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'...roll to your rifle and blow out your brains and go to your gawd like a soldier': An Examination of Masculinity, Violence and Soldier Culture and its Influence on the Directing of a Production of Macbeth

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**'...roll to your rifle and blow out your brains and go to  
your gawd like a soldier'**

**AN EXAMINATION OF MASCULINITY, VIOLENCE AND  
SOLDIER CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE  
DIRECTING OF A PRODUCTION OF *MACBETH***

**JOSEPH GEDDES**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Masters by Research

The University of Huddersfield

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## Abstract

This is a written thesis detailing research that I undertook between June 2015 and January 2017. The research ran alongside directing a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, using the findings and questions raised to inform my decisions.

There were three areas that I researched: masculinity and the masculine culture of the military, violence and the justification of violence, and soldier culture – defined in my research as 'the immersion in the hyper-masculine culture of the military combined with the damaging effects that exposure to violence can lead to (which become apparent when reintegrating with civilian society), and how the combination of these three affected my directing of *Macbeth*.

My research into masculinity examined the hyper-masculine culture that exists in the military and the traits that make it so. I then used those hyper-masculine traits to build the character of Macbeth, and deconstructed his masculinity throughout the play to expose his masculine façade for what it was during Act 3 Scene 4.

I researched into violence and violent acts that the military encourages, and used my research to examine public perception of justifiable and non-justifiable acts of violence. I then asked the question – who decides which type of crimes are justifiable? Examining Macbeth as a King, and posing the question: can anything done by a king be considered a crime when he makes the law?

I combined those two areas of research, masculinity and violence, and examined the damaging effects a combination of the two can have on a person's psyche. The results of the combination of the two is one of the factors leading to high rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which in turn leads to issues like alcohol dependency and problems with reintegration.

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# Introduction

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains  
an' go to yout Gawd like a soldier.  
Go, go, go like a soldier, [...]  
So-oldier of the Queen! (Kipling, 2008)

When Ruyard Kipling wrote his poem, '*The Young British Soldier*', commenting on the miserable conditions and thankless work that comes with being a soldier, he was writing of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which was fought between '1878-1880.' (Ewing, No date) But reading through the poem, paying attention to the gruelling conditions ('worst o' your foes is the sun over'ead [...] If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead'), hard work ('When first under fire an' you're wishful to duck, Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck, Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck') and location (the war was fought on 'Afghanistan's plains' (Kipling, 2008), you could be forgiven for believing it is a poem describing the recent '13-year war' (Watt, 2014) involving British troops in Afghanistan.

It was this poem that prompted me to examine the connections that can exist between the past and the present, to examine whether a piece of literature (whether it be written one hundred years ago, or four hundred years ago) that was written for the audience of its day, can be used to bring relevance to issues that are prevalent today.

To examine this idea, I chose to look at *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's tale of ambition, violence and murder. I chose *Macbeth* precisely because of its timelessness, the central themes of *Macbeth* are just as prevalent today as they were four hundred years ago: people still yearn for power, good men are still pawns in powerful people's games and violence is still seen as an answer.

As part of my examination I directed a production *Macbeth* transferring the setting from medieval Scotland to a modern day Scotland, and changing the battle hardened warriors into modern day squaddies. Bringing the play into the modern day, I had to balance respecting the text, and bringing a modern feeling to it. Using Kipling's poem as my base, I began to pick apart the text and find the similarities that existed between the soldiers in *Macbeth* and modern day soldiers, and the timeless issues that soldiers in the present day face that have been faced by soldiers since Macbeth's time.

I settled on examining three subject areas, each one linked intrinsically with and representing a different facet of being a soldier. The areas which I decided to examine were all evident in my research, *The Young British Soldier* and *Macbeth*.

- 1.) The enforced masculinity of soldiers
- 2.) The inherent violence that comes with being a soldier
- 3.) The impact living life as a soldier has on a person's psyche

The enforced masculinity of soldiers is well documented, not only in *Macbeth* (a recurring motif throughout the whole play is the pressure of being a man) and *The Young British Soldier* (the poem is written directly to a young male soldier, and contains the instruction 'Don't grouse like a woman' (Kipling, 2008)) but in the fact that women joining the British army is still a comparatively new idea (combat roles were only opened to women 'two decades ago' and as of 2016 only '80% of jobs across the armed forces are currently open to women.' (The Guardian, 2016)) With women only becoming a feature in the military recently it is still a, sometimes aggressively, masculine industry. 'Military is the site of masculinity. This is true because the military is historically organized by men and populated with men' (Aronson & Kimmel, 2004. p.546)

'In the military, this masculine archetype is taken to the extreme - it becomes hyper-masculinity. This hyper-masculinity is drilled into soldiers over and over again' (Mammarella-D'Cruz, 2016)

With that in mind I decided to use masculinity to examine the character of Macbeth, giving him masculine traits and building his character at the beginning of the play around those traits, stripping him of them throughout the play, and exposing his now destroyed masculine identity during the banquet scene (Act 3 Scene 4).

The inherent violence that comes with being a soldier is a depressing fact

Those who served in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan were 53% more likely to offend violently than those not on the frontline. Those with multiple experiences of combat had a 70%-80% greater risk of being convicted for acts of violence. (Ellen, 2013)

These brave men and women are being 'flung into combat, sometimes repeatedly' with no care as to whether that 'might prolong and enhance violent tendencies.' (Ellen, 2013) While on deployment surrounded by 'peers who encourage killing' (Barker, 2015), and faced with kill-or-be-killed situations, sometimes on a daily basis, violence becomes a way of life. 'The irony is that when they leave active duty, the same single-minded aggression is swiftly denounced as "wrong[...]" by wider society.' (Ellen, 2013)



It was this immersion in a violent way of life, and the subsequent public reaction to that violent life style that I wanted to explore; to explore the hero worship that exists in the public's perception of soldiers, and the shock that comes when the soldiers are revealed to be human, just like everyone else. The justification of violence, and the acceptability of some forms of violence, and not others, was something else I wanted to explore through my research on *Macbeth*. Are some crimes more heinous than others? Who decides which act of violence is despicable, and which is acceptable?

When looking at the text of *Macbeth* and *The Young British Soldier*, it's clear that no matter which period you are looking at, war has always been a bloody, scarring event. *Macbeth* 'unseamed [Macdonwald] from the nave to the chops' (Shakespeare, 1967. p.54) and the Young British Soldier in the poem is told to ignore his fear 'Remember it's ruin to run from a fight' and if it gets too bad to 'roll to [his] rifle and blow out [his] brains.' (Kipling, 2008) We are now aware of the devastating effect doing/seeing horrific things can have on a person's psyche, breakthroughs in psychology helping us understand and try to heal those coming back from war, but just because PTSD was 'only introduced into the medical dictionary in 1980' doesn't mean that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a new illness: 'The language we use to describe the experience of PTSD might be modern [...] but ancient cultures were well versed in it.' (O'Donnell, 2016)

I wanted to explore the intense nature of Soldier Culture, which for the purposes of this thesis I define as the immersion in the hyper-masculine culture of the military combined with the damaging effects that exposure to violence can lead to (which become apparent when reintegrating with civilian society), and the 'Catch 22' style relationship the two have – with traditionally masculine ways of thinking in the military promoting an affinity with violence, which exposes a person to possibly developing 'anxiety disorder[s]' (NHS, No date) like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and at the same time dissuading people from seeking help.

Looking at these areas (masculinity, violence and soldier culture) as I directed *Macbeth* allowed me to fully explore my ideas, to see them evolve and grow through the performances of the actors. The research I did allowed me to formulate ideas around presenting issues through the medium of theatre, using an old text to try and examine a very modern beast. This idea is not unwarranted

Ancient cultures understood better than us the need to aid warriors when they returned from war. [...] In Rome, the vestal virgins would bathe returning soldiers to purge them of the corruption of war. The Maasai warriors of East Africa had purification rites for the homecoming of their fighters. The Native Americans held

sweat lodge purification rituals for returning warriors in which their stories could be told and their “inner pollution” could be left among the hot stones, evaporating into steam and cleansing the warrior. [...] In medieval warfare, [Christians] who fought in battle were required to do penance. (O’Donnell, 2016)

And it stands, that a classical text may be able to help us examine our pain.

# Chapter One: 'I dare do all that may become a man'

Using hyper-masculine traits to build the character of Macbeth, and the deconstruction of said masculinity in Act 3 Scene 4 of *Macbeth*

## Introduction

'What man dare, I dare' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 129) Macbeth screams at the ghost of Banquo, daring the apparition to face him in a one on one duel in any form it desires; 'the rugged Russian bear, the armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 129), as long as it desists from appearing in the form of his dead friend 'Take any shape but that' (Shakespeare, 1967. p. 129). In my production of *Macbeth*, Macbeth and his court are dressed for a royal banquet, wearing suits and dresses instead of their usual military gear, having finally let their collective hair down after a brutal civil war and the political upheaval of a murdered king. Banquo, or at least the 'psychologically fabricated apparition' (Diana, 1992. p. 24) is also dressed for the party, though his clean suit seen in the previous scene is now covered in dirt and blood, his throat cut and a bleeding wound where his eye once was. This vision, a 'psychologically fabricated apparition based on previously acknowledged information' (Diana, 1992. p. 24) is enough to terrify Macbeth. He curses the apparition ('horrible shadow! Unreal mockery' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.129)) and begs/demands it to leave him be ('quit my sight' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.129)), all while his court and his wife look on in horror. Under my direction Macbeth is not subtle in his delivery: he yells, he moves around the space and tries to threaten the apparition with a knife. This was done not only for their dramatic impact, but to show a weakening in Macbeth's extremely fragile masculinity.

Masculinity is a broad, and oftentimes vague term, but in my direction of *Macbeth* I wanted to strip it down to the 'basics' – what makes someone masculine?

I found traits like 'Courage[ous]' and 'Discipline[ed]' (Wingham, 2012.) in an online article entitled *Nine Traits of Masculine Men*. I did not choose to use the information provided by this website because it was academic or even particularly well written, but instead because of the website's insistence that the only true masculinity is hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity is defined in Kimmel and Aronson's *Men & Masculinities: A Social, Cultural and Historical Encyclopaedia. Volume 1 A-J* as 'sets of behaviours and beliefs characterised by unusually highly developed masculine forms as defined by existing cultural values' (2004), and it is this type of masculinity, not a well-rounded and healthy one, that I wanted my Macbeth to possess. A man should be courageous 'willing to do what is necessary without showing weakness' and disciplined 'Take charge of your

life and what goes on in it.' (Wingham, 2012) The website does not present a well-rounded view of what makes a man, but it gives us insight into what people who believe hyper-masculinity is a positive thing see as traits of masculinity. I wanted Macbeth's masculinity to be ever present in the way he walked, spoke and acted so that when his guard fell down, and his fragile show of 'manhood' was revealed for what it was, it would be all the more shocking.

I wanted to use Macbeth's actions in Act 3 Scene 4, a scene where Macbeth feels secure in his kingship, to tear away the masculinity he had displayed throughout the play, stripping him of 'masculine' traits – being courageous and being disciplined, showing that Lady Macbeth's assertion that being King would make him 'so much more the man' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.61) was far from true.

## Courage

Although he is the titular character, Macbeth himself does not appear in his namesake play until half way through Act 1 Scene 3. Though absent from the stage he is already present in the audience's mind as the Three Witches, Duncan and the Wounded Sergeant have already mentioned him by name: his reputation precedes him, and that reputation is of a seemingly peerless soldier. Macbeth is described as 'brave', 'valiant', 'worthy' and 'noble' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21-23) before the audience meet him, these descriptions of his prowess on the battlefield preparing them to see a great soldier and planting in their minds the idea of Macbeth being a courageous man.

