"Where the Place?"
Meanings of Space and of Places in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Géza KÁLLAY

Eötvös Loránd University
Department of English Studies
kallay@ucsc.edu

Abstract. Drawing especially on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as a text to be investigated in particular and on some philosophical texts on space and time as theoretical background, the paper attempts to show how difficult it is to talk about time without spatial metaphors and how space serves as a device to make time 'real.' In turn, it is also demonstrated how space becomes dependent on time: in *Macbeth*, the significance of a dramatic moment can hardly be established without some specific reference to how that moment fits into the spatial sequence of the plot, and how this effects the formation and disintegration of the character who is in a certain spatio-temporal situation. The paper consists of three parts: in the first, the first scene of the play is interpreted in detail; in the second, there is a brief survey of theories of *space* and *place*, and the third follows the various uses the words space and place are put to in the dramatic text. It is argued that one aspect of Macbeth's tragedy is that he tried the "spatial impossible," inseparable, as usual, from time: he wished to move, to go *and* remain in place at the same time.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Macbeth, space, place, metaphysics, meaning

"Where are we at all?
And whereabouts in the name of space?"
James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake*

1. The Weird Sisters: *when* and *where*

1 Witch: When shall we three meet again? (1)
           In thunder, lightning, or in rain? (2)
2 Witch: When the hurlyburly's done, (3)
           When the battle's lost, and won. (4)
3 Witch: That will be ere the set of sun. (5)
1 Witch: Where the place? (6)
2 Witch: Upon the heath. (6)
3 Witch: There to meet with Macbeth. (7)
1 Witch: I come, Graymalkin! (8)
2 Witch: Paddock calls. (9)
3 Witch: Anon! (10)
ALL: Fair is foul, and foul is fair: (11)
           Hover through the fog and filthy air. (12) [*Exeunt.*]

"When shall we three meet again?" (1.1.1.) – the First Witch (Weird Sister) asks, this sentence also being the very first sentence of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.[1] This question (as preparation to say farewell, perhaps) containing two time-adverbials ("when" and "again"), is followed by three options, underscoring the "trinity" of the Weird Sisters, the number three, not without mythological significance. The three possibilities are still in the interrogative mood, and they might be read as referring to both space and time: "In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" (2), i.e.: 'are we going to meet *when* there is thunder, lightning or rain?' or: 'are we going to meet *where* there is, or will be, thunder, lightning, or rain?'. The Second Sister answers with an implied statement where only the adverbial clauses of time are explicit: "[we shall meet] When the hurlyburly's done, / When the battle's lost and won" (3-4). The "hurlyburly," as the editor's gloss indicates, is "uproar, tumult, confusion" (Muir 1979, 5). In my reading, it is a kind of 'tohu va bohu,' a pre-creational, pre-

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[1] Throughout this paper I quote *Macbeth* according to Muir (1979). References to the play are according to act-, scene-, and line-numbers in this edition. I also follow Muir (who follows the Folio of 1623, the only available "original" source of the play) in calling the Weird Sisters "Witches" in the above speech-headings but only there. The term "witch" must be handled with caution because it decides about the "ontological status" of these obscure creatures too soon: cf. Nicholas Brooke's interpretation in the Introduction to the Oxford edition of *Macbeth*: "They call themselves the Weïrd [sic!] Sisters, and Banquo and Macbeth refer to them as such; the only time the word 'witch' is heard in the theatre is in l[ine] 6 of this scene [in Act 1, Scene 3], when the First Witch quotes the words of the sailor's wife as the supreme insult for which her husband must be tortured. 'Weird' did not come to its loose modern usage before the early nineteenth century; it meant Destiny or Fate, and foreknowledge is clearly the Sisters' main function. But the nature of their powers is still ambiguous" (Brooke 1990, 3).

conditional state where nothing is yet clear or decided. *Tohu va bohu*, (in fact *tohu va vohu* in the Genesis story), originally means something like 'without form,' 'void,' 'chaos and utter confusion.' Things and persons should have space, place and a stretch of "narrated-dramatised" time in order to come out of the initial chaos: the Weird Sisters are preparing the stage and plot-time, the "where" and "when," for the drama to be performed. However, from the conversation of the Weird Sisters, it is not clear whether the respective time and place of "thunder, lightning and rain" (i.e., a storm) and the 'end' of the "hurlyburly" coincide or not. The terminal point of confusion ("when the hurlyburly's *done*") might serve as a kind of corrective alternative to the possibility of meeting in a storm. So the implied answer might be paraphrased as follows: 'yes, we shall meet in a storm, which is also the end of confusion and void,' or 'no, we shall not meet in thunder, lightning or in rain; we'll rather meet when the uproar and tumult, in fact the battle is over' (the parallel syntactic structures: "When… when…", and even the continuing rhymes, help us to identify "hurlyburly" as "battle").

Moreover, the word *done* sinisterly pre-echoes one of the key-words of the play: for example, Macbeth at the end of the dagger-monologue says: "I go, and it is done" (2.1.62), i.e., 'I will go into Duncan's bedchamber, and I will kill Duncan, and then it is over.' Lady Macbeth, in turn, will comment, before Macbeth comes back after having killed Duncan, on the scenario with: "Alack, I am afraid they [the body-guards of Duncan sleeping in his room] have awaked, / And 'tis not done" (2.2.9-10) but Macbeth, with bloody hands, enters with the famous words: "I have done the deed" (14). Later, when his wife urges him to go back to Duncan's chamber and "smear / The sleepy grooms [the bodyguards] with blood" (2.2.47-48) he says: "I'll go no more. / I am afraid to think what I have done" (2.2.48-49). Lady Macbeth, re-enacting the murder-scene in her sleepwalking, in Act 5, Scene 1, will exclaim (even echoing the First Weird Sister's "I come, Graymalkin"): "There's knocking at the gate: Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone" (3.1.56-58). When the Lady is already dead and Macbeth is practically alone in his castle to face his enemies, he remarks: "I 'gin [begin] to be aweary of the sun, [I am bored by daylight] / And wish th' estate o'th world [the structure of the universe] were now undone" (5.5.47-48). This can also be paraphrased as: 'I am tired of even the sun shining at me, and I wish God had not created the world.' How anything should, and can be "done" at all is of central significance in the play, and I will return to this question shortly.

