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Ghosts, Burgers and Drive-Throughs: Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA* Adapts *Macbeth*

> A traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts – nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality.
> (Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*)
>
> Adaptation … is its own palimpsestic thing.
> (Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*)

In *Specters of Marx* Jacques Derrida takes as his starting point the innumerable translations into French of Hamlet's line "The time is out of joint" to make some general remarks on the idiosyncrasy of what he calls "the signature of the Thing 'Shakespeare'", its uncanny ability "to authorise each one of the translations, to make them possible and intelligible without ever being reducible to them".[1] To Derrida, Shakespearean textuality works as 'spectro-textuality'. It "moves in the manner of a ghost". It is an ensemble of 'indeterminate' and elusive ghostly marks which "*engineers* [s'ingénie] a habitation without proper inhabiting", and is thus always in excess of itself. As a ghostly "Thing" it "inhabits" the translations – and, by extension, the adaptations and appropriations – through which it survives "without residing" (*SM,* 18). Therefore, "Shakespeare" is not the name for a self-contained corpus of works. It is, rather, a locus of spatial and temporal 'dis-location' of marks, 'out of joint' with itself. Like the Ghost/"Thing" in *Hamlet*, which provides, for Derrida, the paradigmatic example of Shakespearean textuality, the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" is never quite where one expects to find it ("'Tis here"; "'Tis here"; "'Tis gone" 1.1.145-7).[2] Moreover, its first time is repetition, its first appearance a coming back: "What, has this thing appear'd *again* tonight?" (1.1.24) (my emphasis). This "Thing" is thus the locus of 'dis-junction' in terms of space and time. As such, it cannot but articulate contradictory performative injunctions and excessive demands. This, in turn, affects what is perhaps too simply called its afterlife.

To approach the subject of this paper more closely, I want to argue that what emerges, more or less explicitly, from Derrida's argument is that adapting "Shakespeare" is a complex form of inheriting. Inheriting, in turn, involves "coming to terms with [*s'expliquer avec*] some spectre" (*SM,* 21). This is not a straightforward matter. Adapting "Shakespeare" (or inheriting from it) is, by definition, being/coming after, but in relation to a "Thing" that not only continually crosses boundaries but also works, as pointed out earlier, in terms of an uncanny spatio-temporal logic. What

[1] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 22. Hereafter cited as *SM.*

[2] All references to *Hamlet* are to the New Arden edition of the play, ed. Harold Jenkins, and are included parenthetically in the text.

does "being/coming after" mean if the present (or the presence) of the ghost are, as Derrida insists, the uncanny coincidence of "repetition *and* first time"? (*SM,* 10). In what sense can the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" be 'rigorously' distinguished from the adaptations to which it gives rise, and which it haunts? One may also want to consider that adapting is a complex form of iteration that retrospectively (re)establishes the "Thing" as what it (already) is, as some studies of Shakespearean adaptations underline, although in slightly different terms.[3]

Whatever the answer to these questions, it should be clear that "coming to terms" with ghosts cannot correspond to a true or faithful rendering of the "Thing". For Derrida, there cannot be a natural, univocal, transparent transmission 'and' reception of a legacy. As he succinctly puts it, "inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task" (*SM,* 54). Haunting is not equivalent to paralysis: "An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the *injunction* to *reaffirm by choosing*" (*SM,* 16). It is within the theoretical framework provided by Derrida's work on ghosts that I want to situate my reading of *Scotland, PA* (2001), Billy Morrissette's film adaptation of *Macbeth*, a film which unashamedly, and in a postmodern fashion, exhibits its status as adaptation, of being *after* – in more senses than one –Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. By focusing especially on the representation of the witches as emblems of the supernatural, I want to explore how the ghost of *Macbeth* inhabits the film without 'properly' residing; without, that is, being present in the form of the proper meaning of the original. I also want to show the extent to which this adaptation lives up to the task of inheriting what it explicitly sees as the canonical, high-brow and normative legacy of "Shakespeare", by focusing on the multifarious ways in which it creatively and selectively 'counter-signs' (i.e., reaffirms, re-articulates and transforms).[4] At the beginning of *Specters of Marx*, Derrida sombrely announces that one must "learn to live with ghosts" (*SM,* xviii). For *Scotland, PA*, to learn to live with ghosts is tantamount to a parodic evocation and playful incorporation (in all its senses) and displacement of the ghost of *Macbeth*, a ghost, however, which somehow seems to reassert its uncanny power in the second half of the film.

Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA*, first shown at the 2001 Sundance festival, is set in a small town in rural Pennsylvania in the 1970s. Probably taking its cue from the scenes of banqueting and hospitality that appear at crucial turning points in Shakespeare's play, the witches' boiling "cauldron" (4.1.4) that materialises at the beginning of Act four,[5] as well as the many references to animals that prey and are preyed upon, this adaptation creatively literalises appetite, and brings centre-stage the consumption of animals and the serving of food. In Morrissette's film Pat (Maura Tierney) and Joe "Mac" McBeth (James LeGros), along with their close friend Anthony

[3] They usually refer to Derrida's earlier work on mimesis and dissemination. See, for instance, Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 26. Speaking of Baz Luhrman's *Romeo+Juliet*, the authors argue that "it is only the practice of copying that creates – and confers authority on – the original" (26).

[4] For Morrissette's relation to what they call SHAKESPEARE, see Kim Fedderson and J. Michael Richardson, "*Macbeth*: Migrations of the Cinematic Brand", in Nick Moschovakis (ed.), *Macbeth: New Critical Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 300-317. They argue that Morrisette finds "the burden of tradition … too onerous", and that he thus attempts to "remake tradition in his own image" (313).

[5] All references to *Macbeth* are to the New Arden edition of the play edited by Kenneth Muir, and are included parenthetically in the text.