Macbeth is described as 'brave' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21) by the Wounded Sergeant for his military feats against the invading Norwegian army; he 'carved out his passage' through the enemy men, met 'merciless Macdonwald' and 'unseamed him from the navel to the chaps' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21). When discussing these actions with the cast, I presented them with real life stories of men who had displayed incredible courage under fire:

Private First Class Phillip Mexcur who was hit by 'by two rounds of sniper fire' and continued to do his duty 'stepp[ing] in to lead alongside his [injured] platoon sergeant.' (Hughes, 2010)

Corporal Oliver Bainbridge who after his vehicle 'struck an improvised explosive device [...] grabbed his injured driver, [dragged] him to [the] crater caused by the blast [and] shield[ed] him with his own body while exposing himself to [...] incoming fire' (Ministry of Defence, 2013)

and Acting Lance Corporal Tuljung Gurung who 'single-handedly [fought] off two armed Taliban attacking an Afghan patrol base' despite 'being dazed after a bullet smashed directly into his helmet and [...] [being] knocked down by shockwaves from an enemy hand grenade which he threw to safety when it landed next to him.' (Drury, 2013)

These examples, and the others that were shown, were used to try and create a realistic image of Macbeth's feats in the minds of the cast. Great acts of solo heroism have been made throughout all history, and it's not hard to imagine a more traditional Macbeth cleaving his way through the enemy lines with a sword and shield. Modern military battles, however are fought with guns, explosives and air support – it is much harder imagining a lone modern soldier turning the tide of a war. These three men, and countless other brave men and women, have all displayed the courage and tenacity to single-handedly turn the tides of a battle. I used these examples of military heroism not only to prove that a lone soldier can turn the tide in a modern military battle, but to also show that courage isn't about who shouts the loudest that they aren't afraid. Pfc. Mexcur says his feat is 'not a big deal' and describes himself as not doing 'anything that a person my age, with my experience, shouldn't have' (Hughes, 2010), Cpl. Bainbridge who, when told he would be receiving the military cross, was 'speechless' (Ministry of Defence, 2013) and Acting L/Cpl Gurung is described as being 'modest' (Drury, 2013). These men are not the typical 'action heroes' that one might imagine would be the type of person to charge head first into danger, but instead they have a quiet courage – they don't need to talk about their feats, and they don't want any praise for doing what they consider to be their job (Marine pilot Carl Forsling (2014) advises that you 'Don't thank a veteran.')

I wanted to bring that courage to Macbeth at the beginning of the play, not showing him to be loud and arrogant, but instead to be quiet and perhaps a little unassuming. To do this I paid particular attention to Macbeth's first two entrances; Act 1 Scene 3, where Macbeth and Banquo come upon the Three witches, and Act 1 Scene 4, where Macbeth is greeted by King Duncan.

When Macbeth first enters, the audience already know who he is. The Witches have prophesied his arrival and King Duncan and the Wounded Sergeant have discussed his military prowess. To counter any automatic assumption of Macbeth I had his first entrance be slow, and quiet. Macbeth and Banquo enter on to the stage, and for a few moments neither speak, until Macbeth casually says 'So foul and fair a day I have not seen' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.29) – a quiet observation on how he views the day. It is then Banquo who leads the conversations for the rest of the scene, when they first see the witches Banquo describes them in great detail, and when they deliver the prophecy that Macbeth will be King, it is Banquo who responds. He scorns the Witches' powers

and jokingly asks about his own future, whereas Macbeth remains quiet and pensive. Though this may be in part because the Witches have told him he has a great future, it also shows the difference between Macbeth and Banquo – Banquo is a more typical 'squaddie': he's loud, likes to have a laugh and is unafraid. Macbeth, however, keeps his feelings under guard and doesn't reveal what he's feeling, except in asides to the audience.

Again this difference is shown in Act 1 Scene 4 when Macbeth and Banquo are greeted by King Duncan, who praises them both for their military prowess. Banquo, when thanked 'let me enfold thee and hold thee to my heart' warmly responds 'There if I grow, the harvest is your own' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.43). Macbeth however redirects the praise given to him back to the King 'The service and the loyalty I owe In doing it pays itself. Your highness' part Is to receive our duties,' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.43). Macbeth does not want to be thanked for his actions, he believes that he is simply doing his duty – displaying a quiet bravery like Cpl. Bainbridge who said about his actions '...it was my responsibility. How can you ask somebody else to go in your place?' (Bainbridge, 2013)

This quiet courage that Macbeth shows is displayed again later in the play, though in a very different form. When preparing to kill the King, Macbeth sees an 'air drawn dagger' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.127) that he is unable to touch floating in the air, pointing him in the direction of the sleeping king. Macbeth rationalises with himself that the dagger is 'a false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain' and knows that it is the upcoming 'bloody business which informs thus to mine eyes' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) but cannot shake his fear of it. When directing Andrew Goulding, the actor playing Macbeth, in how to perform this monologue (possibly the most famous in the play) I wanted to focus on his fear, and try and show the audience a truthful reaction. The version of Macbeth in my production, the one whose military prowess I likened to real life heroes, would be a hard man to scare. But fear isn't just displayed by running from something or freezing to the spot – one of the ways our brain tries to cope with fear is to rationalise it, allowing us to calmly comprehend and handle it. To do this the human brain 'Sharply focus[ses] our attention and mobiliz[es] us to act to reduce or eliminate the danger' (Emotional Competency, no date). To show this reaction to fear, I first had Andrew notice the dagger and pause for a second, before beginning the monologue 'Is this a dagger I see before me, handle toward my hand?' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.67). As he spoke the first line he slowly walked toward the dagger, almost like he was trying not to disturb or spook it. I told Andrew to approach the dagger like he might approach a wild animal – slowly, calmly and never taking your eyes off it. As he got closer and his fear abated and he began on the next set of lines 'Come, let me clutch thee' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.67), I had Andrew very quickly try to snatch the dagger from the

air, as if he was trying to prove that it was a real dagger and that someone was playing a trick on him. It is then, when he realises that the dagger is actually some form of hallucination, that he begins to really question why it's there and why he is seeing it.

I didn't want Macbeth being scared of the dagger to translate into him barking the lines at it, or to be afraid to touch it, instead I wanted him to try and rationalise it. The text lent itself nicely to this as Macbeth himself rationalises it 'it is the bloody business which informs thus to mine eyes' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69). To show his brain working in overtime to try and comprehend what the dagger is and why it is there, I had Andrew pair the lines of the script with different interpretations of fear, and each line had a different emotion behind this. I did this to convey the rapid-fire thought processes that happen when you're scared. First on the line 'Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight?' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) I wanted it to seem as though he was a child lashing out due to fear, placing a childishly aggressive emphasis on 'fatal vision' like it's an insult. Then on the line 'Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going, and such an instrument I was to use' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) he speaks in an accusatory tone, almost as if the dagger itself is the reason he is killing the king, that it's compelling him to do so, displacing the blame from himself in an attempt to rid himself of the fear.

As he continues to circle the dagger, as though he is enthralled and afraid all at the same time, he closes his eyes, in a vain attempt to make the dagger go away. As he opens his eyes and sees the dagger is still there, he says the line 'I see thee still; and, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood, which was not so before.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) Making him quake with fear at the sight of the now bloody dagger would have been easy, and obvious, but wouldn't have right motive. With the particular emphasis laid on in previous scenes about Macbeth 'unseam[ing]' Macdonwald and battling so fiercely that he is described as if he 'meant to bathe in reeking wounds' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21-23), I didn't think blood on a dagger would frighten him. So instead I had Andrew relax, let out a sigh of relief and laugh a little throughout the second half of the speech, like seeing the dagger covered in blood is like catching a naughty child misbehaving, or catching a friend playing a trick on you. I wanted it to seem, at least to Macbeth, that some normalcy had returned to the world, to a man in his situation daggers are made to become covered in blood and viscera. It is this sight, the blood covered dagger, that restores Macbeth's courage – he is able to rationalise it, and in turn overcomes his fear.

I placed so much emphasis on making Macbeth scared in this scene because I felt there needed to be a fear in the play that he overcomes, to show the bravery that he is lauded for. While killing a sleeping King may not seem brave, courage is not always about committing 'good' acts. Psychologist Cynthia Pury describes courage as containing 'three

basic elements: [a] noble goal, [b] personal risk, and [c] choice' but says that people who commit atrocious acts can still be seen as courageous. 'Bad courage has a goal, but it's not a noble one [...] [terrorists Dylan] Roof [and Dzhokhar] Tsarnaev meet the technical definition of courage, of pursuing goals at great personal risk to themselves.' (2015)

The way that Shakespeare wrote Act 3 Scene 4 (the 'Banquet scene') shows Macbeth failing to show courage; though he bravely offers to fight the apparition in the form of a wild animal, he still begs the bloody figure of Banquo to 'take any shape but that' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 129), once more unable to face the consequences of his actions (recalling his horror at looking on the slain Duncan in Act 2, 'I am afraid to think what I have done; Look on't again I dare not' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 75)). To draw a sharp focus on my Macbeth's lack of courage, I directed Andrew to continually stare at the apparition, frightened that the second he turned his head, or closed his eyes that it would be upon him. Macbeth is bold of tongue in this scene, he does curse and make demands of the spirit, but I had him cower behind his throne as he begs Lady Macbeth to be able to see what he can see 'Prithee, see there! Behold! Look!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.127), and later when the vision returns, Macbeth, who had regained his composure during the brief interim, grabs a table knife and attempts to defend himself against the apparition, culminating in him screaming in an almost childlike manner for the ghost to leave 'Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.129). This childlike shouting was the perfect culmination to the scene, showing Macbeth stripped of all courage, and acting like a child that has been confronted with something it is afraid of: 'quickly getting angry or irritable [...] being out of control during outbursts [and] being clingy' (NHS, no date).

## Discipline

Soldiers need discipline. It is something armies all around the world fiercely encourage. It is part of a commanding officer's job to ensure that the privates under his command have discipline, without it the privates 'would be slovenly and [...] self absorbed' so 'discipline must be ground into [them]' (Anthony, 2011). In discussions on the character of Macbeth with Andrew, we drew from his own experience in the military and my military research to imagine the level of discipline Macbeth would have.

We came to the conclusion that as a soldier in a modern army, discipline would be very important to him, as the 'strength of [the] military is discipline' (Barta, 2007), and as a captain in the army Macbeth would be an extremely disciplined man. I wanted to convey the importance of discipline, and the respect it brings quite early on in the play, so when



looking at Act 1 Scene 7 I directed Andrew to lay particular emphasis on the line 'He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought Golden opinions from all sorts of people, Which would be worn now in their newest gloss, Not cast aside so soon.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 59). He almost hurls the line at Lady Macbeth, strongly resolved to be a 'good soldier' and obey his king instead of his wife. Strong emphasis was placed on the word 'I', to show how proud Macbeth is that people think highly of him, imagining that the praises given about him in Act 1: 'brave Macbeth', 'peerless kinsman' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.25-45), would have been passed on to him and that he has taken to heart the 'proud privilege [of being] a soldier' (Patton and Harkins, 1995. p.335), even using the fact he has won 'golden opinions' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.59) to counter Lady Macbeth's insistence that he could be king, showing that he considers being a well-respected soldier incredibly important.

In Act 1 Scene 4 of the play, Duncan and Macbeth share their only interaction on stage, and I wanted to quickly show the disciplined side of Macbeth, in contrast to Duncan, his king; who in this production was decidedly informal and relaxed. In my direction of the character Duncan I tried in many ways to make him the opposite of Macbeth (i.e. Macbeth was directed to be slow to smile, while Duncan was often directed to laugh as he spoke). To get this divide right I took inspiration from media coverage of former U.K Prime Minister David Cameron. The aspect that I took from the coverage was his 'relentless imperviousness to any notion that he has to prove himself.' (Kite, 2013), I believed that this was an attitude that a king would have, and soldier would not; Macbeth is always trying to improve himself, and earn respect and Duncan doesn't need to prove himself, he knows 'he is worthy.' (Kite, 2013)

To create a tangible divide between Macbeth and Duncan, I needed to dramatically show the differences between the two. They don't directly interact much in the play, so I needed to show it in every scene in which Duncan appears. To do this I looked at the text, and what contextual information I could find, but I also had an actor who had his own visions and ideas about how Duncan should behave. I wanted to combine my own ideas for how Duncan as a character affected the play with 'mining [the] text like a detective and the extraordinary creative process of an actor'. (Esdaile, 2011. p. 92) In discussions with Gareth Orr, the actor playing Duncan, I asked how he viewed the character and he told me he imagined him in this production as a decorated general, rather than a king. This formed a connection in my head between the research I had been doing into soldiers and the ways they interact with each other and my desire to make Duncan an antithesis of Macbeth (or one of them). Gareth and I decided that Duncan had been a soldier for a long time, but injury (Duncan in our production walked

with a cane) and promotion had stopped him seeing the front line, something that he greatly missed.