The battle is spoken of as if the Weird Sister did not know *who* is going to win and lose, and we of course have no idea yet of even the opponents: right now, this is a 'battle in general,' a 'battle as such.' Yet with this formulation ("lost and won") a future-oriented idea of relativity is introduced as well: after all, it is a general truth that in a conflict, what is winning for the One, is always losing for the Other. The Third Sister, making her first contribution now, foretells at least the

approximate time of the end of the battle, and from her words we also learn that – in a play, where a good half of the action, especially the middle of the play, takes place at night – it is most probably still daytime: "That will be ere [before] the set of the sun" (5), to which neither of the other Sisters objects.

Rather, the First Sister starts to negotiate place: "Where the place?" (6), also breaking, with a half-line, the smoothly rhyming series of couplets heard so far, precisely when it comes to talking about *place*. In the discourse of the First Sister, we are, even syntactically and prosodically, dropped out of the series of sentences, hitherto exclusively discussing time, onto a certain *place*. The relation of space and place is severely complicated – not only in the play but in any discussion – and another goal of mine will be to talk about some aspects of this relation. For the time being, I define *place* as a distinctive region of space, a determinate spatial volume which a concrete object or body could, at least in principle, occupy (cf. Rosen 2012).

The Second Sister responds to "Where the place?" with: "Upon the heath" (6) and this rather vague specification of space is further narrowed down with the help of a place-adverbial coming from the Third Sister: "*There* to meet with Macbeth" (7). The sentence, because of the infinitive ("to meet"), is definitely future-oriented, and it brings the proper name "Macbeth" into play for the first time in the play. The fact that after "meet" the preposition "with" is present, suggests that this is a pre-arranged, future encounter, at least on the part of the Weird Sisters (and it will later turn out that Macbeth, indeed, was *not* expecting it, at least not *then* and *there*). Yet, most importantly, "there to meet with Macbeth" ties place and time to an *event*: *meeting* not only with one another, but with the future protagonist of the play as well, in their circle. The Sisters will meet "with" Macbeth in Act 1, Scene 3, yet it is curious that at this initial moment they – like the letter Lady Macbeth receives from her husband and reads upon her first entry onto the stage (cf. 1.5.1-14) – do not mention Banquo. Is this because Banquo will be there anyway but is not worth talking about? Is he a negligible factor? Or will he be an (unpleasant) surprise for the Sisters?

What remains from this very brief scene of not more than 12 lines is resolution: the First Sister says: "I come, Graymalkin!" (8): Graymalkin – as the footnote informs us (cf. Muir 1979, 4) – is a grey cat. This could be the name of one of the Sisters present, but the Second Sister's upcoming laconic statement: "Paddock [i.e.: a toad or frog] calls" (9) makes the reader uncertain: is it so that one of the Sisters – most probably the Third – is called "Paddock" (as such weird creatures were indeed able to take the shape of toads or frogs, just as much as cats, cf. Muir 1979, 4), and now she has started to move and she is calling the others? Or does "Paddock" refer to a fourth Sister (or some kind of persona) whom the Second Sister can hear calling all of them? There is an overall uncertainty, perhaps even a "hurlyburly" here as regards the exact reference of proper names. For the sake of

symmetry, the next in line to speak, the Third Sister should perhaps utter a name as well, but she only provides us with a time-adverbial "Anon!" (10) (i.e., 'in a short time,' 'soon,' originally meaning 'in one,' i.e. 'immediately'). And what is the purpose of Greymalkin's implicit, and Paddock's explicit, "call"? Are the Weird Sisters summoned for a specific purpose? Do they have some obligation to fulfil? Or has this first meeting been their "recess," a "time of recreation" and they are called "home" as children are called home by their parents from the play-ground when it is time to go home? How playful are these Sisters, in the Folio of 1623 sometimes called "weyward" ("wayward," i.e. 'erratic,' 'capricious,' 'unreasonable' [cf. Muir 1979, 14 and Crystal and Crystal 2002, 490]), later reciting chants which can also be performed as a round-dance? How serious are they when they confront Macbeth and Banquo? How serious are they when Macbeth visits them, at the beginning of Act 4?

In the light of the play, I find it noteworthy that the Weird Sisters are summoned without either they, or someone else (Graymalkin, Paddock) giving the definitive purpose of the call. As if still another (and, perhaps, still another…) call were necessary to clarify why they have to go now. This is worth considering because later for Macbeth each goal attained will by itself entail a new goal to be attained: neither being something with a proper name (such as the "Thane of Cawdor," or "the King"), nor being somewhere (in or out of Duncan's bedchamber, on the throne, at the banquet, in front of Hecate, fighting alone against his enemies in his castle) will mean a "promised end." What Macbeth will lack is a sense of a 'real' ending: each "ultimate goal" will turn out to be an "interim goal," the ultimate one remaining shrouded in obscurity. The plot suggests to its protagonist that when Lady Macbeth says: "I am afraid […] 'tis [the deed, the killing of Duncan is] not done" (2.2.9-10), and when she says "What's done cannot be undone" (3.1.58) she is right, on both occasions. For it is never done. Goals are always deferred, nothing is *really* accomplished, nothing is ever finished, nothing is ever over; whatever there is, it flows on, like Duncan's, "the old man's" "blood." Lady Macbeth will even ask in the sleepwalking scene: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (5.1.33-34).