"Banko" Banconi (Kevin Corrigan), work for Norman "Norm" Duncan (James Rebhorn), the owner of a dowdy burger restaurant, Duncan's Café. Pat and Mac are both frustrated in their jobs, and this is exacerbated by the fact that, after the dismissal of the diner's dishonest Manager, Douglas McKenna, Duncan announces that he will promote his son Malcom (Tom Guiry) to the role of Manager, even if Malcom is more interested in being a rock musician than in his father's business. The two self-proclaimed "underachievers" conspire to murder Duncan to gain ownership of the restaurant: the dagger is replaced by a meat-cooking skillet which knocks Duncan unconscious, and it is only after a series of failed attempts that "Norm" falls, somewhat accidentally, into a fryolater.[6] In spite of Pat's promise to Malcom that they will carry on Duncan's legacy, they refurbish the diner, turn it into a "drive-thru" and rename it McBeth's, a restaurant with shiny formica surfaces and brightly lit interiors which serves burgers and fries to huge crowds of satisfied customers. The success of the carnivorous King and Queen of burgers and fries is, however, short-lived, as the vegetarian new-age police lieutenant McDuff (Christopher Walken), who despises their "greasy food" and drives an olive European car in which he listens to meditation tapes, is called in to investigate the murder. As a result of the increasing pressure the quirky Columbo-like detective McDuff puts on the Mcbeths, Mac becomes more and more paranoid, which leads him to further murders, including that of his friend Banko, who is about to reveal to the lieutenant his suspicions about the murderous couple. As to Pat, she becomes more and more obsessed with a greasy burn on her hand (the play's "damned spot" which symptomatises Lady Macbeth's guilt) caused by the hot oil that splashed upon her during the murder, a burn which has long since healed and only she sees. Banko's return from the grave during a press conference which is supposed to consecrate the McBeths' climbing of the social ladder re-marks the sense of crisis. In the end, Mac entices McDuff to the restaurant roof, tries to kill him but ends up impaled on the steer horns that decorate his car. Meanwhile Pat takes her life by cutting her grease-burned hand with a meat cleaver. The final scene of the film shows that McDuff has taken over the restaurant and turned it into the "Home of the Veggie Burger": he stands outside, with his little dog, eating a carrot and waiting for customers who have not yet arrived and perhaps, the film implies, never will.

I have deliberately left out of my synopsis of the plot what is perhaps Morrissette's most creative intervention vis-à-vis Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: the transformation of the witches into three stoned hippies (Andy Dick, Timothy Speed Levitch and Amy Smart), one of whom sets herself the task of predicting, in an inescapably indeterminate way, the advent of the "drive thru" and the Macbeths' success. They are shown for the first time in the first sequence of the film, as they sit on a Ferris wheel located in

[6] In a sense, it is "Chance" that "crown[s] [him] King" (1.3.144). While the murder is taking place, Pat and Mac's friends are playing Yahtzee, a dice game consisting of thirteen rounds and thirteen possible scoring combinations. This is one of the film's playful explorations of the relation between predetermination and free will.

what looks like a disused Carnival Fair, smoking dope and eating from a bucket of fried chicken (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: 'Dis-membering' the textual body of *Macbeth*

Or, rather, they 'appear', emerging out of the surrounding darkness as the camera shifts from a long-shot to a medium-shot, and are preceded by giggling and almost inaudible words which only later we will be able unequivocally to attribute to them. This, I want to argue, is the cinematic equivalent of Mallarmé's intuition that the witches as creatures of the threshold ("*au seuil*") do not simply enter but, rather, 'appear'; and that the whole of the first scene of *Macbeth* is not, strictly speaking, a scene ("*quelque chose d'autre, non une scène*"), and in fact does not properly take place as a scene ("*le prodige … n'eut lieu, du moins régulièrement ou quant à la pièce*").[7] In both Mallarmé's interpretation of *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA,* the witches interrupt and exceed what has not yet properly begun. (To Mallarmé, the tragedy properly starts with Duncan's reference to the wounded "bloody man"). They uncannily appear *extra-scéniquement. Scotland, PA* re-emphasises this by introducing a caretaker who is locking up the Fair, and by showing that he is entirely oblivious to the presence of the stoned hippies as well as to the bucket of fried chicken they inadvertently drop, in spite of the fact that it loudly crashes to the ground very near his feet.

Commenting on the final section of Mallarme's short essay, and especially on the French poet's expression "*la cuisine du forfait*" (which she translates as "the kitchen where the deed is cooking"), Marjorie Garber argues as follows, and in a way which can be applied to both the play and the film: "The first encounter with the witches seems indecently to invite the spectator behind the scenes, into the kitchen, to the sources of creative energy and dramatic power before it unfolds in its proper place".[8] The beginning of *Scotland, PA* invites the audience to collude with the witches/hippies' bodily and linguistic *jouissance*; to partake, that is, once the pieces of chicken are out of sight, of the playful and ironic 'dis-membering' of the textual body of *Macbeth*: "It was foul… The fowl [i.e. the chicken] was foul… and the Fair [i.e. the Carnival Fair] was fair… foul's fair… the Fair is foul". It offers the spectator a glimpse of the "deed" which is – allegorically – "cooking" in the "kitchen", the specific ways in which *Scotland, PA* as a whole engages with the ghost of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: the process of adaptation as irreverent incorporation and remorseless recycling of the

[7] Stéphane Mallarmé, "La fausse entrée des sorcières dans Macbeth", in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 349-350.

[8] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers. Literature as Uncanny Causality* (London: Methuen, 1987), 93.

Fig. 2: McCloud dangling from an helicopter

adapted text. That the stoned hippies "drop the chicken" allegorically stands for the fact that incorporation does not fail to produce further remainders.

The opening sequence ends with the two male witches' account of the state the female witch is in: "Shhhh! She's having a spell! ... Oh God, *so* dramatic". It is followed by an extended black-and-white excerpt from the 1970s television series *McCloud*, in which a well-dressed quasi-corporate 'bad guy' (Eddie Albert) is brought to justice by detective McCloud (Denis Weaver), who pursues him by hanging beneath the helicopter in which he is trying to escape (Fig.2).

Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe argue that there is a link between the two male witches' words and this extended montage from *McCloud*. "Having a spell", they remind us, means "feeling queasy and disoriented (because you ate bad chicken)". But it also irresistibly suggests a "conjuring", especially when combined with the (ironic) emphasis of the phrase "*so* dramatic", and, specifically, the conjuring of another medium, within the medium of film. According to Cartelli and Rowe, this "conjuring" draws attention, in a quasi-Brechtian fashion, not only to the film's (fictive) process of construction of 'reality' – its editing, inclusion of extra-diegetic sound, shift from colour to black and white and then back to colour, and so on – but also to its irremediably impure and hybrid nature. In short, this conjuring is "designed to make us notice mediation taking place" (114).