In order to convey this Duncan retained his laid back, '[no] need to try too hard' (Kite, 2013) attitude, but particular focus was laid on his relish of hearing about the battles that had been fought in his name, 'the old soldiers interest was his memories of the past' (Nielsen, 2013. p. 24); Duncan would rather rejoice in the glory of war than dwell on what it means to truly be a king. In Act 1 Scene 3 of our production, Duncan shares a tender, secluded moment with his sons, as he reluctantly asks about the execution of the Thane of Cawdor. In discussion on Duncan's history, Gareth and I decided that the Thane of Cawdor was another 'old-school' soldier, like Duncan, and that the two had probably fought alongside each other, making the betrayal more personal and intimate (and perhaps more ironic, in that he replaces him with someone that he has a great respect for, and is again betrayed). Duncan passes some advice on to his sons 'There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face. He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.41), and it is the most vulnerable we have seen him. But just as he begins to share a touching moment with his sons, Macbeth enters and all thoughts of the serious nature of ruling leave his mind and he goes towards Macbeth 'O worthiest cousin!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.41).

As he strides towards him, Macbeth and the other soldiers stand at ease; 'the left foot about 10 inches to the left of the right foot [...] the hands at the small of the back and centred on the belt' (The Drill Pad, no date), and wait for their King to address them. Duncan, with no care for military formality, does not call for a salute or address them and instead pulls Macbeth into a warm hug. Duncan's disregard for proper military etiquette, ignoring the 'unique form of greeting between military professionals' (University of Nebraska – Lincoln, no date), would not be out of place in the original context of the play, with Duncan being the king, 'the figure of God's majesty, His captain [...] Anointed, crowned' (Shakespeare, 1975. p. 201), he could do what he liked. But in our play, Duncan is showing a blatant disregard for the rules, going against military procedure and warmly greeting his men. This is in direct contrast to how Macbeth will be as a leader.

In Act 3 Scene 1 Macbeth makes his first entrance as King with an accompaniment of soldiers, but there has been a change: the untucked and open shirts are gone, as are any touches of individuality the soldier's held. They are no longer laughing and talking amongst themselves, instead they are standing in formation and their uniforms are now identical and correct (they are now wearing the appropriate military berets). Macbeth has brought order to Duncan's army – they are in formation and they are uniformed,

showing a 'powerful display of military discipline' (Crabtree, 2004) – this display is a result of Macbeth's leadership style.

As a man with a respect for the rules, Macbeth has to show respect for his King, even if he does not agree with his methods. He reciprocates the hug Duncan gives him, but quickly falls back to standing at ease when the King steps away. Their following conversation is not conducted in the style of a formal, superior to subordinate conversation. Duncan touches Macbeth on the arm, and as he says the line 'Would thou hadst less deserved, That the proportion both of thanks and payment Might have been mine!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 41), he laughs, as if he is annoyed that Macbeth's deeds are greater than the thanks he can give. To convey the relaxed, friendly attitude Duncan has with his subordinates I purposely had Duncan touch Macbeth on the arm 'touching someone's arm [is] a subtle invitation to trust or intimacy' (Body Language Signals, no date), conveying the warm, intimate nature of the way Duncan rules his men. This is in great contrast to Macbeth, who after stepping back from the hug relegates himself back to his proper place; 'point[ing] the gun' (Trumbo, 2007. no pagination) telling Duncan, in a very formal manner, that it was his duty, misdirecting the praise back to the king 'The service and the loyalty I owe In doing it pays itself [...] doing everything Safe toward your love and honour.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 43).

But as a King, Macbeth no longer needs to be self-disciplined, instead he turns that discipline to his subordinates; he has a strict control over how they present themselves and addresses them in a curt, formal manner. Macbeth has corrected the mistakes that he felt Duncan made; the army that previously were 'carousing till the second cock' (Shakespeare, 2010. p. 81) are now a tool for him to use in any way he wants. In his first appearance as the King, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth enter with soldiers behind them, stood at ease in a 'V' formation. It is evident that power has changed him. He smiles almost constantly, speaks in a controlled, warm voice and inconspicuous lines like 'Fail not our feast' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.101) are turned into veiled threats. Banquo, who up until this point was the King's closest friend, is suddenly an enemy, and must be taken care of. Everything from the flanking formation of his men, the false warmth to his voice and the almost off-hand delivery of the question 'Goes Fleance with you?' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.101) are designed to intimidate his only opposition, and just like famous dictators before him, Macbeth is using his disciplined military presence to solve his problems. Saddam Hussein 'preyed upon so-called enemies of the state in order to maintain power' (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2002), Joseph Stalin '[got] rid of anyone who might [have been] a potential rival to him as leader' (Gracheva, No Date) and Macbeth uses Banquo's former allies to intimidate him and threaten his son, then has him murdered. His power is secure.

But 'no dictatorship can last.' (Hemingway, 1936. p.174-175).

Macbeth being a disciplined soldier, and the subsequent loss of that discipline is not as evident in the text as is his loss of courage, so instead of using lines I had to make it evident in the performances of my actors, and in my staging of the scenes. As soon as Macbeth becomes King he begins to lose his grip on any form of discipline, he, like Duncan, becomes comfortable in the notion that 'he is worthy.' (Kite, 2013). In Act 3 Scene 1, after threatening Banquo, Macbeth dismisses his wife and soldiers to ready himself to speak to the Murderers. In the 'To be thus is nothing' speech Macbeth justifies to himself his reasons for ordering Banquo's murder; he is destined to 'father a line of kings' whereas Macbeth bears a 'fruitless crown.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103).

During this monologue I wanted Macbeth to grow increasingly frustrated by the idea of Banquo usurping his crown, consumed by the same paranoia that consumes all dictators. Hitler had a 'morbid paranoia [...] about the Jews' (Cocks, No Date)', Stalin was 'consumed by paranoid fears [and] obsessed with conspiracies' (Post and Roberts, 1997. p.275) and Macbeth, someone who stole the crown is now afraid of having it taken away. To convey this I had Andrew, stood centre stage, start to slowly turn as he began the monologue, beginning the speech in a low, even voice. Then as he spoke of Banquo and became irritated, he started gesticulating a lot more, and speeding up his delivery. Macbeth's anger quickly turns childish when he mentions their interaction with the Witches, he recounts that Banquo 'chid' (chid here meaning '[to] Scold or rebuke' (Oxford Dictionary, 2005. p.299)) the weird sisters and that he 'bade they speak to him' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103). Now this is true, Banquo does request that the Witches tell his future, but it is only Macbeth's paranoid mind that interprets it as a power play. When the Witches greet Macbeth with 'All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31) he is 'rapt' and 'seem[s] to fear' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31) their predictions. But Banquo, who at this point in the play puts no stock in the witches' predictions, laughs heavily at the ridiculousness of this. It was only when Banquo saw that Macbeth was disturbed by the prophecy that he asked them to predict his future, in my production this is a kind act, he is trying to call their bluff to make his friend feel better. But this kind act is recounted to us differently when it comes from Macbeth's own mouth; he says Banquo 'bade' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103) the sisters to predict his future petulantly, as if he is trying to convince the audience, and himself, that it was Banquo who really wanted to know the witches' prophecies and not himself (yet it was him that asked them to 'stay' and 'tell [him] more.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31))

As he continues the speech, every line that mentioned Banquo and his lineage was directed to be spat out. I asked Andrew to pay attention to these lines about Banquo because they reveal something Macbeth hates about him; Banquo is a father. It is this

idea that plays on Macbeth's mind constantly, the idea of his name fading into genetic and lineal obscurity, 'no son of mine succeeding' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103). The Witches' prophecy that Macbeth 'shalt be king hereafter', but that Banquo 'shalt get kings' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31) plays on his insecurities about his masculinity.

Macbeth has had children, Lady Macbeth references that she has 'given suck' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.61) but nowhere in the play does it reference what happened to the child, only that there is no apparent heir. So Macbeth has fulfilled his manly duty to 'successfully impregnate' his wife, but he does not have the 'large and vigorous family that expands his lineage as much as possible' (McKay, 2014) and that is where the insecurity comes from. The constant focus on Banquo's heirs and his ability to produce heirs in the script was the perfect tool to show the decline in Macbeth's discipline, because it is something that has historically driven King's to great lengths (Henry VIII notoriously dissolved his relationship with the catholic church, and divorced his Queen when she could not produce another heir - 'A king needed as many healthy heirs as possible' (Hanson, 2015)) and culturally the inability to have a child (especially a male child) is something that can seriously damage how a person sees themselves (In Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* the insult 'You couldn't even get your wife with a male child' (1997. p.47) pushes the character Peter to at last defend himself).

During the final section of the 'To be thus is nothing speech', Macbeth makes several references in quick succession to Banquo's heirs,

Macbeth: [...]If 't be so [...] *For them* the gracious Duncan have I murdered; Put rancors in the vessel of my peace *Only for them*; and mine eternal jewel Given to the common enemy of man, To make *them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!* Rather than so, come fate into the list, And champion me to th' utterance. Who's there? (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103. My italics)

I wanted to use these references in the text to Banquo's children to show his growing insecurity about his lineage, and to show those insecurities ruining his discipline.

To do this I directed Andrew to grow increasingly aggressive on each instance. The first 'them' is spat out, as Macbeth points to an imagined line of boys and men all wearing *his* crown. When he continues to say he has put 'rancors in the vessels of [his] peace, only for them' he again points to the imagined line, this time a note of disbelief creeping into his voice alongside the anger. When Macbeth describes giving his soul to the devil 'to make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings!' he is practically raving, eyes wide and spitting while he barks out the line. Having worked himself up into a furious rage, Macbeth scoffs as he realises what must be done. He draws his gun from its holster on

the line 'come fate' and starts to wave it around, before pointing it at his own head, determined to fight 'fate'. (Shakespeare, 2010. pp. 103)

This waving around of his gun goes against all principles of safe firearm handling. Author and former CIA Officer Jason Hanson says 'that you should 'only draw your gun [if you are] in immediate fear for your life' (2011). Macbeth is not in immediate fear for his life, he is using his gun however he pleases; in the interaction that follows the speech he uses his gun to signal for one of his soldiers to 'go to the door' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103) and waves it around in an almost flamboyant manner while talking to the Murderers, almost as if he has forgotten it is in his hand.

Macbeth, who used to strictly follow the rules, now fragrantly disregards them, the murder of Duncan has started him on a path he cannot turn back from - 'committing one offense correlates with committing another.' (Boba and Fenson, 2009. p.129)

When they arrive at the banquet, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth receive a warm standing ovation from the assembled soldiers, who are relishing a moment of peace amid a long period of unrest. Macbeth, who has come so far from the man he was at the start of the play, warmly greets them in return. The aloof man who was slow to smile is gone, in his place there is something else. When directing this scene, I discussed with Andrew the change I wanted the audience to be able to see in Macbeth. To create the feeling I wanted for the scene I first imagined how Duncan would have entered the room, then I took that and applied it to Macbeth, a man who has neither the 'king's divine right to rule' (Labbe, 2010) or the warm nature that Duncan possessed in our production.

As they are being applauded, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth walk separately to their seats at the head of the table. Lady Macbeth is sullen and only briefly smiles at the men, whereas Macbeth shares a small interaction with each soldier as he passes; a friendly nod, a pat on the back etc. This intentional mimicry of the warm way Duncan greeted his subjects is warped slightly, Macbeth seems too happy as he smiles at his soldiers and a drunken air surrounds him. As he reaches his seat Macbeth greets his men with a 'hearty welcome' (Shakespeare, 2010. p .121), but instead of sitting down he carries on and wanders around the table, eager to greet the rest of his men and 'mingle with society' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121). As he warmly puts his arm around a soldier, he notices Lady Macbeth sitting silently in her seat and begins to talk about her to his men, loudly proclaiming 'Our hostess keeps her state' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121), in an exaggeratedly disappointed tone. Macbeth is using the banquet as a display of power and Lady Macbeth, a weak shadow of her former self, is not behaving as she *should be* at his banquet.