One way to sum up Macbeth's tragedy is to say that for him what is done cannot be undone: it is past remedy. However, at the same time, whatever is done, still remains *undone* also in the sense of 'unfinished,' as if significant action with a real purpose had fallen out of time, as if time were rattling along as an empty shell, without any content: "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow / Creeps in his petty pace from day to day / To the last syllable of recorded time…" (5.5.18-20). What is done cannot be altered, or changed: the regret, the remorse, the despair is there but it will, and has to, remain undone, in the sense of remaining open, like an open wound. The problem is not only that something is over but also that nothing is ever over. What I am interested in, in this paper, is precisely some of the spatial and 'place-al' consequences of this temporal aspect of the play.

Then comes the much interpreted, proverbial couplet (so the lines are rhyming once again), spoken by all the three of them, as a kind of chant: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: / Hover through fog and filthy air" (11-12). The references to "fog" and "filthy air" (already filthy, perhaps, because of the blood, the smoke and the dead bodies of the battle, on the literal level of meaning) are most probably specifications of the immediate surroundings, but how are we to read "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"? The opposition of "fair and foul" is a commonplace in the language of Shakespeare's time but their identification, their making them 'equal' is not.[2] Further, both – rather straightforward – qualities may be interpreted ethically just as much as aesthetically, yielding the following, at least two possible paraphrases: 'good is bad and bad is good' or: 'nice is ugly and ugly is nice.' Yet the identification of these binary oppositions makes that kind of relativity explicit which was implied in "lost and won": not only is it a matter of perspective whether anything or anybody is good or bad, beautiful or repulsive but there is a serious crisis, an overall deflation of values which makes distinctions futile and nonsensical. Not only are time and space (including, it seems, especially the future) under the circumspection of the Weird Sisters but the possibility of translucency, of distinguishable qualities has been heavily compromised for all agencies in the play: we may recall, in Act 1 Scene 4, King Duncan's interrupted reflection on the man who was Thane of Cawdor before Macbeth got this title: "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face: / He was a gentleman on whom I built / An absolute trust—" (1.4.12-15).

It is precisely any kind of "absolute" (as opposed to the 'relative,' the 'relational,' the 'partial,' the 'fragmented') that looks impossible in the play. To appreciate what the Sisters stand for even further, we may also remember how Macbeth, upon his first entry onto the stage, echoes the key-words of the concluding, general statement of the Weird Sisters: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.2.36). Macbeth, at this first, initial stage has not yet identified *foul* and *fair* as the Weird Sisters have done; for him, the two qualities are still in a kind of 'conjoined juxtaposition,' yet with the acknowledgement that they may operate, qualifying "day," simultaneously: not 'foul *is* fair' but 'foul *and* fair.' He may not have seen such a foul *and* fair day because the battle, by nature, was ugly and appalling, but victory was sweet and beautiful, so, indeed, even the winner is a kind of loser, a witness to awe-inspiring and repulsive things. Before Macbeth utters this sentence, we see the Sisters for the second time; the scene (Act 1, Scene 3) opens on the note of place: "*Where* hast thou been, Sister? / Killing swine. / Sister, *where*

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[2] Cf. for example the words Brabantio addresses to Othello: "O thou foul thief, where has thou stow's my daughter? […] Whether a maid […] Would ever have […] Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou?" (1.2.62-71) and, in turn, the words of the Duke of Venice to Brabantio: "… noble signior, / If virtue no delight in beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.288-290); quoted according to Ridley (1986). Cf. also Brooke (1990, 95).

thou?" (1.3.1-3), and the story the First Sister tells about the sailor's wife, the sailor and the "tempest-tost bark" (1.3.24, 25) indicates a considerable (though not absolute) control over space as well.

To conclude the first scene, and to entice Macbeth to step into the magic circle, the Weird Sisters, singing and dancing "hand in hand," wind up the "charm" (cf. 1.3.31, 36). The Sisters' circle is often taken to be standing for the ultimate (and absolute) space of the theatre: the stage itself. I take the relativity of "fair is foul and foul is fair" – especially through the aesthetic connotations of these words – as the play's invitation to see time as something which "hovers through," which 'lingers uncertainly as,' and which 'melts' into, space, as the Weird Sisters do: into "fog and filthy air." Thus *time* becomes a phenomenon which is suspended as, and is constantly 'translated' into, space and place.

It is by working my way through space, "carving out my passage" (cf. 1.2.21) through sites of place in *Macbeth* that I wish to draw some more general conclusions as regards discourses of space. Reading *Macbeth* is not only to narrow a hopelessly vast field down into a more manageable arena of space-discussion; it may have further significance. If – in line with Duncan – we consider Shakespeare to be a 'gentleman on whom we may build absolute trust,' and this trust consists in the hypothesis that a poetic-dramatic genius presents, in his text, space and place in a highly original manner, we may hope for some substantial insights precisely from the poetic-dramatic texture of his play which, of course with due caution, can be formulated on a more comprehensive and abstract level and, therefore, in a conceptual manner. In other words, I will read the particular story of a particular character in a literary piece in hope of some more general, philosophical insights – this is, as far as I can see it, one of the advantages of reading literature and philosophy together.

2. The universalist and the personalist accounts of space, place and time

If, indeed, time is envisaged as "dynamic," "transient" and "flowing," and space as "static," "permanent" and "fixed," then it seems we are revisiting some of the most fundamental and initial problems from which Greek philosophy, and, thus, our Western thinking originated: the problem of the relationship between permanence and change, sameness and difference, identity and relativity, determinacy and indeterminacy, synchrony and diachrony, necessity and contingency. One of the most puzzling philosophical queries of the Western tradition has been how we can talk, simultaneously, about specific, individual phenomena – about "each thing" – and about classes, sets of things, also appearing in the philosophical literature as "universals," "types" (as opposed to particular tokens), "sortal or general concepts." How can I talk about both "the table," or