Cartelli and Rowe's approach to *Scotland, PA* suggests the more general point that there is no un*media*ted – in a quite literal sense – access to "Shakespeare"; it also implies, to return to the theoretical framework I have adopted, that adapting "Shakespeare" (or inheriting from it) is not even exclusively a matter of coming to terms with the by now established rich tradition of "Shakespeare on film" – a TV detective show such as *McCloud* can hardly be said to belong to this tradition.[9] Yet Cartelli and Rowe seem to miss some significant aspects of the connection between the hippies' conjuring up of *Macbeth*'s initial scene and the emergence of the black-and-white televisual world of the 1970s. "Having a spell" stands for "feeling queasy or disoriented". But this is not just the undesirable effect of enjoying pieces of fried chicken that are "foul"; it can also be seen as the bodily reaction to the extra-*jouissance* one indulges in when mis*spelling* and chewing, as it were, bits and pieces of the Shakespearean

[9] Morrisette is not unaware of this tradition and considers the film a satire of "the recent spate of Shakespeare film adaptations." Amongst its targets are "those earnest efforts to translate Shakespeare into hip, modern urban tales of corporate corruption [and] adolescent angst". The references are clearly to Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* and Baz Luhrman's *Romeo+Juliet* ("Study Notes" included in the DVD-ROM version).

corpus. In this sense, the shift in medium prompted by the expressions "having a spell" and "*so* dramatic" is an ironic temporary release from a textual *jouissance en plus*; it offers a condensed shortened version of *Macbeth* as a (melo)dramatic black-and-white detective show depicting a world in which "fair" is indeed "fair" and "foul" is indisputably "foul", a world where one might still be unable "to find the mind's construction in the face" (1.4.12) but where criminals are brought to justice without much of a hint of ambiguity.

Scotland, PA seems to be unable to relate to the adapted text without repeatedly conjuring the process of (re)mediation – of which it is of course part – through which "Shakespeare" is consumed, (re)processed and recycled.[10] Given the prominent place the *McCloud* sequence occupies at the opening of the film, it is worth addressing it in more detail, so as to shed more light on the film's wider process of engagement with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. As mentioned earlier, the *McCloud* montage is a reframing of the hippies' excessive "repetition without replication",[11] a recasting that allows the spectator temporarily to enter a relatively safer black-and-white territory. But it is also one of the visual translations of "the battle's lost and won" (1.1.4) and, more generally, of the tumultuous state the witches in *Macbeth* call "hurly-burly" (3). (Another, more extended translation of this is the sequence where Mac jumps over the service counter, to the tune of Beethoven's 7th symphony, to put an end to a food fight between two customers, which also literally shows his "vaulting ambition" [1.7.27]. After pushing these rebellious 'thanes' out of the overcrowded restaurant, he receives the other customers' applause but returns to the grill without being greeted with any title).[12] In addition, the *McCloud* sequence functions as a "pre-diction", some kind of visual foretelling of events which 'precedes' the actual meeting between the hippies and Mac in which the latter will be told his fortune. It uncannily connects with, and offers an interpretive framework for, subsequent scenes, maybe also by virtue of the mere fact that they all involve a series of "Mc"s: for instance, the public humiliation of Manager Douglas *Mc*Kenna, caught out embezzling money from the diner's till, which whets Mac's appetite for his post; or, more generally, detective *Mc*Duff's relentless, if quirky, pursuit of the small-town entrepreneur Joe "Mac" *Mc*Beth has become.[13]

What can be gathered from this analysis of the *McCloud* excerpt is that remediation is not a one-to-one linear process from page (or stage) to screen, not least because it bears the mark of a complex temporality. It is almost as if *Scotland, PA* responded to the uncanny temporality of the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" in its *Macbeth* version by creating a complex temporality of its own which is inextricably bound up with the world of the media. Indeed, one should also consider that the *McCloud* sequence

[10] For the concept of "remediation", see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000).

[11] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 7. I am using Hutcheon's expression because this is an adaptation of the witches' lines within the adaptation.

[12] For an extended reading of this scene, see Cartelli and Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare*, 111-113.

[13] However, McCloud is a rustic detective with an odd accent, unlike the urban McDuff. In the DVD "Director's Commentary", Morrisette claims that the aspect of the play that mostly caught his attention when he first read it was the the presence of the patronymic "Mac".

reappears on a TV screen later on in the film as it is broadcast in the local police station. At a crucial point in the murder investigation we are shown the sleepy local police officer Eddy so immersed in watching this episode of *McCloud* that he hardly pays any attention to Banko's potential revelations about the Macbeths' involvement in the murder of Duncan.[14] It is thus a visual foretelling which repeats itself. It is shown again; and by being shown again, it makes us even more aware of its 'archaic' status,[15] of its being 'originally' part of a series which, qua series, is structured from within by the possibility of being repeated and endlessly aired. Its being repeated also makes us more alert to the fact that it has been there all along, from the very beginning, in ironic quotation marks. With its (double) iterative and ironic structure, the black-and-white excerpt can hardly be said to offer an effective remedy, in the form of re-mediation, to the witches' linguistic excess; nor, in spite of the prominent place it is given at the beginning of the film, can it be said to provide a privileged perspective from which fully to interpret the meaning of subsequent scenes, either in terms of 'content' or in terms of genre. Indeed, to believe it can, the film implies, would mean to occupy the same 'foolish' position as Eddy; it would mean to be under the spell of a TV screen as a passive consumer and ignore anything that exceeds its frame. In terms of remediation, this also simply suggests that TV as a medium is replaceable, and that the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" can and will find alternative media incarnations.

That the film allegorises its own procedures, without much 'angst', while adapting/re-mediating *Macbeth* is emphasised anew as soon as the camera moves inside Duncan's restaurant, after offering a double take of its outside, first in black and white, as if the restaurant was still part of the *McCloud* sequence, and then in colour (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Duncan's restaurant

Once we are inside, excess re-presents itself, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the form of consumption and repetition. We are faced with an extreme close-up of a half-eaten burger on a tray, and then we see a waitress who picks up the tray and, on her way to the kitchen, sneakily takes a bite of the leftover burger. This clearly recalls the witches' 'sickening' incorporation of bits and pieces of fried chicken seasoned with remainders from Shakespeare's play. Commenting on this image, Lauren Shohet argues that it "offers a ripe figure for intertextual borrowing, for what it means for a text

[14] See Lauren Shohet, "The Banquet of Scotland (PA)", *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 186-195. According to Shohet, to whose interpretation I'm heavily indebted, he is "too absorbed by the didactic *image* of effective policing to *act* as a police officer" (190). This is part of her wider argument about the fraught notion of agency in both the play and the film.

[15] Originally part of the 1972 *McCloud* episode "The Park Avenue Rustlers" (1972), this sequence was re-used in the opening titles of later episodes, which emphasises even more its iterability.

to avail itself of sources". She adds that "the snatched gulp of pre-possessed meat is unhygienic, cheap, aesthetically unpleasing – but this is how *Macbeth* can be chewed over" (*BS,* 189). As Shohet emphasises, the "pre-possessed" material the film incorporates (also in the form of allusion) extends well beyond Shakespeare's play. It includes TV programmes such as *McCloud* and *Columbo* – as we shall see, Mac explicitly refers to the latter in a dialogue with Lt. McDuff; films such as *Deer Hunter*, which emerges as an intertextual reference especially when Mac and his friends go on a hunting expedition;[16] and, more generally, a number of cultural artefacts of the 1970s, especially the pervasive music by Bad Company. I have started analysing some of this material. I now want to explore it further and suggest that it is through the incorporation of what is "pre-possessed" – an incorporation, as the witches and the waitress show, which does not quite coincide with the satisfaction of desire – that the film develops its own uncanny logic of repetition, and that this is a way of responding to the ghost of *Macbeth*.

