

THE END OF VERSE SPEAKING? – *MACBETH*

Did you not speak?

MACBETH When?

LADY MACBETH Now.

MACBETH As I descended?

LADY MACBETH Ay.

MACBETH

Hark! – who lies i'th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH Donalbain.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH A foolish thought,

To say a sorry sight.

MACBETH There's one did laugh in's sleep.

And one cried 'Murder' that they did wake each other

Nicholas Brooke ed. *Macbeth*, Oxford (1990)

Lady Macbeth: I heard the owl-scream and the cricket's cry.

Did you not speak?

Macbeth: When?

Lady Macbeth: Now.

Macbeth: As I descended?

Lady Macbeth: Ay.

Macbeth: Hark!

Who lies i'the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth: Donalbain.

Macbeth: [*looks at his hands.*]

This is a sorry sight.

Lady Macbeth: A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

(Cicely Berry, *The Actor and his Text*, 70)

SHARED LINES

Those that link single short lines:

MACBETH Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH Know you not he has? (1.7.30)

Those that link a single short line with a longer speech:

MACBETH Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more,

Macbeth does murder sleep' – the innocent sleep,

Sleep that knits up the ravelled 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 –

LADY MACBETH What do you mean? (2.2.33-38)

Those that link two longer speeches:

IMAGE

KING DUNCAN This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

BANQUO This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heavens breath
Smells wooingly here. (1.6.1-6)

LADY MACBETH . . .

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.

MACBETH If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll not fail.

(1.7.56-61)

BANQUO . . .

Fears and scruples shake us.
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF And so do I.

ALL So all. (2.4.125-8)

SHORT LINES

Single

Lady Macbeth Is **Banquo** gone from court?

Servant. Ay Madam, but returns again tonight. (3.2.1-2)

Final

Macbeth . . .

Will all great *Neptune's* ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? no: this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,

Making the green one, red.

[*Enter Lady Macbeth.*]

Lady Macbeth My hands are of your colour: but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (2.2.58-63)

Initial

Macduff. Is thy Master stirring?

Our knocking has awak'd him: here he comes.

(2.3.41-2)

Internal

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 marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use. (2.1.36-43)

King.
Give me your hand:
Conduct me to mine host we love him highly,
And shall continue, our graces towards him.
By your leave Hostess. [*Exeunt*] (1.6.28-31)

Macbeth We will speak further,
Lady Macbeth Only look up clear:
To alter favor, ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*] (1.5.70-72)

Cap. . . .
For brave *Macbeth* (well he deserves that name)
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandis'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 bad farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th' chops,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements. (1.2.16-23)

Cap.
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bath in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another *Golgotha*,
I cannot tell: but I am faint,
My gashes cry for help. (1.2.38-42)

'figure of silence' - 'when we begin to speake a thing, and breake of in the middle way (Puttenham, 139)

'a forme of speech by which the Orator through some affection, as either of feare, anger, sorrow, bashfulnesse or such like, breaketh off his speech before it be all ended' (Peachum, 118).

Lady Macbeth Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,
Greater then both, by the all-hail hereafter,
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.
Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to night.

Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?

Macbeth. Tomorrow, as he purposes.

**Lady Macbeth. O never,
Shall sun that morrow see.**

Your face, my *Thane*, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters, to beguile the time. (1.5.52-61)

PUNCTUATION AND LINEATION AS PUNCTUATION

'Shakespeare's architecture in his verse is entirely dependent on the preservation of the iambic line'

(Hall, 24)

'Always learn a text thought by thought, not line by line'

(Rodenburg, 119)

'three manner of pauses . . . The shortest pause or intermission they called *comma* . . . The second they called *colon* . . . The third they called *periodus*'
(Puttenham, 61-2)

Macb. . . .

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. (5.5.16-27)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare*. London: Methuen, 1984.
Berry, Cicely. *The Actor and his Text*. London: Harrap, 1987.
---. *Text in Action*. London: Virgin, 2001.
Donnellan, Declan. *The Actor and the Target*. London: Nick Hern, 2002.
Hall, Peter. *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players*. London: Oberon, 2003.
Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. New York: Theatre Communications, 1992.
Neill, Michael. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.
Peacham, Henry. *The Garden of Eloquence*. London, 1593.
Puttenham, George. *The Arte of English Poesie*. London, 1589.
Rodenburg, Patsy. *Speaking Shakespeare*. London: Methuen, 2002.
Wells, Stanley, Taylor, Gary et al. *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.