"tables" in general, and about "this (very) table" (in front of me) in particular? Particular things will always differ from each other (even two eggs will not be totally alike) and it was the temporal aspect of difference, as one of the *causes* of difference, which was first emphasised especially by Heraclitus (~ 535 – ~ 475 BC) at the dawn of philosophical speculation: everything will be in constant flux, in constant motion (cf. Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1995, 181-212). The Sophists famously followed Heraclitus, and claimed that because everything is changing all the *time*, and there will always be a difference between things even with respect to themselves, no knowledge is possible at all: both the thing I wish to describe, and I who try to describe it, change so much even within the very short time it takes to name the thing, that the thing will not even "deserve" the name (and the more lengthy description even less so). It is equally well-known that Plato wanted to solve the question by 'stopping' the constant flux. He proposed that our ability to intelligibly talk about a particular thing and to grasp it conceptually, in other words to create classes, universals, types, sortal concepts, into which we can put particular things in order to interpret them, is possible because our by nature "general" concepts are "backed up" – in a highly complicated and here not further analysable way – by Forms (Ideas) that correspond to our concepts. Forms cannot be moved out of their place because they are fixed in the space of "real" Reality: Forms are unmoving, eternal and absolute. Thus, ultimately, it is Forms that make thinking and (certain) knowledge possible, since they resist movement and, therefore, time. Time, and the particular "amidst" time, was trapped in space, assigning a fixed place to another, generic (universal, typical, sortal) form of the particular (cf. especially Plato, *Cratylus*, 437d-440e and the *Republic*, 514a-526e).[3]

Thus, the relationship between time and space raises, in variously profound ways, some of the most fundamental puzzles of Western thinking. It is not only because of Plato's enormous influence on the subsequent philosophical tradition that we may see why any discourse about space is bound up with talk about time, and vice versa. When, e.g., to observe something, I fix a thing, I fix it in space and assign it to a certain place: place, as defined above, is a determinate region of space, a "here or there." This way place appears to be the space the particular object occupies and if it does not move, we may talk of a "concrete, fixed place," whereas we usually think of time as, nevertheless, "going on," as "passing by" (somehow "around," "above" or "under," or wherever) the object which is fixed in this or that specific volume of space. It is true that we do not experience space or place "separately", i.e., independently of the object: it is precisely the object that

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[3] I give the references to Plato's works according to the so-called "Estienne" (or "Stephanus")-pagination, which is internationally used. An excellent and famous English translation of Plato's oeuvre is Hamilton and Cairns (1982), where *Cratylus* was translated by Benjamin Jowett (421-474) and the *Republic* by Paul Shorey (575-844).

"cuts out" place, a "piece of space" – as Michel Foucault would say – for us (Foucault 1986, 27 qtd. in Casey 1993, 317). But we "experience" time separately "even less," since it is one of the "duties" of time never to stop but to go on-and-on, in an ungraspable manner. If I put an object down, and then lift it up, I can touch the "place" (the "ground") it has occupied. But how could I ever "touch" the time, the "while" when it was there?

The most ardent proponent of the view that time and space, although directly "invisible," are necessary, unconditional and always already present determinants of anything we experience was Immanuel Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* He called space and time "pure forms of intuition" (Kant 1956, B 66)[4] meaning that it is an anthropological fact about human beings that they arrange and order everything they perceive in space and time; space and time are initial "aspects," or "frames" we simply cannot get rid of, and according to which, and in which, we envisage all phenomena; three dimensional space, and time as the fourth dimension (and no "more" dimensions are possible) are in the mind as categories of apprehension and understanding, and they are our most fundamental and direct relations to the world (cf. Kant 1956, B 37-73).

Kant's theory of space (and time) involves the famous "Copernican turn" Kant congratulated himself on most: thinkers should turn the tables on the world, and should not adjust themselves to the world; rather, they should allow the world to mould according to the boundaries the human being discovers in herself (cf. Kant 1956 B xix-xxiv). Thus, Kant's theory of space and time has become a highly original account also in terms of presenting a special "blend" of what we may call the "cosmological" (or "physicalist," or "objectivist") theory of space (and time) on the one hand, and the "personalist" (or "psychological," or "subjectivist") theory of space (and time) on the other.[5] For Kant, space and time are in the mind, it is a genuinely "inner" and human category (and limit). At the same time, neither space nor time is "subjective" in the sense that each of us would have a different apprehension of them; on the contrary, they are objectively *there*, in each mind, as an anthropological necessity. In cosmologist space-talk such questions are discussed as whether space is not more than a bundle of *spatial relationships* between material things – as Leibnitz held –, or whether space – as Newton argued

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4 I follow the international practice of giving references to Kant's work by using the pagination of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (originally from 1787), widely called as the "B-text". The standard English translation of the *Kritik der reinen Vernuft* is Kant (1956), the quote above can be found on page 66.

5 It was Paul Ricouer, who, in his *Time and Narrative,* introduced, the respective terms "cosmological conceptions of time" (such as, e.g., Aristotle's) versus "psychological theories of time" (such as, e.g., Augustine of Hippo's). The first is concerned – in Ricoeur's words – with "the time of the world," the second with "the time of the soul" (cf. Ricoeur 1988, 12-22). I think this distinction can be applied to theories of space as well.

– should rather be considered as having *real existence*. For Newton, space is a *genuine entity*, a "vast aetherial container without walls, in which everything else that exists lives and moves and has its being" (Van Cleve 2009, 74).[6] Talk about space not as personal experience or orientation but as "space in the universe," as "space in the world" which would exist even independently of human beings, involved discussion of the possibility of void, of "empty space," and also of geometrical issues, including Euclidean versus non-Euclidean geometries. Since the modern revolution of physics at the beginning of the twentieth century, space and time have been found to be inseparable, and, thus, have been discussed as "spacetime," giving rise to a new discussion of cause and effect relations, of the "asymmetry" between the past and the future,[7] and even of entropy. The philosopher is interested in these – resolute and sometimes bitter – debates to draw some conclusions as regards fundamental metaphysical issues about cause, effect, determinism, and so on, from a field that seems, at least for some thinkers, to be independent of human relations and subjective perception, since geometry and physics have long had the reputation of disciplines where the "laws of nature" would hold even if no humans were present in the Universe.