A disciplined leader knows that belittling a subordinate in front of people is an immature and unimpressive way to handle issues you face, and that any negative comments should be dealt with 'privately, and with benevolence' (Hall, 2012), especially when that leader is trying to give off the impression that they are strong, worthy and in-control. Being able to swallow your feelings and react when appropriate is a show of discipline in itself. But Macbeth is no longer the disciplined man he was at the beginning, he walks round to his wife and grabs her firmly by the shoulders speaking over her to his men 'but in best time we will require her welcome' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121) in the same manner a drunk person speaks to a group of strangers, emboldened by alcohol – he laughs at what he said as though it was a joke, speaks too loudly and afterwards roughly kisses the top of her head in an act of unwanted affection. Macbeth displays here the 'confrontational' attitude that is one of the 'common sign[s] of advancing alcoholism.' (Neil, no date) Lady Macbeth meekly follows her husband's suit and plays the dutiful wife, and asks that he welcome them in lieu of her. Macbeth here is play acting at being a happy king, and she has to comply. To communicate to the audience the falseness of Macbeth in this scene, as he attempts to mimic Duncan's style of ruling, Andrew was directed to smile frequently, but to not let the smile reach his eyes, just smiling with his mouth, as a smile usually only '[shows] sincerity' (Widrich, 2013) when it reaches the eyes. I wanted the warmth that Duncan had to be missing from this scene, replaced by something superficial, and forced.

To communicate the breakdown in Macbeth's discipline during the banquet to the audience, I needed it to be total, so that there would be no doubt in the audience's minds that Macbeth in the second half of the play (in my production the interval was placed after the banquet scene) was a man who followed no rules but his own. Through the language and through Macbeth's actions as he entered the banquet I wanted to show the effect his new lack of discipline was having on his ability to rule successfully and his once strong marriage. But I also wanted to show the effect a lack of discipline and self-control can have on your ability to control your own body. When the First Murderer enters the banquet hall, his face splattered with blood, Macbeth is relaxed and ready to 'sit i'the midst' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121) of his men, but as he notices the murderer standing by the entrance, his façade begins to slip, he cannot hide his fear. I directed Andrew to take a few seconds to notice the Murderer, and to truly take his blood splattered face in before slowly letting the smile he had been holding for the beginning of the scene drop, his eyes wide with fear. The soldiers sitting at the table, who were looking up to Macbeth as he spoke, were all directed to one-by-one turn to look at what had scared their King so much. I then had Andrew stammer as he delivered the next line 'Be large in mirth. Anon we'll drink a measure the table round' (Shakespeare, 2010.

p.121), walking quickly down to the murderer, patting one of his soldiers on the back in a feeble attempt to hide his fear and appear jovial.

When Macbeth reaches the Murderer all false appearances drop and he roughly grabs him, furiously spitting the line 'There's blood upon thy face' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121) as all his soldiers, and his wife look on. This is an aggressive and violent act, something that may well have been tolerated in the court of a king, but as well as being a king Macbeth is also a soldier. A disciplined man does not behave this way; when 'swayed by passion, [...] grief [...] and pain' a well-disciplined man does 'not merely [restrain] it [...] but [prevents] it from rising altogether.' (Allen, no date) But Macbeth is no longer a disciplined man and cannot contain himself when told the news that Banquo's son, Fleance, 'is scaped' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.123) and that his ambush has not had its desired result. When he hears this news he goes into a rage, 'Then comes my fit again' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.123), he roughly grabs the murderer, and starts shouting and pacing madly, seemingly having no care as to who sees him act this way, or who hears what he has to say. The audience can see Macbeth stripped of all self-control, to see him truly have the 'relentless imperviousness to any notion that he has to prove himself.', and be emboldened by the idea that 'he is worthy.' (Kite, 2013).

Macbeth, who as a modern soldier, would have had discipline drilled into him at the earliest stages of his career, and who maintained his discipline even when those around him and those in charge had relaxed theirs, is no longer the man he was. His carefully maintained discipline has been eroded away; he has learned what all leaders do, when you're in charge it becomes easy to bend the rules to suit you - 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' (Dalberg-Acton, 1887)

## Conclusion

Stripped of his courage and discipline, Macbeth becomes something less than he was before, still a man but lacking the masculine traits that he prided himself on. He shows bravery in later scenes; he becomes comfortable with the horrific vision of Banquo (in our production, there is no question that Banquo is a 'psychologically fabricated apparition' (Diana, 1992. p. 24) created in Macbeth's mind, and appears in scenes where he is not scripted to appear, in a twisted way becoming Macbeth's last, albeit imaginary, friend) and when faced with the certainty of his impending defeat, he once again dresses as a soldier, the first time since the banquet scene, facing death with discipline and courage like a good soldier. However this is not the same courage that his soldiers lauded, and it is not the same discipline that made him an effective (albeit brutal) leader. Stripped of his hyper-masculinity, Macbeth cannot hold firm to his beliefs. In our



production, when Young Siward meets him during the battle, he faces defeat with the same discipline and bravery that he displayed in the battles before the play begins, but when given the opportunity he cruelly beats the young soldier to avoid his death, and when informed that Macduff is not 'born of woman' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.199) he transforms from being arrogantly bored with the fight to being a crying, whimpering shadow of his former self, screaming that he will 'not fight' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.223) him.

Lady Macbeth's assertion that to be king would make him 'so much more the man' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.61) has proven wildly inaccurate, the masculine traits that he was so proud of only served to hasten his downfall.

## Chapter Two: 'I am in blood stepped in so far'

An examination of violence and violent acts in the military, the justification of violence and their applications to *Macbeth*

### Introduction

'Soldiers kill. It goes with the job.' (Evans, 2011) Committing acts of violence and being a soldier seem inextricably linked. It is not the sole purpose of a soldier, but it is something that they must at least comprehend, because it's a sorry truth of active service in the military - 'if they cannot [...] kill to avoid their own death and that of their comrades, they are a detriment to the safety of others.' (Nadelson, 2005. p.43) But who draws the line between premeditated or random acts of violence and lawful, state sanctioned violence? Who decides which act of violence is acceptable and which is not? Is there a scale? Can some people get away with things that other people can't? People serving in the military seem to exist in a grey area in regard to the public's opinion of them – they are given the utmost respect by a large percentage of the population even though they may be called upon to commit acts of violence that the public would vilify a non-service person for doing. People seem to want to either ignore the violent side of being a soldier or dramatize it for their own enjoyment, displaying the 'morbid curiosity of those wanting to be entertained' (Lommasson, No Year). They make these soldiers into saints or action movie stars. Never just normal people.

This way of viewing soldiers is why it is so jarring when soldiers commit acts of incredible brutality that is not lawful or state-sanctioned. The brutal rape and murder of 14-year old Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi was committed by a group of young American soldiers, and 26 year old hotel receptionist Baha Mousa was detained and tortured for 36 hours before dying, all while in the 'heart of a British military base' (Williams, 2013) – these violent acts were especially shocking because the violence was committed by a soldier/soldiers, people we hold in our highest esteems as heroes, even though part of their job description is to commit violence. These acts of violence were outside of what we can ignore or glorify, so force us to see these soldiers as human beings.

In the same way that soldiers and violence are linked, it is difficult to look at or discuss *Macbeth* without examining the violence committed in the play, and the consequences of that violence. Violence seems to permeate the whole play. It is not the most bloody of Shakespeare's plays (the tragedy with the highest death count is *Titus Andronicus*) but the violence in *Macbeth* seeps through to the soul of the play, so even though it doesn't

have the highest death count you cannot escape the violence contained, acts of violence or discussions of violence (usually glorifying it) are constant throughout the whole of the play.

Violence is defined as 'behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill.' (Oxford Dictionary, 2005. p.1968)

Within the first two scenes of the play: the Witches have discussed the ongoing 'hurly burly' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.19), the Wounded Sergeant has described the 'broil' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21) to Duncan in great detail and Macbeth has been given the title Thane of Cawdor for his 'valiant' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.23) deeds. In just two scenes we have seen the aftermath of violence and the rewards that it can bring, but the violence mentioned in these two scenes is merely a 'happy prologue' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) to the beginning of a very bloody play.

I didn't want to focus on the violence exhibited in the play alone, but also the ramifications of violence. I wanted to explore, through Macbeth, the disgust and shock that must be felt by the people who staunchly support those serving in the military, when they hear about horrific, violent acts committed by soldiers. In my attempt to do this I brought the violence in the play to front and centre stage –the murders committed on stage were gratuitously violent, the witches pulled apart corpses with their bare hands and the aftermath of violence – bruises and gore – were always shown as realistically as possible. I wanted the audience to see the horror of violence committed by/for someone who is supposed to be a hero and the effects that kind of violence has on the world of the play, to try and create in them the complicit guilt of supporting someone who turns out to be a monster.

## Hero Worship

Macbeth enters the play as a war hero. He is highly praised for his skill on the battlefield, and is rewarded for his brave deeds in the war with the title Thane of Cawdor. Before the audience physically see Macbeth on stage, they first get to know him through the descriptions of various characters, the people he fought with/for talk about Macbeth the soldier and the Witches discuss Macbeth like a great upcoming force of nature. Based on these descriptions, an accurate picture of Macbeth has not been painted for the audience. Instead he is made out to be a man who looms larger than life – both Duncan and the wounded Sergeant praise him highly, describing his actions as 'valiant' and 'brave' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21-23) and a battle he fought in is compared to being as memorable as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (the Wounded Sergeant describes Macbeth

as seeming to 'memorize another Golgotha' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.55) – Golgotha being the 'site of the crucifixion of Jesus' (Oxford Dictionary, 2005. p.744)). This over-emphatic style of praising soldiers is still seen today in the representations of soldiers in the media – the 'almost religious veneration' (Astore, 2010) of soldiers, especially in the United States, paints a picture of them being these saint-like action heroes that can do no wrong, which makes it all the more crushing when they are revealed to be men and women with real, sometimes violent, flaws.

Throughout the play I wanted to deconstruct the notion of Macbeth being a hero, and to instead show him as a man with flaws and demons, and just like in real life cases of soldiers committing atrocious acts of violence, I wanted to show Macbeth fall from the pedestal that he was put on.

To do this I needed to first look at the instances of violence committed by Macbeth directly in the play – acts of violence that can be seen in the text and acts of violence that were added into my direction of the play.

Though there is quite a lot of violence and a high body count in Macbeth, there are only two scripted instances in the play where Macbeth himself 'does the deed' on stage. The first time we see Macbeth – this great warrior – actually do any fighting is the murder of Young Siward. The script itself does not give much indication as to what happens during the fight, it simply reads 'Fight, and Young Siward is slain.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.217) This lack of description meant that I had free reign over the details of the fight. In my production, set in modern day Scotland on an army base, sword fighting was not an option, not only because it would be jarring for a modern soldier to suddenly be sword fighting, but also because I wanted the fight to be more up-close and personal. I wanted to use the violence in this scene to make the audience feel an implicit sense of guilt as they watched the young soldier 'protest[ing] [his] first of manhood' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.195) go up against a man that has already been established as an incredibly gifted warrior, and is seemingly impervious to harm from anyone 'born of woman.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.217)

Macbeth is the character through whose eyes the audience see the story, they are very personally pulled along his journey into murder and madness, 'sympathetically connected to [the] protagonist.' (Cain, 2008) I wanted to use this inherent closeness to create this sense of losing a hero in the audience. To do this I needed to make his murder of Young Siward be as reprehensible as possible, really stripping the audience of any residual support for the character. Before Macbeth entered the play he was already established, to the audience, as a fearsome and violent warrior, they know he can do serious damage to another human just through the text. When fighting 'merciless

Macdonwald', Macbeth 'unseamed him from the nave to the chaps' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.21), splitting him open from his stomach to his jaw. The audience have also had a preview to Macbeth's bloodthirsty ways in Act 2 when he kills the king. We do not see Duncan's demise, and instead are left to decide for ourselves how this 'peerless' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.45) soldier brutally murdered the king

Shakespeare could have confronted us with the vicious deed, as he depicts the blinding of Gloucester, for example, and the deaths of Julius Caesar, Polonius, and Desdemona. With Macbeth, we must make the murder happen in our imaginations. Visualizing murder in the mind's eye makes us give our own colour and movement to the action we know that Macbeth performs. What he does, assumes a shape we design for it. (Cain, 2008)

Though the murder occurs off-stage, I didn't want the audience to have carte blanche in their decision on how Macbeth killed the king. Though Shakespeare seems to have written this scene in a way that gives the audience 'space to create [their] own' (Rose, 2014) disturbing murder scenes, I didn't want anyone in the theatre to think that Macbeth gently smothered the King before stabbing him or painlessly slit his throat while he slept. To do this I used two contrasting sounds. The first started just as Macbeth left the stage, a member of the band started singing a slow, acapella song about the changing of the seasons. As the song continued the audience began to hear another sound. Now it depended on where you sat in the theatre how well you could hear the murder happen – for some it was an undercurrent to the music, and for others it was almost as if it was happening on their laps. But no matter where you sat, under the music you could still very clearly hear the murder – Duncan's initial panicked screams quickly turning into agonising moans, and Macbeth grunting in an animalistic, sexual manner.