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.3.38): this is Macbeth's first line, just before the meeting with the witches. It is a line, as many critics have noted, that echoes the witches' "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11) and thus irresistibly raises a question that haunts Shakespeare's text as a whole: who/what speaks when a character speaks? Nicholas Royle observes that to speak of echo in relation to this and other innumerable cases in *Macbeth* – the repetitions of the words "do" and "done" are perhaps paradigmatic in this respect – may be deceptive:

> Echo ordinarily suggests a chronological linear progression … But Shakespeare's play disturbs this sense of order … The logic of echo in the context of *Macbeth* is not simply or necessarily linear: the 'first' appearance of a word can respond to, or be haunted by, its apparently later appearance … This strange effect of the after before, of what comes later coming earlier, is fundamental to the play as a whole.[17]

As a sign of disquieting temporality, echo has thus to do with the uncanny *in* the play as well as with the uncanniness *of* the play – one does not quite know when or where this echo begins or ends. It is part of the wider logic of what Royle calls "magical thinking or telepathy" (96), and Stanley Cavell refers to as "language as magic or mind-reading", which occurs especially between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.[18] As Macbeth's first line shows, it is also inextricably bound up with the question of the supernatural, what Cavell calls "language as prophecy", "the condition of words as recurrent".[19] This raises a further question: given the uncanny migration of words from character to character and across scenes, to what extent is one not simply spoken but *possessed* by that which one supposedly possesses?

[16] Christopher Walken, who plays McDuff, was an actor in this film and won an Oscar.

[17] Nicholas Royle, *How To Read Shakespeare* (London: Granta Books, 2005), 95.

[18] Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays by Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) (updated edition), 232.

[19] Language as "magic or mind-reading" and language as "prophecy" are the two modalities of language the play dramatises and are in fact, according to the American philosopher, "the conditions … [of] possibility of language as such" (Ibid., 232).

In *Scotland, PA*, like in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the supernatural is mostly associated with the witches and their ability to "look into the seeds of time" (1.3.58). It corresponds to the stoned hippies' more (or less) than natural bodily and linguistic *jouissance*, made of repeated incorporations of food and iterations of words; it coincides with the more (or less) than natural, 'artificial' realm of media representation, a quasi-infinite archive of recycled and easily recyclable *objets trouvés* from which the hippies borrow with apparent nonchalance to enact their "solicitings" (1.3.130). We have already seen an example of such "solicitings", in the form of the evocation of the *McCloud* sequence, with its uncanny temporality. But it is perhaps in the scene of the encounter between Joe "Mac" McBeth and the hippies that the tissue of quotations from "pre-possessed" textual and media material emerges most forcefully.

The meeting takes place in the Fair's playground, where Mac happens to wander after a heavy drinking session with his friend Banko at the local "Witch's Brew". Mac does not echo the witches' line as Macbeth does in Shakespeare's play. Yet his day has similarly been "fair" – he has risen to the status of local hero by kicking out of the diner the two unruly customers who had engaged in a food-fight. His day has equally been "foul" – he has just had a fight with Pat, who has once again reproached him for being "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (1.5.17), for being unable to talk to Duncan about promotion as he keeps on promising her: "Mac, I'm going to go home…I'm tired. … Besides, I have heard this story before. It kind of bores me". Mac's mixed feelings are compounded by Banko's revelations about Manager Douglas McKenna embezzling money. Interestingly, he stops Banko in the midst of these revelations, confidently walks across the room to reach the jukebox and kicks it so that the dull "I'm not Lisa" is suddenly replaced by what he wants to hear: the more aggressive "Bad Company" track by Bad Company. It is not just that this latter track registers Mac's shift of attitude – he has clearly decided to take his fate into his own hands, what "Bad Company" calls "destiny". Rather, what we witness here is the indistinguishability of fantasyscape and mediascape, which is typical of Morrissette's film as a whole. In other words, we are shown that Mac's 'core of being' is made of media material: paradoxically, it is only through the endlessly recyclable Bad Company music and lyrics that he can pose, at least temporarily, as a *singular* kind of 'baddie'; that he can fantasise himself as someone who is "always on the run" and "was born 6-gun in [his] hand"; as someone, in short, who is "bad company" ("They call me bad company/ And I can't deny/ Bad company/ Till the day I die").[20] Moreover, the fact that he is himself "bad company" somehow prepares him to be in the "bad company" of the witches, which is Morrissette's witty critical contribution to one of the crucial questions regarding the relationship between the witches and Macbeth in Shakespeare's play:

[20] The section of the track we don't hear re-emphasises these themes. As "bad company", and "till the day [he] dies", he is prepared to "play dirty for dirty" and "kill in cold blood".

do the witches act upon somebody who is already predisposed to act in a certain way?[21]

Mac's roaming comes to an end as soon as the two male witches start hailing him in alternating voices: "Mac!" "Beth!" "Beth!" "Mac!" "Fleetwood Mac!" "Mac" "Ramé" "I love macramé", and so on. The hippies do not only address Joe "Mac" McBeth but also conjure the title of Shakespeare's play. Their 'hailing' operates by splitting "Macbeth" into its constituent phonemes and repeating them in reverse order, in a way that recalls previous chiastic formulations in both the play ("Fair is foul, and foul is fair") and the film ("Foul's fair… the Fair is foul"). This splitting triggers a number of 'unconscious' free phonic associations whose effect is that of irresistibly drawing the 'high' ("Shakespeare") into the orbit of the 'low' (1970s popular culture) and making the distinction between them precarious: what is "fair" is indeed uncannily proximate to what is (presumably) "foul", and the other way round. This iconoclastic 'levelling' applies to "Mac" too. Not only is "Mac" inserted in a potentially endless chain of signifiers that exceeds possession by any 'subject'. After hailing him, the hippies start talking to each other to pursue the senseless logic of the signifier: "I made you some thing… some little macramé … thing". They make Mac a mere spectator of the scene of interpellation which should have been properly and exclusively his. When they address him next, they do so by referring to him as "Makki", and offer him a spliff: "Would you like some wacky tobakki, Makki?" Afterwards, they shift to a more 'personal' tone, which seems to touch upon Mac's predicament after his fight with Pat: "Next time you should go home with your wife, or any loved one". But this only occasions yet another "equivocation". The hippies select words from their previous speech and reassemble them: "lov*ed* one" becomes "love *the* one"; "with your" is reversed into "you're with". This produces a formulaic expression ("Love the one you're with"), which is repeated twice and is of course uncannily similar to the title of a song by Crosby, Still, Nash and Young. Once again, the reiteration of media material infiltrates and shapes the realm of 'experience'.