Others, either convinced that any talk about space and time is hopelessly bound up with human agency anyway, or that we should rest satisfied with a more modest program, have tied the discussion of space – and time, too – to openly "personal" interpretations, where the initial point of departure is the way we ordinarily conceive of space as everyday beings. This does not mean that a personalist philosophical account would concentrate only on extreme and exclusively idiosyncratic views of space. Personalists – mostly, as far as I can see, those working on the problem of space from the phenomenological point of view – also wish to generalise and "transcend" their particular accounts. They tend to treat themselves as examples – as sort of "metonymical samples," standing for many others – whose introspective insights might find resonance in a lot of other people. Where personalists differ from cosmologists most, I think, is that a personalist acknowledges her findings to be the result of conscious reflection on what initially is private experience, originating in an act of consciousness (or, as the Anglo-Saxon tradition prefers to say: in an act of the mind) of her own. A personalist thinks of the experience of space, always already *as reflected* experience which would simply not exist without the observer's consciousness, without her "inner

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6   See further Sklar (2009, 569-574) and: "Space is, in Newton's famous remark in the *Opticks* [sic!] 'God's sensorium', the organ through which God is omnipresent in the world" (Rutherford 1999, 436).

7   "We remember and have records of the past, but not of the future. We take causal influence to proceed from earlier to later events. We think of the past as 'fixed' and unchangeable, but of the future as 'open' and indeterminate in nature" (Sklar 2009, 573).

world." This goes back to the "father" of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, whose revolution in philosophy was precisely marked – among other feats – by considering only those properties of things real which can be experienced in everyday life (cf. Hammond, Howarth and Keat 1991, 5). Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that instead of space, personalists prefer to talk about place, or even of commonplace (the latter including Maurice Blanchot, for instance).[8] Gaston Bachelard, who is rightfully celebrated for having re-annexed place for existential philosophy and for the appreciation of literature, in his famous *The Poetics of Space* grudgingly remarks that philosophers boast that they "know the universe before they know the house," while what in fact they never forget and, thus, genuinely know are "the intimate values of inside space" (Bachelard 1964, 5 and 31), the "house of their own," which is their personality and very existence. Edward Casey, in his *Getting Back into Place,* a groundbreaking study in the phenomenology of place and space, argues that place is never "a matter of arbitrary position. What if the stakes in the game of place are much higher than we think? Where then will we find ourselves? Not in empty space" – he answers the question. "As J. J. Gibson reminds us […] 'We do not live in 'space.' Instead, *we live in places*. So it behoves us to understand what such place-bound and place-specific living consist in" (Casey 1993, xiii). Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist of the seventeenth century claimed that the Cabbalists call even God, the Divine Numen, "MAKOM, that is, Place (*locus*)" (qtd. in Koyré 1957, 148). "Why is God called place? – Shmuel Sambursky asks, in dialogue with a commentary on the Genesis-story. Because He is the place of the world, while the world is not His place" (Sambursky and Pines 1971, 15). God, for the Cabbalists, is not the God of space, space in the sense physics discusses it. He is not only cosmic occasion but rather the place of every occasion. He is the source and limit of the universe and the source and limit of human existence (cf. Casey 1993, 18). If the Cabbalists tied human existence to God as sacred place (sacred place being the most typical place for several thinkers), Martin Heidegger, in his late essays, such as Building Dwelling Thinking, ties "mortals" to "Being" through "dwelling in" and "building" houses, where one is genuinely at home: "Dwelling […] is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals [human beings] exist. Perhaps this attempt to

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[8] Cf. Maurice Blanchot: "Man does not want to leave his own place (*luogo*). He says that technology is dangerous, that it distracts from our relationship with the world […]. Who is this man? It is each one of us. [...] This same man suffered a shock the day Gagarin became the first man in space. […] In these cases we must pay heed to the man in the street, to the man with no fixed abode. […] It is therefore necessary, up there, for the man from the Outside to speak, and to speak continuously, not only to reassure and to inform us, but because he has no other link with the old place than that unceasing word, which […] says, to whoever is able to understand it, only some insignificant commonplace, but also says top this to him who listens carefully: that truth is nomadic" (Blanchot 1996, 269 and 272).

think about dwelling and building will bring out somewhat more clearly that building belongs to dwelling and how it receives its nature from dwelling. Enough will have been gained if dwelling and building have become *worthy of questioning* and thus have remained *worthy of thought*" (Heidegger 1994, 160). For Heidegger, "place is the phenomenal particularization of 'being-in-the world'", which Edward Casey makes more concrete by interpreting it as "*being-in-place*, i.e., being in the *place-world* itself" (Casey 1993, xv). Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued, in his seminal work, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, that instead of an empiricist or intellectual account of "being-in-the world," we should rather concentrate on the body's awareness of place as *situatedness*, as the body feeling the "life-world" around itself. Abstract movements, such as watching a play on stage in the theatre, involve, on the observer's part, the ability of projection through the possibilities the imagination offers: "The normal function which makes abstract movement possible is one of 'projection' whereby the subject [the observer] of movement keeps in front of him an area of free space in which what does not naturally exist takes on a semblance of existing" (Merleau-Ponty 1985, 111). This is tantamount to saying that even participating in the imaginary originates not so much in what we know but what we, with our bodies, are capable of doing in space, space understood here as a concrete place, a particular situation.

These examples from the personalist speculations about space and place are perhaps enough to show that since these accounts involve a multitude of aspects of human existence, the various senses of space and place will be in direct proportion to this multitude (and perhaps we will, in this tradition, end up even with *too* many meanings of space and place, some of them with rather vague boundaries). Edward Casey, in *The Fate of Place*, which is a "philosophical history" of the problem of space and place (and a sequel to *Getting Back Into Place*), shows how, in the history of thinking the systole and diastole of space- and place-talk changed from discourses about place, for example, in Aristotle's system, to theories of space in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, to return, from late nineteenth century onwards, chiefly to discourses of private places. From among those I have termed personalists Casey devotes special attention to Bergson, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Bachelard, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida, and Irigaray (cf. Casey 1998).