To create a realistic image in the audience's head, and give Andrew a consistent image to work with, we discussed the psychological process that Macbeth goes through every time he commits a murder, and the manner in which he preferred to kill. I wanted to discuss the psychology behind the murders as well as the method he used to commit them, so that the performance remained realistic in the audience's minds while staying true to the character Shakespeare created, and my vision for him. I couldn't have him be a cold, calculated serial killer that could ruthlessly and efficiently dispatch his victims without a second thought because that wouldn't be staying true to the script. Macbeth is a man tortured by his violent deeds, he describes his mind as being 'full of scorpions' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.113) – painting a beautifully violent image of what it must feel like in his mind, being constantly reminded of the guilt brought about by your misdeeds over and over like being stung by a scorpion – and he sees visions of the dead,

manifestations of his guilt that haunt his waking hours. Macbeth would not be such an interesting character if it wasn't for his doubt and guilt.

I also didn't want Macbeth to be an animal, someone that has no control over his actions and therefore cannot be held truly accountable. Macbeth is not some dog with a temper, he plans efficiently, he has moments of doubt and moments of weakness, and these are not the actions of a berserk warrior that can quickly switch between Jekyll and Hyde to suit his purposes.

To create a realistic Macbeth, a soldier that can commit unspeakable deeds to promote and further his own desires, I looked to another soldier that found himself committing atrocities and justifying it to himself, just like Macbeth does throughout the play.

Korvettenkapitän Peter Strasser was a German 'gunnery specialist' in World War I, flying zeppelins over Great Britain in his belief that the 'airship' was a certain way to 'victoriously [end] the war' (Strasser, 2007. p.79). Helping to pioneer the zeppelin as a war machine, Strasser was responsible for countless civilian casualties during the war. In a letter to his mother, Strasser was able to rationalise his actions as being for the good of his country

We who strike the enemy where his heart beats have been slandered as 'baby killers' and 'murderers of women.' What we do is...but necessary. Very necessary. Nowadays there is no such animal as a non-combatant. Modern warfare is total warfare. My men are brave...their cause is holy...If what we do is frightful, then may frightfulness be Germany's salvation' (Strasser, 2007. p.79)

Strasser rationalised his actions and the actions of his men by justifying it as an act of war, and was able to continue performing his duty for his country because of this. I wanted to reflect some of Strasser's fierce resolve to do whatever it takes to the character of Macbeth.

Strasser was able to see women and children as combatants by explaining to himself that there are no 'non-combatant[s]' in 'total war' (Strasser, 2007. p.79), Macbeth too is able to make incredible justifications about his actions. So when directing the scene I had Andrew pause after the bell rings (a prearranged signal that Lady Macbeth had successfully drugged Duncan's stewards and that the last soldier had retired for the night like he was instructed to do 'Get thee to bed' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.67)) listening to it in its entirety before continuing with his monologue, slowly beginning to walk forward into Duncan's chamber as he said the line 'I go, and it is done; the bell invites me' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) less fearful and frantic as he was in the previous sections of the monologue, having flipped the switch that made his grim task unavoidable.

The murder of Duncan and the mind frame necessary for Macbeth to commit murder was something that I continually referenced when directing the fight scene between Macbeth and Young Siward. I cast Gareth, the same actor who played Duncan, to play Young Siward to help create a circular feel to the whole play. Just as Duncan's death was unavoidable once Macbeth set himself to the grim task, Young Siward's death is also inescapable. While Macbeth makes no reference to Young Siward looking like Duncan, I imagine the audience noticed the similarities between the two and for those who didn't know the story, maybe they imagined a fitting form of revenge would be for Duncan to avenge his own death in a way. But that is not the way the story goes.

Young Siward enters and is visibly afraid. Macbeth has a surprising air of calm around him for someone who is facing defeat. His short speech before Young Siward's entrance was performed while he finally dressed himself for war, after spending the previous half of the act in a dressing gown and his underwear, ready to face whatever comes for him. I directed Andrew to play Macbeth in this scene as someone who is ready for his final battle, the impending war having cleared his mind a little. Macbeth in this scene is almost eager to have the crown taken away, feeling at the same time cursed and secured by his seeming invincibility. Gareth was directed to view the battle in almost the exact opposite way – he is not ready for his first battle, and a justifiable rage clouds his vision.

YOUNG SIWARD: What is thy name?

MACBETH: Thou'lt be afraid to hear it

YOUNG SIWARD: No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name than any is in hell

MACBETH: My name's Macbeth

YOUNG SIWARD: The devil himself could not pronounce a title more hateful to mine ear

MACBETH: No, nor more fearful

YOUNG SIWARD: Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword I'll prove the lie thou speak'st (Shakespeare, 1967, p.217)

During this scene, I directed Andrew to sit staring forward, not taking heed of Young Siward when he first enters, barely acknowledging him when he first speaks. I instructed Gareth to react aggressively to this, keeping with his description as of one of the 'unrough youths [...] [protesting] their first of manhood' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.195) quickly shouting 'no' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.217) when Macbeth claims he will be afraid to hear his name.

This is the first scripted act of violence Macbeth has committed on stage and it needed to really have an impact. Throughout their dialogue Young Siward makes his way closer and closer to Macbeth, stepping in front of him on his final line and holding his gun against his head. Macbeth, in a moment of calm simply closes his eyes and accepts his fate, but fate is on Macbeth's side, and as Young Siward is presumably of woman born, he cannot kill Macbeth, and his gun does not fire. This manifestation of fate protecting Macbeth is something that I added into the production to make this act of violence all the more brutal – in conflict with any other man, Young Siward would have emerged victorious. The worried young man fires the gun a few more times, confused as to why his gun is not working. The young man on his first real mission, pretending not to be scared as he faces a fearsome warrior, was the perfect way to turn the audience against Macbeth properly. The audience can tell Young Siward is scared: it's in the quiver of his voice, in the way he tries to rebuff Macbeth's answers and in him having to bring up his second hand to support his shaking gun hand. The audience witness first hand this brutal murder and any hope of redemption for the hero they have been 'sympathetically connected to' (Cain, 2008) throughout the play has been erased.

But of course, for that to be true the murder itself had to be brutal.

Once Macbeth realises that he cannot escape his fate, he decides to fight back. He grabs Young Siward's gun hand and uses it to leisurely pull himself to his feet. The two men share a brief look, and I instructed Andrew to wait a second before proceeding, giving time for the switch in Macbeth's head to release. This slight pause also served to increase the tension in the audience, they have heard of Macbeth's violent acts, they have heard him murder a King, and they have seen him be physically aggressive with his men and his wife, but none of those things are quite the same as seeing him commit murder in front of you.

Though the fight is brutal, the majority of it is over quickly. Macbeth punches Young Siward in the stomach, doubling the boy over and allowing him to casually take a step back, and throw the young man to the floor. Macbeth then uses Young Siward's hair to drag him onto the black platform that served as the one constant piece of set, climbs on top of him and begins to choke him. I instructed Andrew to once again make the same low, grunting noises that he made in Act 2 Scene 1, as he choked the life out of Young Siward. I chose strangulation as Macbeth's preferred method of executing someone because 'Strangling is a very intimate way of killing somebody' (Van Zandt, 2011), and I wanted that intimacy to transfer to creating an uncomfortable feeling in the audience. Strangulation is not as detached as shooting someone, or as gruesome as stabbing – it's up-close, personal and a little sexual in nature.



To make the murder as realistic as possible, I researched into the ways a trained combatant like Young Siward might try to get out of a choking situation.

Defensive tactics instructor Dave Young gives this advice for how to resist when you are being choked

[Push] your fingers into [their] eyes [...]

Break anything within reach. [...]

[Stick a] hard object into the [...] eyes or throat area. (2007)

And it was this advice that I used to make the murder more realistic. Young Siward first goes for the vulnerable spots in Macbeth's body: his eyes and his throat. With one hand attempting to pull Macbeth's hands from his neck, I instructed Gareth to use the other to attempt to gouge Macbeth's eyes, and when that failed to reach for his throat instead. When that didn't work, I instructed Gareth to then try to damage Macbeth in another way, striking him on his upper arms and hands in an attempt to dislodge the grip on his neck, slowly growing weaker. The final act of a dying young man was to be one last attempt to free himself, reaching for Macbeth's throat but only being able to gently push on it before slipping into unconsciousness. All this took place in around 30 seconds (a little longer than the average of 8-14 seconds (Koiwai , No date)), but my aim was to have that 30 seconds feel infinitely longer for the audience as they watch the hero they have followed through the play brutally murder a boy.

This was the image I wanted the audience to have in their minds as they watched Macbeth's confrontation with Macduff. The image of a frighteningly violent man who after murdering a young boy jokingly chides him for picking a fight he cannot win 'Thou wast born of woman But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn, Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.217) not the man who was courageous in the face of defeat, and not the man who they heard so highly praised before he stepped onto the stage. With him no longer on a pedestal, they can see his true character as he goes into his final confrontation.

## Justification

Paul Jennings Hill 'tried to be the model Christian' (Sawyer, 1994). He 'got up every morning at 4 a.m. for [...] Bible study alone for two or three hours', 'he got along well with non-Christians' and 'everybody liked him'. (Leonard in Sawyer, 1994) He had a rocky start to life, but he truly believed in the teachings of the bible and had 'no tolerance for [grey]' (Leonard in Sawyer, 1994) going so far as to scold a friend for

'[going] over the speed limit, because if I disobeyed authority, it was un-Christian' (Leonard in Sawyer, 1994). He was not a moderate man but he was considered by many a good man. He wrote of God's 'unspeakable zeal for His own glory and honour' in his biography *Mix My Blood with the Blood of the Unborn* (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination) and on July 29th 1994 he himself presumably filled with his own unspeakable zeal for God's glory traded 'what [he] called the "weapon of the spirit" [for a] black pump-action shotgun' (Sawyer, 1994). Outside of an abortion clinic in Pensacola, Florida Jennings Hill fired multiple times at Dr. John Bayard Britton and his escort James Herman Barrett after they passed them in their truck. Both men were killed, the fire from the shotgun having 'caught both men in the head.' (Sawyer, 1994) Afterwards Jennings Hill calmly laid his weapon on the ground and waited for the police to come and arrest him. As he was led away by the authorities he spoke to the crowd that had gathered 'One thing's for sure, no innocent people will be killed in that clinic today.' (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination)

Jennings Hill targeted Dr. Britton because he was a doctor who, as part of his duties, performed abortions. Jennings Hill believed that he was doing God's work, and saving countless innocent lives. In his biography, published four years after his death, he recalled motivating himself in the moments before the killing by reminding himself

If I did not intervene and prevent the abortionist from entering the clinic, he would kill two or three dozen children that day. The second, and more prominent thought, was that if I did not succeed in killing the abortionist, but merely wounded him, he would, in all probability, return to killing the unborn as soon as he was able. In the coming months and years, he would likely kill thousands of unborn children, under the security of the best police protection available. I was determined to prevent this. (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination)

