; but now, they rise again, / With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns, / And push us from our stools" (M III, iv, 78–81). What peace of mind is possible for him if the ghost of murdered people can come back to take away the joy of his deed? He has to realize that his crown is fruitless, and what is worse, it was done only to be enjoyed by Banquo's issues.

Hallucination effects Lady Macbeth's mind as well, visible in her constant hand-washing: "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" (M V, i, 41). Blood sticks to her hands, and it is the same joke of the mind as the bloody dagger was for Macbeth. Her hallucination, the sleepwalking, and the fear of darkness are proofs of her mental disease. In the diagnosis of the doctor it is "A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching!" (M V, I, 9–11). However, in her case "the benefit of sleep" is accompanied with the horror of re-enacting the slaughter and its effects again and again.

Macbeth also suffers from insomnia after the murder, sleeping is the reward for those who have not committed any sins: "Glamis hath murther'd Sleep, and therefore Cawdor / Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!" (M II, ii, 41–2). Sleep is only given to Duncan, who is "in his grave; After life's fitful fever he sleeps well; / Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison, / Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing / Can touch him further!" (M III, ii, 22–6).

Signalizing this out-of-order working of those in power, the country similarly shows the symptoms of a sick body: "I think our country sinks beneath the yoke, / It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (M IV, iii, 39–41).

III. Supernatural level

Whatever we regard the Weird Sisters, Supernaturals or Others, their realm also make use of body parts either in the Apparitions – the armed Head and the bloody Child – evoked by Macbeth or for cooking the hell-broth for magical purposes: "Liver of blaspheming Jew; / Gall of goat, and slips of yew, / Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse; / Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips, / Finger of birth-strangl'd babe / Ditch-deliver'd by a drab, / Make the gruel thick and slab" (M IV, i, 29–32). And we cannot forget about Banquo, whose restless ghost leave Macbeth amazed, since Banquo should not behave the way he does: "let the earth hide thee! / Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold; / Thou hast no speculation in those eyes / Which thou dost glare with" (M III, iv, 92–4). Unnatural, of course, in their appearance in the world of the living where

they have no place to be, ghosts also signalize the falling apart of the cosmic order.[3] Banquo's ghost shows all the symptoms that would place him under ground, yet, he usurps the realm of the human beings.

IV. The level of humours

Furthermore, universal disorder can be recognized on the level of bodily fluids, humours. Shakespeare extensively employs humours in order to present the imbalance or corruptness of the body, or very often, in the country.[4]

Macbeth is full of references to bodily fluids, such as blood, phlegm, bile, and organs attached to them, all presented to us as a horrific tableau vivant. The macrocosmic imperfection can be detected even in the minute parts of the human body, as the defect affects all levels of the macrocosmic/microcosmic hierarchy. We all remember Lady Macbeth's gruesome wish to turn her milk to gall: "take my milk for gall" (M I, v, 48), or the gore and blood around the royal couple. Let me show you some examples of the humours as signifiers of disorderly bodies, when the macrocosmic effect is visible in the microcosm of the human being.

Blood is the fluid which governs the whole drama by its presence: "I am in blood / Stepp'd in so far that should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er" (M III, iv, 136–8). Blood is important as it provides the hereditary lineage of the ruling house, the promise of the future generation, and this is precisely from which Macbeth is deprived despite the bloodshed around him. Patriarchal blood cannot leave the body of the monarch without generating great impact on both the body and the nation (Paster 1993, 103–4). The sight and the amount of blood of the old king is shocking even for Lady Macbeth: "who would have thought the old man had to have so much blood in him?" (M V, I, 35–6). It is far from the healing bloodletting of the nation as a means of purification, Duncan *was* the legitimate king. Macbeth gains the adjective "bloody" to his name from Malcolm (M IV, iii, 57). Make no mistake, it is the man, who is so "full o'th'milk of human kindness" (M I, v, 17) that Lady Macbeth felt her encouragement is needed to carry out the murder of Duncan.

Phlegm is mentioned in the play in images of fear. Macbeth speaks of his "pale-hearted fear" (M IV, I, 85), or horror on the face of the "lily-liver'd boy" (M V, iii, 15), whereas Lady Macbeth expresses her shame with it: "My hands are of your colour, but I shame / To wear a heart so

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[3] If we think about the Ghost of Old Hamlet, hallucinated by Hamlet or a 'real' apparition, we find that the ghost symbolizes the disruption of royal lineage, being Claudius on the throne instead of Hamlet.