That the patronymic prefix "Mac" (or its even more colloquial version "Makki") is nothing but an 'anonymous' repeatable signifier, designating no one in particular, is stressed again when Mac asks the hippies how they knew his name: "Do you mean your name really is Mac? …. I thought we were just saying it like you say it … like 'Watch your step, Mac!', 'Up yours, Mac!', Fuck off, Mac!' I can't think of another one." As Cartelli and Rowe argue, "this reduction [of the patronymic] … brings the remote and formal titles of Scottish feudal culture down to local, colloquial scale". Referring to the 'hailing scene' as a whole, they add that "the hippies' colloquialisms seem a kind of inventory of a culture that has levelled social distinctions and lost any memory of its patronymics. 'Mac', the

[21] See, for instance, Shohet, "The Banquet", 187. For Shohet, moreover, *Scotland, PA* continually links problems of agency with problems of masculinity. Mac's pose as "bad company" is a case in point (190).

prefix that signifies 'son of', is reduced to an epithet" (117). In fact, as Shohet points out, it is reduced not just to an "epithet" but to "a branding prefix" (192).[22] Once the McBeths take over the restaurant, "Mac" reappears on the restaurant menu in the form of "McBeth", "McBeth with Cheese", "Big McBeth", "McBeth McBeth", and so on, not just as food to be consumed but as a brand-name whose reproducibility and infinite expansion are dependent upon customers' addiction to what the vegetarian McDuff calls "greasy food".[23]

The ironic displacement of the title of Shakespeare's play, and the critical interrogation of "Mac", are followed by a scene in which the female hippie tells Mac his fortune. He is invited into a mysterious room full of flashing lights whose door bears an image of the Gorgon, and is told to sit down on some kind of carousel that will go round and round throughout the scene. He finds it all "a little weird", and is about to leave when he is forced to sit down again by a male voice coming out of the female hippie's mouth, a voice which, as the scene develops, will intermittently and uncannily become his own voice, as in the following question: "You haven't been very happy, have you, Mac?" This 'superegoic' voice brings to the surface his "black and deep desires" (1.4.51) but his "desires" turn out to be essentially *Pat*'s desires: "Honey wants the money and there is no reason to stop now… Screw management. You can do better. Don't think you deserve better? Don't you think *she* deserves better? [Mac's voice]". Significantly, in a later scene, as Mac and Pat drive back home from the diner and start making plans about murdering Duncan, it is Pat who will say to Mac: "We have to aim higher… Don't you think you deserve it, Mac?" Mac's desires are Pat's, which are, in turn, Mac's, and so on and so forth. On the one hand, this suggests that one can apply to Morrissette's film the argument that critics such as Cavell and Royle have developed in relation to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, that the transmission of words and ideas from Macbeth to Lady Macbeth takes place in an 'unconscious' telepathic way. As Cavell succinctly puts it, "uttering words as mind-reading is represented in the language of this marriage, in which each of the pair says what the other already knows or has already said"(238). On the other hand, the 'unconscious' migration of words from mouth to mouth points to the intriguing fact that *Scotland, PA* adapts *Macbeth* by ironically adopting the latter's 'mad' logic of echo, a logic which re-marks, as pointed out earlier, the lack of any clear-cut temporal and spatial distinction between "identifiable source and response or repetition".[24]

The female witch, whose 'ventriloquism' is of course also an oral and visual rendering of the blurring of gender which characterises the witches in *Macbeth*, proceeds by putting together an ensemble of signifiers that vaguely predict the advent of the drive-through: she speaks of a "bank", "a Spanish bank", "a restaurant with an intercom" that "looks like a bank

[22] Given the fact that "Mac" does not seem to designate anyone in particular, Shohet also argues that "like Macbeth, Mac seems to have been all too easily interpellated by a hail he need not have embraced" ("The Banquet", 193).

[23]According to Cartelli and Rowe, the film's stance is only tangentially that of opposing the homogenisation of the cultural or food industry. To them, the film asks us "to see the scripting of experience as a kind of consumption, digestion, the only way in which any inheritance – including Shakespeare – continues to live" (*New Wave Shakespeare,* 111).

[24] Royle, *How to Read*, 95. Doubling belongs to the same logic, and ranges from minor details to significantly repeated scenes. For instance, the owner of the beauty saloon 'When a Tan Loves a Woman' has a tanned son who is his exact replica; Donald's lover wears the same dressing-gown as Donald; the two boys at the drive-through counter say goodbye to punters in exactly the same way.

with a drive-through teller … for food". It is no wonder that Mac looks puzzled: "What's all this?" As with the "imperfect speakers" (1.3.70) in *Macbeth*, prophecy is left indeterminate in order to function as the locus of one's projections and fantasies. The two male witches contribute to what *Macbeth* calls "equivocation" (5.5.43). They continually interrupt a speech which is already in itself a fragmentary collage of cross-gendered utterances by obsessively reiterating the name "Anthonyyy!" They echo Mac *after* he surmises that the "bank" the female witch alludes to may be his friend Anthony "Banko" Banconi. But they also echo Mac *before* he mentions "Anthony", thus abiding by the ghostly temporal logic of echo. If echo doubles, so does the source which retrospectively gives rise to this uncanny form of repetition. Halfway through the film, we realise that there is another source for the male witches' compulsive refrain, a TV commercial showing a mother at a window calling out "Anthonyyy! Anthonyyy! Anthonyyy!", and then a young lad in shorts running back home amidst a crowd of people, presumably to be fed. The voiceover informs us that Anthony "lives in Boston, in the Italian North End, home of the Prince Spaghetti Company", and this may be the reason why when they first hear the name Anthony "Banko" Banconi in the prediction scene the two male witches state that it "sounds Italian". The context in which this TV commercial appears is highly significant. It is broadcast on the television Mac is watching while sitting in a semi-darkened room in a gloomy mood, after a troubling conversation with Banko in which the latter asks him why he has always mentioned to him, his best friend, all his other ideas, regularly dimissed by Duncan, but not the idea of the drive-through. Soon after watching the commercial Mac somberly announces to Pat: "Banko is a problem", a colloquial version of Macbeth's "Our fears in Banquo/ Stick deep" (3.1.48-9). In Act 3 scene 1 of Shakespeare's play, Macbeth recalls the witches' prophecy with a mixture of anger and resentment: "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" (60-3). If the prophecy were to come true, it would mean that "for Banquo's issue ha[s] [he] fil'd [his] mind/ For them the gracious Duncan [has he] murther'd" (64-5). The masque of Banquo's heirs in Act 4 scene 1 seems to confirm his suspicions that he has performed the murderous deed for nothing, acting on somebody else's behalf. It displays a "line [of kings] stretch[ing] out to th' crack of doom", with the eighth king bearing a glass "which shows [him] many more" (117, 120). *In Scotland, PA* the glass is replaced by a TV screen presenting a TV commercial which can indeed, by virtue of its endlessly reiterable 'nature', "stretch out to th' crack of doom". It is on this screen that the small-town childless magnate Joe "Mac" McBeth projects his deep-seated fears that one day his "sceptre" will be "wrench'd with an unlineal hand";