Jennings Hill is still praised this day by some members of the anti-abortion movement, and reading reviews of his biography, one gets the feeling that Jennings Hill succeeded in becoming a martyr for his cause (in summary from the prosecution after his execution, it is said that Jennings Hill told reporters that he hoped 'his death would make him a "martyr" in the anti-abortion movement' (Office of the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney, 2003)). The anti-abortion movement is often known under the moniker 'pro-life', which makes it strange that they would support a man described by President Clinton as a 'domestic terroris[t].' (Clinton, 1995. p.1339) They were able to support him because they, and many fundamental Christians who supported Jennings Hill and protested his execution, believed that he was doing God's work – that the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is a mistranslation and it should instead read "You shall not murder." (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination), and that 'it is not

enough to refrain from committing murder; innocent people must also be protected' (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination) which gives them, they believe, the right to fight for the life of an unborn child by taking the life of another. Jennings Hill said in his biography

Those who favor abortion need to fear, and what those who oppose abortion need to promote, is a God-given zeal for protecting the unborn. The immoral passion that drives the pro-abortion movement-to indulge their lusts and abort the unborn-must be overcome by an even greater and godly passion for defending these children (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination)

He believed he was morally justified in killing these two men because he was a tool for God's 'zeal'. A year before he shot and killed James Barrett and Dr. Britton, Jennings Hill phoned a talk show to praise the murder of Dr. David Gunn who was killed by Michael Griffin for performing abortions, and later appeared on the show and in front of the murdered man's son compared the action to 'killing a Nazi concentration camp "doctor."' (Jennings Hill & Leake, 2007. No pagination). He expanded on this point in his biography

Others object that killing Dr. Britton was excessive. But many [...] would not object if they learned that, during the Jewish holocaust, someone had shot and killed a Nazi concentration camp "doctor." Suppose, for instance, someone had shot and killed the notorious Dr. Joseph Mengele who practiced at Auschwitz. Wouldn't this have been warranted, under the circumstances, to prevent him from continuing his torturous and murderous experiments? (Jennings and Leake, 2007. No pagination)

It was this justification of his own actions, casting himself as a conduit for God's justice and being able to believe this until the very end (Jennings Hill's last words were 'The last thing I want to say: If you believe abortion is a lethal force, you should oppose the force and do what you have to do to stop it. May God help you to protect the unborn as you would want to be protected' (Office of the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney, 2003) that helped to shape my ideas around directing Macbeth.

Macbeth holds the ambition that many people have had throughout history. It is the same ambition that has propelled the human race forward, the belief that you are/can be great. Wanting to be bigger. Wanting to be better. One of the biggest moments in history, man landing on the moon, was part of the United States 'competition with the U.S.S.R. for technological dominance.' (History.com Staff, 2010) Negative aspects of history can too be traced back to humanity's 'vaulting ambition' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.59) – the belief that one religion was superior to another has caused wars throughout the whole of history, and one of the motivations of Nazi Germany was that some people

were naturally better than others. Macbeth has that vain ambition; the ambition that sent a man to the moon and sent thousands to concentration camps.

In his speech in Act 3 Macbeth claims that he can challenge fate itself 'come fate into the list' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103), and after hearing prophecies from the Witches believes that he is invulnerable, claiming 'I cannot taint with fear' and that 'the mind I sway by and the heart I bear shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.199) It was this boasting, especially when compared to his reluctance to act in Act 1 and 2, that correlated to my research into Jennings Hill. When he hears the Witches prophecies in Act 1 Scene 3 they terrify him, freezing him to the spot ('he seems rapt withal' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31)) and this is because he is still convinced of natural order, the written and unwritten laws that rule the world, and that him acting against them is not only morally wrong

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself(Shakespeare, 2010. p.57)

but that there is a higher power that will punish him for his actions

Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep" [...] "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more." (Shakespeare, 2010. p.75)

But as the play progresses he loses his fear of a powerful being punishing him for his actions, and it is replaced by a swaggering confidence in what the Witches have told him. The Macbeth that was scared to act on his desires is dead, and in his place a man who can do whatever he likes, knowing he is justified in his actions, even actions that he would have condemned previously – this does not just include the acts he is likely to consider acts of ruling (the murder of Banquo because he was the one person who could stand in his way, and his attempted destruction of the whole Macduff line seem justifiable to a man like Macbeth) but includes actions that cannot be justified or rationalised as him acting as a military leader like domestic violence (in my production, Lady Macbeth reveals in her madness large bruises on her arms and back) and the slaughter of his own people ('Skirr the country round. Hang those that talk of fear.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201) Macbeth's way of viewing his status in the world has shifted, he is now the king, meaning that any action he commits are justified.

Justifying your own actions is something that everyone does, but when you have done something morally reprehensible it becomes increasingly difficult for other people to accept the justification. People who hold racist views for instance may be able to justify it with personal experiences or statistics they find; when users at Debate.org were asked 'Is racism ever justified?' 56% of respondents believed that racism can be justified (No date), citing such reasons as crime statistics, psychology and historical evidence – and these people seem happy with their justifications. But what about when someone takes it too far? When white supremacist Dylan Roof 'massacred nine people inside a historic African-American church' (Foster & Sanchez, 2015) he had similar reasons to the users of Debate.org: he believed that African-Americans were criminals 'you rape our women and are you're taking over our country' (Foster & Sanchez, 2015), that they were psychologically inferior 'n\*\*\*ers are stupid and violent' and that history had lied to us about the persecution of African-Americans 'Segregation was not a bad thing. It was a defensive measure.' (O'Connor, 2015)

The thoughts of someone who holds views society as a whole frowns upon and the deeds of a homeland terrorist can sometimes only be separated by action.

There are a few distinct similarities between Macbeth, Paul Jennings Hill and Dylan Roof. They were all men who saw a future that would be enriched by a terrible deed and they all acted upon their desire to reach their goals. But whereas Paul Jennings Hill's vision of his actions helping humanity 'to decide whether to join the battle on the side of those defending abortionists, or the side of those defending the unborn' and Dylan Roof's desire to 'to start a race war' (Payne & Sanchez, 2016) were not realised, Macbeth's dream of being 'king hereafter' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.31) became a reality.

But once he has it, once he seizes power and claims it for his own, can anything he does be compared to people like Roof and Jennings Hill? When he takes the crown, he becomes king, a comparative to a modern-day world leader, and world leaders are not usually held to the same standards as ordinary people. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao. These are all world leaders who had a vision of a better future, and acted on those visions with seeming disregard for who got in their way. While their crimes are on a completely different level to the crimes of Roof and Jennings Hill, that was not because those two had less ambition, it was because they did not have the means to achieve their goals. Both Roof and Jennings Hill spoke about their goals going further than what they as a single person could attain. With the character of Macbeth you get to see the transition from single person with an idea to a person with the power to do as they please. Though history looks on the likes of Hitler and Mussolini and can see their acts for how deplorable they were, at the time those leaders had no need to justify their actions because they had no one to answer to.

I wanted to bring that into my production of Macbeth, the switch from Macbeth being a man afraid of his own ambition to a man who doesn't even attempt to justify his acts.

In Act 1 Scene 3, when Macbeth hears his first confirmation that the Witches' prophecies may be coming true, his mind immediately jumps to thoughts of murder. In an aside he states 'my thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is but what is not.'

(Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) After briefly considering if any information gained from the Witches can be good or evil, he immediately thinks of murder. Lady Macbeth is often named as the instigator in the plan to kill the king, and it is true that she pressures Macbeth when he falters, but one of his first thoughts is how the thought of murder is strange to him. A person may hear the prophecy that he is to be king and think he should bide his time, but for both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth the next logical step is murder. In directing this scene, I had Macbeth step away from his comrades, and pace around, seemingly lost in thought. I directed Andrew to legitimately try to get lost in his thoughts so when he begins to think the news he has heard through 'Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill, Why hath it given me earnest of success, Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) he gets a little excited, putting a celebratory emphasis on the line 'I am thane of Cawdor' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) and at first accepting that the prophecy is good for him. As he continued through the next line, 'If good, why do I yield to that suggestion Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, Against the use of nature?', his mood deflates – he remembers Banquo's warning that 'oftentimes, to win us to our harm, The instruments of darkness tell us truths, [...] to betray's In deepest consequence.'

(Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) and he knows that the Witches do not have his best interests in heart.

Knowing this, Macbeth declares 'If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, Without my stir.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.37) deciding to wait and see what happens.

Compare this Macbeth, willing to accept the timeline fate has for him, and the Macbeth who is bullied by his wife into committing himself to regicide (in my production even more so than what is simply in the text: when he claims it would take someone inhuman to go through with it 'I dare do all that may become a man; Who dares do more is none.'

(Shakespeare, 2010. p.59) she slaps him hard across the face before going into her speech) to the Macbeth that appears in later scenes, and he is almost unrecognisable.

He has been consumed by power, and not necessarily corrupted by it but instead corrupted by the idea of losing it, of having someone come and usurp him like he usurped Duncan 'It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it' (Suu Kyi in Aris, 2010) He has Banquo killed, orders the massacre of

Macduff's entire castle and commands his soldiers to murder his people if they speak of fear with determination, he is not simply doing it for himself but for his cause (which happens to be his lineage). He is now able to justify anything he wants.

I wanted the difference between Macbeth the soldier, to whom the thought of murder is alien, and Macbeth the king, who is willing to do anything, to be extremely evident to the audience. During the Banquet scene Macbeth arrogantly brings up Banquo, acting surprised that Banquo is not there and stating that he hopes he has to 'challenge [him] for unkindness Than pity [him] for mischance.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.125) – meaning here that he hopes he has to tell Banquo off for being rude and not turning up instead of hearing that something bad has happened to him on the journey there. I directed Andrew to try and make this statement as warm as possible, putting warmth into his voice, pretending that he cares for Banquo's safety. This joking about Banquo's absence seems almost sociopathic, and it almost comes back to bite him when he is reminded of his violent ways upon spotting the apparition of Banquo sitting at his dinner table. Macbeth is naturally scared of the vision, the apparition in our production was incredibly gruesome with a bleeding wound where his eye was, but once it leaves the table, he calms down and though he has just made quite a scene in front of all his men, he goes back to talking about Banquo, almost daring the ghost to appear again. He leads the table in a toast 'I drink to the general joy o' th' whole table, And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss; Would he were here!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.129) laying particular emphasis on how much he misses his 'friend' Banquo.

The man who quaked at the idea of murder is now able to laugh as his friend lies dead in a ditch somewhere with 'twenty trenched gashes on his head.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.123)

But can kings be held to the same standards as ordinary men? In only the second scene Duncan orders the execution of the thane of Cawdor 'Go, pronounce his present death.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.25) The prophecy Macbeth heard from the Witches foretold that his crown would not be passed to any of his line, and that Banquo's heirs would be kings. With Banquo being the only other person to hear the Witches' prophecies, Macbeth would know that if he grew suspicious he would surely act on it – he describes Banquo as being brave, but not foolhardy 'tis much he dares; And, to that dauntless temper of his mind, He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor To act in safety' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.103), and an enemy who knows your secrets and is able to act quickly and in a rational, fearless way is a dangerous enemy to have. Why wouldn't Macbeth, not a man renowned for his decision making skills, assume that Banquo would attempt to take the crown from him by force, just as he took the crown? And plotting to steal the crown is treason. If the king believed someone was guilty of treason, ordering

his execution is completely legal. The same with Young Siward, who is part of an invading force sent to kill the king. Killing him in single combat is justified too.

I wanted every action Macbeth took, every step on his path to self-destruction, to be justifiable in his head. It didn't matter if the act was morally reprehensible, or a foolish decision, I wanted all of Macbeth's decisions to be justified in his own mind. The certainty with which I wanted Andrew to act when making decisions as Macbeth, was the same certainty that I directed Gareth to act whilst he played Duncan, and Joe to act as he played Malcolm in the final scene. The three actors, all playing kings at different points in the play, were all given very different ideas on how to play their characters: Andrew was directed to gradually present Macbeth's madness, Joe Biltcliffe, the actor who played Malcolm, was directed to show the fear being thrust into a position of decision making has on a person who hasn't had to do that before (in my production, while his father was alive, Malcolm was a little simpering and ineffective). But it was the direction that I gave to Gareth, to be '[impervious] to any notion that he has to prove himself' and be secure in the knowledge 'he is worthy' (Kite, 2013) that became both actors motivation. I have discussed previously how Macbeth slowly picked up on Duncan's traits, and I directed Joe to do the same thing when portraying Malcolm in the final scene.