3. Displaced and fixed Macbeth

"What if the stakes in the game of place are much higher than we think?" – Edward Casey, as we have heard, asks. This is a question we could ask Macbeth to answer, too. It is one of the commonplaces of Shakespeare-criticism that in Early Modern English culture the body of a person, including the actor's body on the stage, was seen as the microcosm, mirroring the Macrocosm. The Macrocosm, as

they knew it, included all the spheres around the Earth with the planets (including the Sun and the Moon, which for them were also planets), corresponding to respective (male) parts of the human body as macrocosm (cf. e.g. Elton 1986, 18-19). Whether this meant trying to find a place – in philosophical treatises, in poetry, in tragedy, comedy, history, etc. – for the human being both in the everyday world and the Universe simultaneously, is difficult to tell. The answer is complicated by the, to me, absolutely not implausibly sounding claim that even whom I call cosmologists have always wished to find a home in the Universe, too, just they started out by adopting a divine standpoint – they tried to look at the scenario from "God's perspective," mostly in the name of "reason" – rather than making their initial steps reckoning with their human limits. This is important to note because Shakespearean tragic heroes can also be seen – among several other perspectives as well – as precisely marking out the boundaries between the divine and the human. King Lear, for example, begins his play as a God-like, mythological figure and ends as a wretched, "poor, bare, forked animal" (*King Lear*, 3.4. 106),[9] mad with grief but also with wisdom, howling over the death of his favourite daughter, Cordelia. Lear, being an earthly father, can, unlike God, give life to a beloved person only once, and cannot resurrect his child, as a Divine Father could.

The transcendental creatures starting *Macbeth* and surrounding the protagonist may get a cosmologist and personalist interpretation simultaneously: the Weird Sisters can be taken as representatives of Fate and as projections – even in Merleau-Ponty's sense of "projection" – of Macbeth's utmost personal imagination. "They met me in the day of success – Macbeth's letter informs his wife – and I have learn't by the perfect'st report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge" (1.5.1-3). Macbeth, intoxicated by success – and having "bathed in reeking wounds" (cf. 1.2.40), and thus drugged by the odour of blood and killing – has to encounter some tangible representatives of his desires and ambition, who at the same time vanish into "fog and filthy air": the Weird Sisters are just as "certain" as any of our inner feelings, thoughts, beliefs, hopes, wishes, and so on. And Macbeth does not only have beliefs about, but believes *in* the Weird Sisters as well. That he talks about "more than mortal knowledge" "*in* them" to me indicates that he already considers them as a kind of "place" where he would wish to be, to dwell, in the Heideggerian sense, but by the time he gets there, they make "themselves air, into which they vanish" (cf. 1.5.5).

As already hinted at while interpreting the First Scene, Macbeth's "being-in-a-place," his *esse in loco* will be one of constant movement: his immediate placement – or, in Edward Casey's terminology: his "implacement" (Casey 1993,

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[9]   Quoted according to Muir (1986, 115).

xiii) – will continuously turn out to be a series of *dis*placements. When Macbeth thinks he is in place, that he has caught up, and has overtaken the Others (including Duncan, Banquo, the Murderers, Malcolm, Macduff, and, first and foremost, the Weird Sisters), he finds himself in a place from which he *must* move out and on. And if we emphasize the *esse* part of *esse in loco*, so if being in a place is really one of the defining features of one's being, then Macbeth's struggle – almost mimicking a kind of crucifixion – will be being torn apart between conflicting spaces. He will constantly have the urge to change places, which Casey calls "place-panic" (Casey 1993, ix). Macbeth's mind, his imagination, in incredibly rich poetic metaphors, tries to interpret this panic and does everything to keep the disintegrating parts of his personality together. When Macbeth writes his report to his wife, he is still something Merleau-Ponty calls the "intellectualist," who tries to explain phenomena from, and through, knowledge (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1985, 122): we do not *know* what the source of Macbeth's "perfectest report" might be on the Weird Sisters having more than mortal knowledge: maybe it is the appearance of Ross with the news that Macbeth is Thane of Cawdor (also recorded in the letter) which counts as strong evidence. But the point precisely is that Macbeth will move, form the intellectual/imaginative plain, which is at the beginning in harmony with the bodily plain, onto a realm where disharmony prevails on the bodily level: until the very end, the body will be, in a way, "in constant flux." The imagination and the intellect will try to structure and order the "moving body," slowly falling apart, in vain.

The word *time* occurs in *Macbeth* 39 times, which is a high record in itself. If we include plurals, derivatives and compounds such as "betimes," "oftentimes," "sometime," "supper-time," "timely," and "untimely," we end up with 56 occurrences. The significance of time in *Macbeth* has, quite understandably, often been discussed.[10] The word "space" occurs only once in the play: Macduff uses it in a rather insignificant context with the semantic content 'country,' or 'kingdom,' or 'world': "Fare thee well, Lord / – Macduff says to Malcolm, when Malcolm pretends to be a treacherous future king – I would not be the villain that thou think'st / For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp" (4.3, 34-36). Macduff's use of "space" instead of, e.g., "country" indicates the vacuous nature of Macbeth's empire. However, H. W. Fawkner, in a much-neglected book on the play, makes some excellent points about place and displacement concerning Macbeth's personal and theatrical plight:

> The reason why Macbeth's displacement from theatrical self-presence is so
> complex and contradictory is that theatricality itself is a fundamentally two-

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[10] E.g., Kastan (1982, 91-95); Coursen (1995, 158-167); Palfrey (2004, 96-111); Kállay (2004, 332-389).