that one of Banko's heirs, some Anthony at the head of some "Prince Spaghetti Company", will appropriate his empire of burger and fries.[25] This fear cannot even be alleviated by some competing claim to TV celebrity. Unfortunately, the local TV (Channel Five) has not yet completed a documentary about the drive-through which will immortalise the two local heroes' rise to power. When one reads the male witches' "Anthonyyy!" from the vantage point of the future which they repeat in advance, it turns out to be an oblique warning to Mac that Banko is not entirely excluded from the hippies' "prophetic greeting" (1.1.78), even if he is not present as such, unlike *Macbeth*'s Banquo, in the prediction scene.

[25] Shohet also argues that this is a "quite nuanced", "fragmented and subtle" version of the masque. It bears witness, however, to the "greater tenuousness of inheritance" when compared to the masque in Shakespeare's play ("The Banquet", 192-193).

The brief conversation between Mac and Pat about Banko being "a problem" marks a turning point in the film.[26] Pat seems to be deeply affected by Mac's sombre mood. As she walks out of the room, she briefly looks at her hand, and from this moment on she will become more and more concerned with the (inexistent) grease burn that symptomatises her guilty enjoyment of her new social status. Through her facial expression she seems to be echoing Lady Macbeth's lines about a murderous deed that fails to bring about its desired effects: "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" (3.2.4-8). These are lines Macbeth typically echoes soon afterwards: "Better be with the dead,/ Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,/ Than on the torture of the mind to lie/ In restless ecstasy" (3.2.19-22). Lady Macbeth concludes her speech, after her husband's entrance, with the notorious line "what's done is done" (12). But of course her "doubtful joy" bears witness to the fact that what is done – the murderous deed – is never properly over and done with. The line "what's done is done" turns out to be a way of protecting her husband from the knowledge she knows he already possesses (or by which he is already possessed), and which emerges here as "restless ecstasy".

[26] In the DVD "Director's Commentary" Billy Morrisette remarks on the shift in terms of mood from this point on, which coincides with the beginning of the McBeths' "spiralling down", a shift which seemed to affect all members of cast and crew during the shooting.

Addressing this scene as well as speaking more generally of what he calls "the most enigmatically repeated, curiously echoey word" (98) in *Macbeth*, the word "done", which "repeats, reverberates, resounds like a knell, summoning strange kinds of communication between one speech or scene or character and another" (99), Royle argues as follows:

> What is done is … never completely and purely done. The murder … is not just something that happens … However much Lady Macbeth might want to claim that 'what's done, is done' … [t]he doing of the deed in a sense never ends … T]he crime is at once something that cannot be 'undone' and yet also (in its haunting enormity and after-effects) something that carries on happening. (98-99)

And, paradoxically, one tries to prevent if from "happening" by making it happen over and over again; one tries to escape from the deleterious

effects of the "deed" – in order to be "safe", which is, according to Royle, another "ghostly word" (i.e., secure *and* dead)[27] – by keeping on performing it over and over again ("Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill") (3.3.55), which is simultaneously the most safe *and* unsafe of acts. *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA* share this 'mad' spiral-like logic of repetition, of "strange things … which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd" (3.4.138-9) but inexorably "return/ To plague th'inventor" (1.7.9-10). Moreover, in both the play and the film, the repetition of the deed coincides with the swapping of roles between male and female in terms of agency. (Macbeth reassures his wife, who asks him what is "to be done" about Banquo, 3.2.44, with these words: "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,/ Till thou applaud the deed", 45-6, and then launches into the "Come, seeling Night" speech, which is mostly an appropriation of Lady Macbeth's earlier "Come, thick Night" speech, 1.5.50-54, a speech which connotes *her* determination to act; similarly, after he persuades himself that Banko is a "problem", Mac becomes more and more secretive, withholding from Pat information about his murderous plans, mistakenly believing that he is doing this in order to protect her, which drives her insane: "Everything's going to be all right. I'm going to take care of *everything*, Pat. I'm going to take care of *you*"). In *Scotland, PA*, however, the repetition of the deed (which includes the murder of the non-Shakespearian character Andy, the homeless guy who is initially blamed for Duncan's murder) allows Morrissette fully to explore what was only implicit up to this point: the deadly connection between violence against the human and violence against the animal, the uncanny overlapping between Mac's murderous 'production' of dead human bodies and the production, serving and consumption of the corpse of the animal in the form of meat – and greasy meat at that.[28] Macbeth keeps on doing the deed, or having it done on his behalf, only marginally in order to prevent the royal couple from "eat[ing] [their] meal in fear" (3.2.17);[29] Mac keeps on acting murderously not in order to eat in peace (or not mainly), but in order to ensure the safety of the drive-through, a meat business fostering potentially *un*safe (i.e., unhealthy) eating practices, as the vegetarian not-of-woman-born Lt. McDuff is quick to point out in a joky way as soon as he turns up at Duncan's wake with a vegetarian dish: "I envy you; by the time I get to my customers, they are usually dead. At least you get a chance to kill them … with that greasy food".[30]

In the second half of the film, Pat increasingly confines herself to the private space of her middle-class home, or is forced to do so by Mac's "transformation … from weak, submissive, and overly romantic to suspicious, devious, violent, and uncommunicative" (*F*, 45). She starts chain-smoking and drinking to excess, and only leaves her home to go down to the local chemist's where the pharmacist and his assistant

[27] For instance, to be safe is also to be dead, like Banquo, "safe in a ditch" (3.4.25), or Duncan, who "in his grave … sleeps well" (3.2.22-3). But they are not quite "safe" because they come back to haunt, in different forms, making Macbeth and Lady Macbeth *un*safe. See Royle, *How To Read,* esp. 93-95.

[28] In the DVD "Director's Commentary", Morrisette points out that he intentionally wanted bodies of dead animals to be visible everywhere in the film, and that he only later became aware of the many references to animals in *Macbeth*.

[29] For one of the Lords in *Macbeth*, the restoration of order will be able to "give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,/ Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives" (3.6.34-5).

[30] For an excellent reading of the food references in the film, see James R. Keller, *Food, Film and Culture. A Genre Study* (Jefferson and London: McFarland, 2006), 37-48. Herafier cited as *F*.