Though I tried to show Malcolm's gradual growth throughout the play from Prince to King, in the final scene I gave Joe the same direction I had previously given Andrew and Gareth. He speaks to his men with confidence, commands attention and, most importantly, dismisses the two Murderers. The two murderers are dragged in and forced to kneel in front of Malcolm, and when he says the line 'Producing forth the cruel ministers Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.227), referencing the Murderers, he stands before them in judgement. Then, as he continues with his speech, he waves a hand and dismisses them. In my production I told my cast there was no uncertainty that the two Murderers were sent to be executed.

I wanted one of Malcolm's first acts of being King to be ordering the execution of the Murderers, because one of the first things we see Duncan do is order the execution of Cawdor, and Macbeth orders the execution of Banquo in his first scene as King. I wanted Malcolm's first act as King to create parallels in the audience's minds to Duncan and Macbeth's style of ruling. Because as each one was King, each one was a law unto themselves. Duncan ordered the execution of Cawdor because he was a traitor. Macbeth ordered the execution of Banquo because he was a threat. Malcolm ordered the execution of the Murderers because they were the remnants of Macbeth's time in power. They were all justifiable to themselves because they all believed their rule to be righteous. And they didn't need to justify their actions to anyone but themselves.



## Conclusion

'Violence breeds violence.' (Kennedy 1968) The violence in Macbeth cannot be ignored. The war with Norway was bloody, Cawdor's betrayal made it into a civil war and with the Thane of Cawdor's execution, Duncan unwittingly started a chain of events that led to his own death, as well as the deaths of several others. Men, women and children were all caught up in a maelstrom of chaos and bloodshed which only ended with the death of the 'butcher and his fiend-like queen.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.227) Macbeth's renown for violence was something that brought him respect and honour, something that made him a hero. If the play was set during the war, and ended with the execution of Cawdor and the noble Macbeth taking his place, he would be known for his bravery and heroism. Instead the cycle of violence and the pressure of destiny made a great soldier into a terrible king. The audience get to watch this happen, get to experience Macbeth transitioning from hero to madman. They get to follow him down the dark path his actions take him on and experience for themselves the horror he brings upon himself and his country.

I wanted the audience to attempt to step into his shoes, to wonder whether they, in the same circumstance, would have made the same decisions. To question the nature of leadership, and the danger of placing anyone on a pedestal.

## Chapter Three: 'O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!'

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, substance abuse and issues with reintegration faced by veterans and their application to *Macbeth*

### Introduction

*Macbeth* is a play about soldiers. Six of the characters with speaking roles: Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff, Siward, Young Siward and the Wounded Sergeant, are all known to be soldiers. I took this further in my production of *Macbeth*, Duncan was a decorated military general, Lennox and Ross were soldiers in his army and a large amount of the remaining characters were combined together into three amalgam characters: Menteith (made up of Menteith, the Old Man and a Scots Doctor), Caithness (made up of Caithness, the Wounded Captain and the Gentlewoman) and Angus (made up of Angus, the Porter and a Messenger) who were all soldiers as well. All these soldiers (except the King) wore identical military costume, meaning they were easily identifiable among the other characters. This was especially pertinent as I wanted it to be obvious to the audience that the majority of interactions in the play had at least one soldier in them. I did this to try and mimic the intense nature of Soldier Culture.

I wanted the military presence in the play to be so immediate, that it felt truly difficult to avoid it. This was because of the intense, sometimes claustrophobic nature of life in the modern military that I wanted to portray as accurately as I could with a play that was written over 400 years ago. The reason I wanted to have the military presence in the play be unavoidable is because when you join the army, it becomes your life, 'your squad is your family; your platoon, your extended family.' (Burge, 2012. no pagination) There is no way to avoid it. And that is not always a positive thing.

Military service has been hypothesized to increase tendencies for violence through several mechanisms, including removal from familiar social environments, indoctrination into masculine military culture, familiarization with weapons, the experience of extreme stress, and exposure to and participation in violent combat. (Paull, Siminski & Ville, 2013. p.3)

This idea is expanded on by Gary Barker in his article *Violence Does Not Come Naturally To Men And Boys* where he explains more ways in which institutions like the military encourage violence, especially in men (in the U.K. female soldiers are a relatively new

thing, and as of 2008 only '9.4% of [the British Army]' (Bone, 2008) are women, so my research into Soldier Culture is focussed on male soldiers). Barker explains that to create the perfect soldiers, capable of extreme violence, there are steps you need to take

...[rupture] basic human connections; [...] systematic cruelty and brutality; [...] intense indoctrination; [...] rupturing relationships or having family members or peers who encourage killing rather than discourage it; [and] "othering" of the "enemy." (2015)

Barker later remarks that it 'takes months if not years' to '[teach] and [socialise] men to kill', and while institutions like the military have become efficient at it, they are 'horrible at helping them recover from it' (2015)

It was these articles, and others like them, that led to my explorations into the dangers of this type of violent indoctrination and the after effects it can have on a person's psyche. While I wanted to show the positive side to life in the military through the comradery of the soldiers, Macbeth is not a play that casts soldiers in a positive light, so I felt I also needed to show the inner demons that face the modern military.

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

'Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. [...] [including] military combat (NHS, No date) with approximately '20 per cent of all military personnel [being] affected by these [PTSD] at some point.' (Merz, 2014) This incredibly debilitating disorder, a large factor in the staggering suicide rates among veterans ('more U.S. soldiers have killed themselves than have died in the Afghan war' (Gibbs & Thompson, 2012)), is one of the facets of the real world that I wanted to bring to my production of Macbeth, exploring a negative aspect of the military's 'indoctrination into masculine military culture' (Paull, Siminski & Ville, 2013. p.3)

Men are often characterized as unwilling to ask for help when they experience problems in living [...] A large body of empirical research supports the popular belief that men are reluctant to seek help from health professionals (Addis & Mahalik, 2003)

Indoctrinated into masculine ways of thinking, with part of traditional masculine thinking being that you are 'unwilling to ask for help' (Addis & Mahalik, 2003), it is no surprise that veterans are often unwilling to seek help when confronted with this illness 'the

majority of patients opt for no treatment [...] If they do see somebody (who diagnoses the condition,) they feel they want to tough it out on their own.' (Highberger, 2008)

I wanted to explore this scenario in my production of Macbeth: what happens when people who are experiencing PTSD slip through the cracks? I wanted to convey that Macbeth has witnessed, and done terrible things and that it has left a mark on his psyche. I didn't want my Macbeth to be a good man who turns bad, I wanted him to be someone who had serious, undiagnosed mental problems, holding himself together to the best of his ability, with the cracks in his psyche becoming more and more apparent after the murder of Duncan.

In order to properly examine the portrayal of mental illness in a directed production of Macbeth, I first wanted to explore what PTSD is, its symptoms and where its origins lie.

'I can't forget it [...] God knows I've tried' (Watson, 2013. p.253) Going to war is not something you can ever forget, even if you want to. The after affects of going to war on a person's psyche is something that we still know very little about. For a great stretch of mankind's history there was no explanation for the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); war simply broke people. During wars before the advent of modern psychological research, when they had no name for the mental effects war can have on a person, it was instead treated as a weakness in character. Some doctors at the time believed 'servicemen who broke down on the battlefield and failed to return to duty after a short period of recuperation showed a lack of resolve.' (Jones, 2014) Even when doctors started believing that war could have some effect on people, they believed 'that combat was secondary to personality in terms of causation. War [...] served as a trigger to underlying vulnerability. Robust individuals with no family history of mental illness were expected to recover from the trauma of battle relatively quickly with no lasting ill effects.' (Jones, 2014)

However, the lack of name didn't stop the suffering. PTSD, which has documented roots in 'Railway spine', a condition of experiencing symptoms of pain even after all physical injuries had healed after being 'exposed to [...] terrifying train crash[es].' (Jones, 2014) became a much more prominent issue when the 'Great War' came to Europe, bringing with it unspeakable acts of violence, horrifying fighting conditions and 'no prospect of an early end to the conflict.' (Jones, 2014) It was during this that soldiers began suffering from what they described as 'shell shock' the feeling of being 'worn down by the emotional demands of trench warfare' (Jones, 2014) as they existed under constant shellfire.

'By the early 1950s it was recognized that all soldiers have a breaking point, however well trained and motivated' (Jones, 2014), it was not the fault of the soldier's mental strength or their family history of mental wellbeing, but the direct result of war. Before the First World War and the advent of psychological research it is not known how many soldiers returned from war still reeling from the damage to their brains. But the more current the war, the more information we have about the veterans and the effects that the wars they fought in had on their psyche. Data from the U.S Department of Veteran Affairs says that '15 out of every 100 Vietnam Veterans (or 15%) were [...] diagnosed with PTSD at the time of the most recent study in the late 1980s [and] it is estimated that about 30 out of every 100 (or 30%) of Vietnam Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime.' (No date). The treatment of PTSD in the veterans of more current wars has improved 'today veterans who bear the psychological scars of combat are treated with greater understanding and respect' but the 'mental scars of battle are deep; there is no quick fix for them, and sufferers may need expensive, specialised care for decades' (Gregg, 2015) and unfortunately a lot of soldiers still go untreated.

The specific symptoms of PTSD can vary widely between individuals

[...]Re-experiencing is the most typical symptom of PTSD. This is when a person involuntarily and vividly re-lives the traumatic event in the form of: flashbacks nightmares repetitive and distressing images or sensations physical sensations – such as pain, sweating, nausea or trembling [...] Some people attempt to deal with their feelings by trying not to feel anything at all. This is known as emotional numbing. This can lead to the person becoming isolated and withdrawn, and they may also give up pursuing activities they used to enjoy. [...] Someone with PTSD may be very anxious and find it difficult to relax. They may be constantly aware of threats and easily startled. This state of mind is known as hyperarousal. Hyperarousal often leads to: irritability angry outbursts sleeping problems (insomnia) difficulty concentrating [...] [self] destructive behaviour (NHS, No date)

Alongside these symptoms, alcohol dependency and alcohol related medical issues are also damaging symptoms of the illness

Another report published last week showed record levels of alcohol abuse within the armed forces, with more than 1,600 service personnel requiring medical treatment for alcohol-related problems in the past year. Along with recurring nightmares, insomnia, mood swings and relationship difficulties, heavy drinking can be a symptom of PTSD, with sufferers [...] turning to alcohol to try to block out their original trauma. (Merz, 2014)

To create a realistic portrayal of PTSD, I first identified sections of the play that corroborated the symptoms of PTSD, not a medical definition of the symptoms but instead a compilation of descriptions of what it is like living with PTSD, from people suffering from the disease. I used these first hand descriptions, compiled by Michele Rosenthal (Author and PTSD recovery coach), because I felt the accurately portrayed what it is like living with PTSD, not just the symptoms a doctor can notice. While looking for the symptoms I didn't simply stick with Macbeth, but also looked at Lady Macbeth. While she was spared from fighting in the war, Lady Macbeth's mental decline following the death of Duncan also shows symptoms of what we would now call PTSD.

One symptom that I noticed in the play was the person being 'stuck in the moment of horror, unable to move past it. The feeling [of] being trapped in a nightmare, unable to wake up.' (Rosenthal, 2014) This of course draws parallels with Act 5 Scene 1, the sleepwalking scene, where the once strong Lady Macbeth, now a shadow of her former self, is trapped in her nightmares, simply reacting to whichever madness comes to her with 'no rational connection in the sequence of images and ideas' she flits between 'The sight of blood on her hand, the sound of the clock striking the hour for Duncan's murder, the hesitation of her husband before that hour came, the vision of the old man in his blood, the idea of the murdered wife of Macduff, the sight of the hand again, Macbeth's 'flaws and starts' at the sight of Banquo's ghost, the smell on her hand, the washing of hands after Duncan's murder again, her husband's fear of the buried Banquo, the sound of the knocking at the gate' (Bradley, 1905. p.398) lost in her delusions, unable to wake herself.