[4] Bodily fluids are frequently used to characterisation in other Shakespearean plays as well. Often they symbolize the corrupted body or the dysfunctional ethos of the dramas. Melancholy is one of the most frequently used adjectives in *Hamlet* about the prince's state, but it also appears in *King Lear*, where in Edmund's interpretation is the is means for role-playing: 'cue is villanious melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam.' (KL I, ii, 138–9). Lear is an imperfect, choleric old man according to his daughters: '... then must we look to receive from this age, not alone the imperfections of long-engraffed condition, but, therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and *choleric years* bring with them.' (KL 1, i, 299–302). In Lear' curse Goneril is a harmful humour, causing disharmony in the king's body: 'But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter; / Or, rather, a disease that 's in my flesh, / Which I must needs call mine: thou art a bile, / A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle, / In my corrupted blood.' (KL 2, iv, 222–6). In *Hamlet* (as in *Macbeth*), choler and its organ, gall appears as the symbol of anger when Hamlet is searching his motivation for carrying out his revenge: 'for it cannot be, / But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall / To make oppression bitter, or ere this, / I should have fatted all the region kites / With this slave's offal.' (H II, ii, 585–8). After the mouse-trap scene he hear that Claudius is suffering from choler as well: 'Guil.: [The king] Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered./ Ham: With drink, sir? / Guil: No, my lord, rather with choler.' (H III, ii, 301–3).

white" (M II, ii, 64–5). Macbeth is surprised to realize that his wife can cope with the burden of their deed: "I think you can behold such sights, / And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks, / When mine is blanch'd with fear" (M III, iv, 113–5).[5]

Lady Macbeth recalls the gall, when she refuses her femininity with the wish to produce gall instead of milk, which is obviously poisonous for a child:

> Come, you Spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me, from the crown to the top, top-full / Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood, / Stop up th'access and passage to remorse; / That no compunctious visitings of Nature / Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between / Th'effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts, / And take my milk for gall... (M I, v, 40–8).

With this sentence she also refuses the image of a fragile and fallible female body as well. The refusal of feminine weakness is her weapon against her reluctant husband, who has doubts about the murder of the king (Paster 1993, 39).

All these examples illustrate to the spectator that the presented human bodies do not work properly even on the level of bodily fluids, the corruptness of the country is followed down to the smallest part of the macrocosmic/microcosmic hierarchy.

V. Healing the nation from outside

To all these dysfunctional mechanisms the play offers a counter-example, a place where universe and kingdom, king and nation are in harmony –, but it is outside Scotland. This is the English court, where Edward is in possession of miraculous healing, he can cure The Evil, that is, scrofula: "there are a crew of wretched souls, / That stay in cure: their malady convinces / The great assay of art; but at his touch, / Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand, / They presently amend" (M IV, iii, 141–5) and "strangely-visited people, / All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, / The mere despair of surgery, he cures; / Hanging a golden stamp about their necks, / Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken, / To the succeeding royalty he leaves / The healing benediction" (M IV, iii, 150–6). Not only he is gifted with the power of healing, but his legitimacy is a sharp contrast to Macbeth's tyrannical power (borrowed robes on a dwarf): "sundry blessings hang about his throne, / That speak him full of grace" (M IV, iii, 158–9). Since Duncan's sons fled to England after the murder and the help of the English monarch is the only way Macbeth can be dethroned, the reference to Edward as the holy king presents us a medicine for the nation's problems. After the bloodletting of Scotland, curing is possible from outside the nation, and it will be performed with the assistance of the healing ruler, Edward: "Meet we the med'cine of the sickly weal; / And with him pour we, in our country's purge, / Each drop of us" (M V, ii, 27–9). Reconstruction, the role of the anatomist can be performed after the abscission of the sick body parts – the tyrant couple –, when all dysfunctional behaviour is eliminated, legitimacy is more or less restored, and the country as a body can start its healing process.

The Doctor comes to the same conclusion after witnessing Lady Macbeth's disturbed night-walking, the crime has taken its toll, healing is not possible originating solely from the body itself: "unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds / To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. / More needs she the divine than the physician." (M V, i, 63–66). In his conversation with Macbeth, the usurper king comes to the conclusion that something is seriously wrong with his country and asks him to cure it: "If thou couldst, doctor, cast / The water of my land, find her disease, / And purge it to a sound and pristine health" (M V, iv, 51–3).

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[5] 'milk-liver'd man' (KL IV, ii, 52)

Witnessing the events in the play, after all the anatomization, the audience has the same task as the anatomist: to put the parts together, to find a coherent, functioning body to understand the big picture of the play.[6]

In conclusion, showing these examples, it might not be far-fetched to suggest that the knowledge from the anatomy theatres had some effect on the Elizabethan theatre as well. Shakespearean plays, and *Macbeth* especially reflect the new consciousness about the body in the Renaissance era. As I have shown, the cosmic disorder is represented on several levels in the drama: it affects the universal, earthly and even bodily levels at the same time.

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[6] Or as Marcus says in *Titus Andronicus*: 'O, let me teach you how to knot ... These broken limbs again into one body' (TA III, i, 279–87).