(Morrissette's version of Shakepeare's doctor and waiting-gentlewoman of act 5 scene 1) somehow reluctantly supply her with larger and larger quantities of ointment for her grease burn. As to Mac, one finds him unceasingly "roving and ravaging the open spaces that now seem too small to contain his appetites".[31] Indeed, the whole of Scotland, PA becomes an extension of Birnam woods (the place where he regularly goes hunting with his male friends), a wilderness where he keeps on exercising his killer instincts. He is "a threat to mammals everywhere" (*F*, 41) In one scene we see the juxtaposition between the unconscious, drunken, almost lifeless body of Banko being carried into McBeth's house and the lifeless body of the deer Mac has shot during the hunting expedition being carried on the shoulder of one of his friends.[32] Once the visual connection between the dead body of the deer and Banko is established and reinforced by the fur hat Banko wears, we are prepared for the next step: Mac's murder of his best friend, which symbolically replaces the body of the non-human animal with the body of the human animal. But this symbolical substitution is itself preceded by the consumption of the corpse of the deer in the form of meat.[33] Through this and other scenes the film suggests that one cannot incorporate the flesh of the animal without turning into the animal one incorporates, an animal which is likely to lose sight of the distinction between the human and non-human animal and is thus more likely to kill. In short, we are continuously invited to associate the consumption of meat with murder. Given the fact that the film stringently develops this logic, especially in its second half, it should come as no surprise that the murder investigation becomes more and more a confrontation between the carnivorous culture of *Scotland, PA* and the vegetarian culture of the 'outsider' Lieutenant McDuff, a conflict which, to Mac's increasingly paranoid eyes, is nothing but a class-bound division between the "better half" and the lesser half of society, a division no cash flow can hope to bridge.[34] Coming home drunk after the murder of Banko and after another trip to Birnam woods to consult the witches, Mac finds McDuff there with Pat, and ironically addresses him as follows:

> What brings you here? … Don't tell me. You're gracing our humble home with a vegetable dish of some kind tonight, a little tidbit to show us how the other half lives … I meant *better* half … No, you don't think that. *That* would be mean, and you don't think mean thoughts … just us vicious carnivores can think mean thoughts [he strokes one of the hunting trophies that adorn his home].

The speech also contains an implied threat to "big daddy McDuff and all the little McDuffs", a "mean" and "vicious" thought only a predatory carnivore such as Mac seems to be able to entertain.[35] When Mac next meets the hippies in his restaurant, after they urgently call him at home

[31] Courtney Lehmann, "Out Damned Scot: Dislocating *Macbeth* in Transnational Film and Media Culture", in Richard Burt and Lynda E Boose (eds.), *Shakespeare, The Movie, II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 246.

[32] Mac points the gun at Banko in Birnam woods as if to shoot, but the witches dressed as deer stand in the way, perhaps to warn him that there are too many witnesses.

[33] Pat cooks and serves the deer. She is so annoyed at Mac and his carnivorous friends' behaviour at the table that she dubs them "you animals". The equation Banko=animal is also re-emphasized by the following joke: "I'd swear he was thinking out there today. I could see those Banko brain cells moving". They all laugh at the joke, except Pat.

[34] Many critics accentuate the fact that the film shows that the 'stain' of being 'white trash' can never be deleted. See Elizabeth A. Deitchman, "White Trash Shakespeare: Taste, Morality, and the Dark Side of the American Dream in Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA*" and Eric C. Brown, "Shakespeare, Class, and Scotland, PA", *Literature/ Film Quarterly* 34.2 (2006), 140-146 and 147-153. For the association between this 'stain' and Pat's greasy burn, see especially Lehmann, "Out Damned", 246.

[35] In *Macbeth* Lady Macduff compares Macbeth to an "owl" (4.2.11); Macduff,

because they have forgotten to tell him something important (of course only Mac can hear the phone ringing), "big daddy McDuff and all the little McDuffs" come up in the conversation, a conversation in which they are trying to decide what Mac should do next. Significantly, the discussion takes place while Mac is cooking burgers for the three hippies who are starving ("I could eat a horse"; "I could eat a cow"; "I could eat a pig"), as if to remind the viewer that plans for further murders are inextricably bound with the preparation and consumption of meat. After all, even in Shakespeare's play Macbeth is called a "butcher" (5.9.35). One of the male hippies suggests: "Mac should kill McDuff's entire family". The other one strongly disagrees: "Oh that'd work … about a thousand years ago … These are modern times. You can't go around killing everybody". The female hippie simply interjects: "Or can you?", and looks intensely into Mac's eyes. After a while she takes on a male voice and adds: "I think we have to go straight to the source of the problem." The "source of the problem" is of course McDuff, who is by now absolutely certain of the Macbeths' guilt and has asked them to report to the police station in the morning. But it is also the "problem", as pointed out earlier, that *Scotland, PA* shares with its Shakespearean "source": the performance of the deed produces uncanny after-effects one can (attempt to) magic away only by performing the deed over and over again. Can one "go around killing everybody", then?" Did it work "about a thousand years ago", for instance in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*? Would it work in these "modern times", for instance in *Scotland, PA*? As is often the case with the hippies in *Scotland, PA* (and the witches in *Macbeth*), they pose questions that draw attention to the process of construction of the cultural artefact they – supposedly – inhabit. In this specific context, these are also pressing meta-dramatic questions about how to bring the performance *as such* (not just the repeated performance of the deed) to a satisfactory ending. The hippies crave for this just as much as for the burgers Mac is about to serve. And so does the viewer.

The "source of the problem" – Lieutenant Ernie McDuff – seems to be aware of the "problem" of the *ad infinituum* reiteration of the murderous deed. During the final confrontation on the roof of the restaurant, he warns a self-assured Mac, who is pointing a gun at him: "So I'm next but after that it looks like you have to kill Malcom …. and then Donald, because Donald is coming after you". Mac recognises the genre from within which the Lieutenant speaks, a genre which forcefully pre-scribes his demise as a small-town criminal: "This is not an episode of Columbo. … I'm not gonna break down, hand you the gun, get waltzed out of here between a couple of good- looking cops with my head bowed down". Unfortunately for Mac, there are no bullets in the gun he has seized from the local policeman Ed. At this point, he seems to resign himself to being,

after the news of the massacre of his family, implicitly refers to him as "hell-kite" (4.3.217). See also Keller, *Food,* 41.

after all, a character in an episode of a detective serial: he raises his hands, and his gesture of surrender makes him look like an exact reproduction of the 'bad guy' brought to justice in the McCloud episode we have seen more than once. Yet unlike this 'bad buy' Mac decides to react (or 're-act'), odd as his reaction may seem. He yawns (perhaps to signify the tiredness of the detective serial's conventional solution) to distract McDuff's attention and keeps on fighting with the only weapon left, a weapon which seems appropriate for his role as a purveyor of unhealthy potentially murderous eating practices: a meat burger, which he tries to feed into McDuff's mouth. After McDuff bites his hand, which shows that vegetarians, too, can stick their teeth into the flesh of the human animal, Mac runs downstairs in pain, and seems uncertain about what to do next. He looks up and is himself distracted by the apparition of the witches who are sitting on the restaurant's neon sign bearing his name. This gives McDuff the opportunity to jump onto him from the roof, causing Mac to meet a gruesome death as he ends up impaled on the steer horns that adorn his car. The final shot of Mac irresistibly invites the viewer to consider how much he resembles all the dead stuffed animals that embellish his house (Fig.4).