sided thing in *Macbeth* (and elsewhere). On the one hand, the theatre is the place where meaning is produced; on the other hand the theatre is the place where meaning is subjected to equivocation. On the one hand Shakespeare situates himself firmly inside the tragic West, forwarding its project to turn negativity into meaning, suffering into tragic self-presence; on the other hand Shakespeare situates himself close to the twentieth-century world where the sublation of suffering is beginning to be questioned as a source of human truth. Macbeth, who from the outset seems strangely distanced from the drama of his own tragic fall, can in a wonderful way ride on both of these forces unleashed by the displacement of theatrical truth. Insofar as the theatre is an arena for the production of meaning, Macbeth's disenchantment is the withdrawal of his imagination from meaning and self-presence, but insofar as theatre is the scenario for the staging of equivocation, Macbeth's increasingly anxious withdrawal betokens the fear of the loss of meaning. (Fawkner 1990, 45)

The word "place" occurs 10 times in the play, and 15 times if we count derivative forms as well. It is also significant as a *lack*, when it would be vital to know *where* something *is* (such as Macbeth's dagger). However, it is precisely that which is shrouded into uncertainty. Macbeth, at the beginning of the play, is first talked about as constantly being on the move in the battle: he "like Valour's minion, carv'd out his passage" (1.2.19), and he – with Banquo – is compared to "eagles" and "lions" (1.2.34), who are not renowned for their slowness. Macbeth – with Banquo again – is on his way to Duncan when he is stopped for the first time in the play, by the Weird Sisters, as we could witness to it. In the dramaturgical structure of the play, this is the first instance when he is given a chance to think, to reflect, and it will precisely be this contemplation that will "unfix" him further: "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 [custom] of nature?" (1.3.134-136). He moves on to rejoin Lady Macbeth in his castle – where Duncan will be the chief guest – overtaking the Royal train, for (in Duncan's words) "he rides well" (1.6.23) and even the servant who "had the speed of him" (1.5.35), is "almost dead for breath" (36).

Lady Macbeth does not waste much time to share her plans with her husband: Duncan should never see "tomorrow" (1.5.59). But to kill someone is not that simple, especially because Duncan had pointed out – although he named his son, and not Macbeth as his successor – that Macbeth is among those "sons, kinsmen" and "thanes" "whose places are the nearest" (1.4.35-36), i.e., Macbeth is very close to his heart. It is seeing himself as standing "here upon this bank and shoal of time" (1.7.6) that Macbeth can see a heavenly, transcendental tumult taking revenge for Duncan's contemplated murder: Duncan's "virtues / Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against / The deep damnation of his taking-off [his death], / And

pity, like a naked new-born babe, / Striding the blast [riding on the storm], or heaven's cherubin / […] Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye" (18-24). It is this despair which is in Macbeth's apologetic statement to his wife when she urges him on: "I dare do that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none" (1.7.46-47). Lady Macbeth, as if she was the dramaturg of the play, quickly points out that when Macbeth first reported the arrival of Duncan, he still "durst" (49) (i.e., dared to) do the deed, and then he was a man but then "Nor time nor place," two of the three famous Aristotelian 'unities,' "did adhere" (i.e., 'agree'). The Lady, in a Brechtian manner, reminds us that action and plot on stage requires the right time to coincide with the right place. But Macbeth is not convinced: "If we should fail?" (1.7.59), to which Lady Macbeth retorts: "We fail! / But screw your courage to the sticking-place / And we'll not fail". As Kenneth Muir's gloss explains, the metaphor is either "suggested by a soldier screwing up the cord of his cross-bow," or it is "perhaps from the screwing up of the strings on a viol" (Muir 1979, 42-42). The chief underlying idea in both cases seems to be that courage should be in place, waiting for the right moment, and it should be tightly fixed. When we see Macbeth alone again, it is precisely this fixedness which is missing: Macbeth will see the famous "air-drawn dagger" (3.4.61), which he cannot "clutch" ("Come, let me clutch thee" (2.1.34)): he cannot catch it, he cannot pin it down. It will be denying the sight of the dagger all together ("There is no such thing" (46)) which mobilises Macbeth again and prompts him to go, "with Tarquin's ravishing strides" (55), into Duncan's bedchamber.

The bedchamber is a claustrophobic, closed, fixed place but – very importantly – we are never allowed entry into it; we must see the sight only in our imagination. Yet Lady Macbeth refers to it as "the place," contrasting it with Macbeth's brain, the seat of his imagination: "Why, worthy thane, / You unbend [slacken, weaken] your noble strength to think / So brain-sickly of things. Go get some water / And wash this filthy witness [the blood as evidence] from your hand. Why did you bring these daggers from the place? / They must lie there" (2.2. 42-47). "The place," when the Macbeths are already in bed, will grow into "hell" in the words of the drunken Porter, who is, at the same time, cold in the castle, so he decides: "But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further" (2.3.6). Macbeth's and his wife's deed is indeed so horrible, that – in the words of Ross – "the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens this bloody stage" (2.4.6), here stage meaning the Earth, but of course also all the stages where *Macbeth* is performed. The Old Man, Ross's interlocutor, agrees: "'Tis [the world is] unnatural / Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last / A falcon, tow'ring in pride of place, / Was by a mousling owl hawked and killed" (2.4.10-13). The falcon, which is not supposed to be killed by an owl that feeds on mice, might be read as an allegory of Duncan, or of Macbeth, providing a further example of a universe falling into chaos.

Yet Macbeth cannot stop. He has been crowned king, and Lady Macbeth queen, but the prophecy of the Weird Sisters to Banquo, namely that he will "get [beget] kings" (1.3.66), so his "children shall be kings" (86) is still in the "filthy air." Macbeth, in the "Banquo-soliloquy" of Act 3, scene 1, is brooding over the prophecies of the Weird Sisters again: "prophet-like, They hail'd him [Banquo] father to a line of kings: / Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown, / And put a barren sceptre in my gripe. / Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand / No son of mine succeeding" (58-63). Macbeth, who, unlike Banquo, does not have any children, has to realise that while he is moving on and on, the story is taking another course: there is a rival plot unfolding in full swing: the story-line of the Weird Sisters. It is the same prophecy that has made him king that seems to place Banquo and Fleance, Banquo's son, into the roles the Weird Sisters have assigned. To have a crown placed on one's head is not enough. Now he should overtake Banquo and the Weird Sisters and place himself before them.

In the course of murdering Banquo, place will gain further significance. Macbeth hires two Murderers to do the dirty job, but when the fatal moment comes, and the assassins are waiting for their victims, a Third Murderer appears. Much ink has been spilt on the question who the Third Murderer might be (cf., e.g., Irving 2008, 147-150). Can it be Macbeth himself? But he is at the banquet, celebrating the crowning-ceremony. There are several arguments for and against Macbeth's ability to be at two places at the same time, for example that *Macbeth* is a poetic drama, where we should not expect the realism of mid-nineteenth century novel to prevail: it is precisely *dramaturgically* possible that Macbeth takes part in the attempt on the lives of Banquo and Fleance (and thus it is precisely Macbeth's fault that Fleance may escape). During the banquet-scene, Lady Macbeth utters a sentence which I take to provide further support as regards Macbeth's presence at the murder scene of Banquo. The Lady says to her husband, telling him off for having been a spoil-sport: "You have displace'd the mirth [the happiness, the joy], broke the good meeting / With most admir'd disorder" (3.4.107-108). Lady Macbeth's ironic, mocking words explicitly refer to the "meeting" but this is the only crux in the play where the word "displace" occurs. Macbeth, as the agency of displacement here, acts as if he had been displaced, too. Moreover, it is nowhere else in the play that there would be so much emphasis on a concrete place: a seat, a chair, a tangible stool. Ross, seated at the table with the other thanes, asks Macbeth: "Please't not your Highness / To grace us with your royal company?" (3.4.43-44). But Banquo's ghost has entered already "and sits in Macbeth's place" (stage direction, 3.4.40). Thus Macbeth responds: "The table's full". Lennox insists: "Here is a place reserved, Sir." "Where?" – Macbeth asks (44-46). (As if Macbeth were echoing the Weird Sisters: "Where's the place?"). For sure, to see a ghost, especially shaking his "gory locks" (50) at the observer is terrible. Yet Macbeth might also be shocked because the second in line he annihilated did not

'just appear' in the banqueting hall, taking a stroll, but has *taken his place*, the royal seat, at the table. Macbeth, who has taken the place of somebody (Duncan) must witness now to having been *dis*placed and being *re*placed by somebody (Banquo). And, perhaps, as a result of his simultaneous displacement, he was/is also present at the murder-scene of Banquo.

In what follows, Macbeth will be more and more cornered, more and more fixed. He will become increasingly lonely: after the banquet-scene, we shall see Lady Macbeth again only in the sleepwalking-scene, when she is already mad and alone, too. Macbeth's last real dramaturgical move is to visit the Weird Sisters for further prophecies. While Macbeth, in the words of the First Weird Sister, "stands amazedly" (4.1.126), various apparitions loom up in front of him. The third apparition talks *about* movement: "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" (92-94). Macbeth is intoxicated again: "That will never be: / Who can impress the forest; bid the tree / Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good! / […] our high-place'd Macbeth / Shall live the lease of Nature, pay his breath / To time, and mortal custom [Macbeth will live until he meets his natural death]" (94-100). The two contrasting poles of movement *versus* fixedness are set: Macbeth thinks he will remain "high-placed," and the roots of the trees in Birnam forest will remain unfixed, whereas it will happen exactly the other way round. Macbeth will be deposed; the woods will start to move.

Yet for a while Macbeth will remain fixed in his castle. It is, I think, emblematic that whereas Macduff flees to England (cf. 4.1.142), leaving, in Lady Macduff's words, "his mansion and his titles in a place / From whence himself does fly" (4.2.6-8), seeking a "place" not so "unsanctified, / Where such" (4.2.80-81) a man as the Murderer could find him, Macbeth remains in his castle and annihilates Lady Macduff and her little son *via* agents. At the beginning of the play, he moved toward the attackers of Scotland and eliminated them. Now he is waiting for the Scottish and English army to come to him. One of the last scenes of the play starts with Macbeth saying: "They have tied me to a stake / I cannot fly, / But bear-like [like a bear in the arena during one of the entertainments of Early Modern England, the bear-biting] I must fight the course" (5.7.1-2). The last thematised movement Macbeth has to perform is to turn: "Turn, hell-hound, turn" (5.8.3) – Macduff cries out before he kills Macbeth. Macduff will greet the new king, Malcolm, with the words: "Hail, King! For so thou art. Behold, where stand / Th' usurper's [Macbeth's] cursed head: the time is free" (5.9.21). Macbeth's head is now fixed to a pole, as Macbeth "fix'd" the "head" of "merciless Macdonwald upon [the] battlements" (cf. 1.2.9, 23-24). Will this new fixing free time indeed? Malcolm wants his thanes to believe so, trying to restore order: "That calls upon us, [what is still our duty] by the grace of Grace [God] / We will perform in measure, time and place" (5.9.38-39). By referring to performance, and evoking "time and

place," as Lady Macbeth did, and the Weird Sisters had done, at the beginning of the play, Malcolm perhaps tries to gain control over the theatre, the stage and the Aristotelian unities as well. Macbeth's body will be put, like all our respective bodies, into a fixed place, the grave. With his death, the magic circle of time and place, wound up by the Weird Sisters, is broken. We have seen him being placed, moved, displaced, replaced, unfixed, and then fixed and replaced again. Macbeth is a villain, but a tragic villain. One aspect of his tragedy is that he has tried the "spatial impossible," inseparable, as usual, from time: he wished to move, to go *and* remain in place at the same time.

Villains like Macbeth in Shakespeare's culture found their proper place in hell. Where does Macbeth find a place for his audience today?

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