It suggests that one cannot incorporate (in all its possible senses) the animal and keep it safe inside one's self, one's home (as grisly décor) or restaurant (in the form of mass-produced meat to be cooked and served) without it eventually coming back to haunt one and perhaps reassert its rights. What also emerges is that Mac and Pat – who is shown chopping off her hand with a meat cleaver as the fight between the two men goes on [36] – seem to be aware, as the film draws to a close, that they are acting within a field of powerful constraints; but they decide to act nonetheless, even if the act can only lead them to their death. It is one thing to die. It is quite another to die by 'counter-signing' one's death. Mac, for example, doggedly tries to exceed the detective serial's 'pre-scripted' outcome, ludicrous as his (re)actions may seem. By doing so, he approaches a more 'Shakespearean' ending. Like Macbeth, he is "tied" to the "stake" of generic constraints but, even more "bear-like" than his Shakespearean counterpart, he resolves that he "must fight the course", a "course" that ends with death. ("They have tied me to a stake: I cannot fly,/ But, bear-like, I must fight the course") (5.7.1-2). One may go as far as to argue that Mac's sense of

[36] According to Lehmann's Lacanian reading, Pat "dies with a grin on her face", which suggests her "identification with the *sinthome*" (i.e. the impossible junction of enjoyment and the signifier), "her liberating realization, having traversed the fantasy of her impossible class ambition, that there is nothing left for her but to identify with lack itself" ("Out Damned", 246).

Fig. 4: McBeth's gruesome death

agency is simultaneously 'sedentary' and 'mobile', as hybrid and impure as the technology of the drive-through or the process of TV viewing as represented in the film.

In the course of this article, I have often emphasised that *Scotland, PA* lays bare its devices while relating to the adapted text. I want to conclude with another significant instance of this. After the death of Duncan, the Macbeths pay a visit to Malcom and Donald to negotiate the price of the restaurant. As neither Malcom nor Donald are interested in the business, they get an excellent deal. On her way out, Pat reassures them that they will "carry on [Duncan's] legacy … keep his name alive". No sooner does she end this speech than we are shown a montage of the extensive refurbishment of Duncan's diner. Needless to add, the sign bearing Duncan's name is the very first item to be dismantled. Pat and Mac's iconoclasm is clearly allegorical of *Scotland PA*'s relation to its Shakespearean 'source'. The murder of Duncan and the refurbishment of his diner also allegorically stand for the 'deconstruction' of the soporific normative legacy of a class-bound "Shakespeare". Duncan qua emblem of "Shakespeare" regularly falls asleep in his office. (Of course, another reason for this is that he must embody "Sleep" for Macbeth to be able to "murther Sleep", 2.2.35). He is called "Norm" and keeps on vilifying what he calls Scotland's "white trash". Iconoclasm undoubtedly provides its moment(s) of bliss. Towards the end of the montage we are shown Mac and Pat in the garden of their new middle-class home, with Mac drinking a beer and Pat floating in a newly-built above-ground pool. One can hardly envision Macbeth and Lady Macbeth sunbathing in the garden. Significantly, the soundtrack being played is "Beach Baby" by Gill *Shakespeare*, and Gill clearly replaces William. At the opposite end of iconoclasm, if we take McDuff's "Home of the Veggie Burger", which is the film's last shot (Fig.5), to be also an allegory of the 'reconstruction' of "Shakespeare" after the destruction of its legacy by the Macbeths, we have an urban, properly middle-class, edulcorated version of "Shakespeare".

Fig. 5: McDuff's Veggie Burger Restaurant

This is a "Shakespeare" made of self-help meditation tapes like the ones McDuff listens to in his olive green car, and which flattens out the rough 'carnivorous' edges of the playwright's language : "Do not toil in your troubles"; "Tomorrow is tomorrow. Tomorrow is not today". Yet iconoclasm or edulcoration are just

two marginal modes of the films' relation to its adapted text. We mainly witness a number of selective incorporations whose bodily content is often emphasised. They are sometimes playful (as in the witches' "The fowl was foul"), sometimes satirical (as in the dismembering of the title of Shakespeare's play), sometimes governed by savage black humour (as in the image of Mac impaled on the "stake" Macbeth is only tied to). These are incorporations, often driven by a *jouissance* which frustrates the viewer's desire for the 'proper' meaning of the 'original', which retrospectively 'produce' *Macbeth* as an ensemble of fragments and remainders which are then forced to cohabit and interact with 1970s popular culture, from TV to music to fashion items. Indeed, each incorporation seems to conjure up 'pre-possessed' media material as well as the *processes* of 're-mediation' in which the film itself of course participates.[37] In fact, the film seems to suggest, to "carry on [Shakespeare's] legacy", or "keep his name alive", is tantamount to coming to terms with the ghost of the media through which "Shakespeare" is endlessly processed, refracted and recycled. *Scotland, PA* takes it for granted that these "modern times" – the 1970s – are saturated with media images just as much as with burgers (and as a film it is haunted by the memory of its future, which speaks of an increase of saturation). But it is also intrigued by the relationship between past and present, as testified by the female witch's invitation to ponder the relevance of the past, the pertinence of *Macbeth* to the present: Can one go around killing everybody like a thousand years ago? This is not just *any* question about the relationship between the past and the present. It is a question about an aspect of the past and the present – seriality as a structure of iteration – which by its very nature blurs the distinction between them. There is no definite answer to the female hippie's question in *Scotland, PA*. But I want to argue, by way of conclusion, that this question is not unrelated to the fact that one of the film's most creative responses to *Macbeth* is its implementation of a spiral-like logic of iteration, doubling and echo (involving media as well as textual material); one that uncannily corresponds to – and perhaps even, in a spectral way, *with* – the logic of *Macbeth* itself, without necessarily coinciding with it.

[37] Each incorporation also produces further remainders; this is allegorized by the waitress who takes a bite of the leftover burger and then puts it back on the tray.