Another symptom that echoes with Macbeth is 'Unbearable emotional pain [...] terrifying rages.' (Rosenthal, 2014) Macbeth, now resigned to madness is so overwhelmed with the deeds he has committed claims he has 'supp'd full with horrors' and that 'Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts, Cannot once start me' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.209), the weight of what he has done has made him numb to all sensation. But he proves himself a liar when he is confronted with the wood of Birnam approaching the castle, just as the Witches warned him, and he rages at the messenger of the grim news 'Liar and slave!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.211), in my production rushing towards the messenger and tackling him to the floor, choking him for his presumed offence.

Other symptoms and their parallels in the text include 'extreme startle reflex' ('Who's there? What, ho!' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.71)), 'recurring nightmares' ('Sleep in the affliction of these terrible dreams that shake us nightly' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.111-113)) and 'disturbed sleep patterns' ('You lack the season of all natures, sleep.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.133)) (Rosenthal, 2014) all giving at least a little credit to the idea that both Macbeth and his wife were suffering from PTSD.

But to accurately portray PTSD through my production of Macbeth I couldn't just use the examples I could interpret from the text. Though the symptoms of Macbeth's descent into madness can be found in the text and seem to establish that Macbeth and possibly Lady Macbeth may have been suffering from a form of PTSD, PTSD was not a condition known to Shakespeare, or not in the way we now know it, so any allusions are simply theory. To portray PTSD in my production as accurately as I could, I had to examine real life cases of PTSD and its symptoms and bring them to the front and centre of the play.

In doing this I needed to first show that the disease isn't something that is necessarily easy to spot. It is a surreptitious disease, and symptoms are not always easily discernible, they can sometimes take 'months or even years [...] to appear' (NHS, No date), so I wanted to show Macbeth descend slowly into this illness. I also wanted to make sure that through my interpretation no one assumed PTSD was the sole reason Macbeth became a tyrant. I wanted his mental state to be a factor in his actions; just like the Witches' prophecies, Lady Macbeth's persuasion and his own lofty ambitions.

To achieve this I couldn't have the first time the audience see any sign of mental trouble in Macbeth to be the murder of Duncan. I wanted to show that he could be a dangerous man to friend or foe before that. To do this, in my direction of Act 1 Scene 3, I had Andrew become increasingly aggressive as he delivered his speech to the Witches as they prepare to leave. As they ignore his requests for more information, only giggling and whispering to each other, Macbeth becomes more insistent, beginning to raise his voice on the line 'Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence?' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.33), his voice becoming louder and his phrasing more erratic, reaching a crescendo with him shouting the line 'Speak, I charge you.' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.33). As he shouts this line, he pulls his gun and aims it at the Witches, who use the magic of their 'pilot's thumb' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.29) ('Old English superstitions [assigned][...] power to the thumbs [...] they were deemed valuable in incantations' (Anon,1837. p.456)) to freeze time and 'disappear'.

The three Witches in my production of Macbeth are not ugly, wizened hags, but instead are three schoolgirls; which in my opinion changes Macbeth's reaction to them. Pulling a gun on anyone might be considered a sign of a weakened mind, but pulling it on three young girls in their school uniforms takes it to a new level of mental degradation, and shows Macbeth as being a man almost at the edge before he truly starts to believe in their prophecies. To show the horrid nature of him pulling the gun on them, I had the actor playing Banquo (which after an unfortunate bout of chicken pox, was myself) reach across and grab the arm of Macbeth, trying to turn him away from the Witches. Banquo is frozen along with Macbeth, and as the Witches leave the stage and time starts once more, continues his movement as if nothing has happened, keeping a hold of Macbeth's

arm. As Macbeth starts to speak, Banquo keeps holding his arm, staring intently at Macbeth's face, not allowing him access to his gun, worried about what he'll do. Their reactions to the Witches are very different, Macbeth looks around in wonder at the fact they disappeared, Banquo keeps his eyes on Macbeth, more shocked that his friend would be willing to threaten or even kill children. It is only once Macbeth has calmed down that Banquo releases his arm and acknowledges the magical exit the Witches undertook.

This sudden, violent snap was a facet of my research into PTSD and the long-lasting changes it can have on people, using the example of Cpl Jimmy Johnson. Jimmy Johnson was a model soldier in the Royal Tank Regiment 'where he demonstrated the leadership qualities that led to his promotion to corporal and tank commander.' (James, 2010) Cpl Johnson is also currently serving his second life sentence in prison for murder. Jimmy served two tours of Ireland, and after witnessing atrocities left the army and fell into a depression. While on a drive with a friend one day, there was a bang on the side of the van as a group of nearby children 'either kicked [a ball] [...] or [threw a brick]' (James, 2010) against the van; whatever the sound was it 'triggered a horrific reaction' (James, 2010) that ended with Jimmy beating his friend to death with a piece of scaffolding and not remembering a thing. Eighteen months after being released for the first murder, Jimmy murdered again. The only thing Jimmy could remember was 'hiding under a stairwell' (James, 2010). But before he hid under the stairs 'he had picked up a lump hammer and beaten the man he was working for to death' (James, 2010). Jimmy was clearly suffering from a mental illness, and just like Macbeth, he snapped.

The idea of the bang on the side of the van triggering a psychotic episode in Jimmy was another aspect of PTSD I wanted to bring to my Macbeth, a trigger. PTSD expert Dr Claudia Herbert describes triggers in a discussion about Johnson

They are running around with a body full of stored memories and, because these have not been processed, they can be triggered by what otherwise seem like normal everyday events. A sudden noise or movement may trigger an extreme reaction over which they have no mental control. It is a survival mechanism.

Such people who have been trained to kill are dangerous, perhaps not per se, but their bodies have been trained to be killing machines (2010)

As part of their plan to murder the king, Lady Macbeth rings a bell when everyone in the castle is asleep, signalling Macbeth to go into the king's room and murder him. While a bell is not a loud, jarring noise (a bang on the side of a van could sound like a gunshot) I wanted the sound of the bell ringing to trigger something in Macbeth, which pushes him past the point of any return. This bell, a trigger, transforms Macbeth from nervous and



rambling to grimly resolved. 'I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.69) As he walked towards Duncan's chamber, I asked Andrew to lower his voice, so it was almost monotone, no longer playing a man with doubts and concerns, now just a shell of a man. A dangerous man. A man who may not be entirely culpable for his actions, because he is not always in control, and he is in a situation where violence is an answer to many of his problems. While serving in Ireland, one Johnson's men was attacked by a rioter; Johnson pursued the man and when he had caught him began 'smashing him with the baton gun [...] regardless of the blood that was gushing from his head and oblivious to his screams' (James, 2010). Johnson continued until he was restrained by his men, telling him that the man had had enough and stopping him from killing the rioter, the same men who later 'made light of the damage his out-of-control violence inflicted on the rioter' (James, 2010). This is an example of the 'systematic cruelty and brutality' and the 'peers who encourage killing rather than discourage it' Barker (2015) mentioned in his instructions to create a soldier.

Without treatment PTSD can cause extremely violent, erratic behaviour, and that was something I wanted to bring to Macbeth. As well as Cpl Johnson's recollections, I also took this symptom from Victor Gregg's account of returning home from the Second World War, and becoming violent and having no recollection of it

I began to do things over which I had no control. [A] chap made a remark about [my wife] [...] in a flash the man was being dragged across the table, [...] and there I was, being hauled off the lad whose face was now covered in blood. I dimly remember that the whole pub had gone silent, then someone said: "Don'tcha know, 'e's just been demobbed. One of them paratroopers. Bonkers if yer ask me." (Gregg, 2015)

Gregg goes on to explain the stigma that existed surrounding suffering from mental health issues, especially when those mental issues result in violent behaviour; the same stigma that still persists to this day

I wasn't a thug — I needed psychological help [...] A lot of us returning soldiers had mental problems but were dismissed as "nutcases" or "off their rockers" [...] I am sure that there were thousands of men like me who [...] were dealing with the same battle-induced trauma which today is recognised as the illness [PTSD]. When I was demobbed, people didn't talk about what was going on in their minds. It just was not the done thing; you straightened your shoulders and got on with life. The men who did try to raise the subject were treated with scorn: "What yer moaning about? [...] Pull yourself together." Perhaps worse was: "My old man was in the war and 'e never behaves like that." (Gregg, 2015)

One of the symptoms of PTSD that I found particularly interesting was its interference with sleep. Two of the symptoms of PTSD are 'Difficulty falling or staying asleep' and 'Nightmares (either of the event or other frightening things)' (Robinson, Segal & Smith. No date), which nicely coincide with two themes that run through Macbeth, sleep/lack of sleep and nightmares. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are shown to be suffering due to their lack of sleep, Macbeth remarks that they both 'sleep in the affliction of these terrible dreams that shake us nightly' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.111-113) showing that even when they manage to sleep, they are woken by horrible nightmares. Studies show that '80 percent of those with PTSD experience nightmares' (Jain, 2014), and this was something that I wanted to show with both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. For Lady Macbeth this was more obvious, as nightmares and trouble sleeping are explicitly in the text for her; the whole of Act 5 Scene 1 shows how troubled her mind is. Lady Macbeth walks about the castle nightly, holding a torch 'She has light by her continually; 'tis her command' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.189), ironically now scared of darkness after urging 'thick night' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.49) to come to her. Macbeth's trouble with sleep was less text based so I wanted this to be portrayed by the actor, as to not lose the connection to sleep. To achieve this I first discussed with the actor playing Macbeth some symptoms of a lack of sleep such as being 'irritable' (Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School, 2008) and a 'negative mood' (Gordon, 2013) both of which we agreed were present in Macbeth as a character, both in the text and in our portrayal of him. Macbeth's violent mood swings become more frequent, and more erratic as the play progresses, something I used to show his irritability (he frequently switches between being angry with someone to being their friend again), and to make it more clear that he is suffering with a lack of sleep, in my production the once proud man spends the majority of the final act in his underwear and a dressing gown, attempting to show the audience the extreme fatigue that he must be feeling.

## Substance Abuse & Reintegration

PTSD is a debilitating condition, and with stigma surrounding mental illness (especially in masculine industries like the military - 'evidence of stigma [around mental health] in the military is overwhelming' (Department of Defense, 2007)) dissuading soldiers from seeking help (or even knowing that they need help), these men and women have to find a way to cope with the heavy weight of this illness. 'Many individuals with PTSD use alcohol [...] to cope with emotional arousal and decrease the disturbing impact of traumatic memories' (Marvasti, 2012. p.120)

Substance abuse (especially the abuse of alcohol, which is 'readily available' (Marvasti, 2012. p.118) on modern war fronts) is so rampant that 'Seventy-five percent of combat veterans with lifetime PTSD [also face] the problem of alcohol abuse.' (Kulka et al, 1990) There are many theories as to why 'among male combat veterans [...] exhibiting PTSD, alcohol abuse or dependence is the most common co-occurring disorder' (Marvasti, 2012. p.120) but a prominent theory is the Self Medication Theory, 'the self-medication theory states that people with PTSD use substances as a way of reducing distress tied to particular PTSD symptoms.' (Knowsley, 2011) The veterans and servicemen/women do this as an alternative to seeking help, allowing them to avoid the stigma of seeking help for mental health issues, hoping that the alcohol will 'decrease anxiety' as 'for years people have used alcohol to alleviate or numb trauma and its comorbidities' (Marvasti, 2012. pp.118-120)

'Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure the table round.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.121) Macbeth shouts to his men, before rushing to confront the Murderer for arriving at the banquet with Banquo's blood on his face. The text for Macbeth mentions alcohol frequently: Lady Macbeth asks 'Was the hope drunk Wherein you dress'd yourself?' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.59), Macduff wakes the castle after a heavy night of 'carousing' and discusses with the Porter the downfalls of alcohol (Shakespeare, 2010. p.81) and while she waits for her husband to kill the King, Lady Macbeth admits that she has been drinking to make herself 'bold.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.71) Just like with the instances of PTSD being found in the text whilst looking at it through a modern lens, these multiple references to drinking seem to show that alcohol was used much in the same way in 11th century Scotland as it is today.

With 'three quarters of surviving soldiers who suffered [...] violent trauma in war [...] reported to have [a] drinking problem' (Marvasti, 2012. p.121) I felt I needed to increase the amounts of times the characters drank throughout the play, especially instances involving Macbeth who is, with his self-reflective monologues, the lens through which the audience see into the world of mental instability.

At first I toyed with the idea of having Macbeth drinking throughout the play, sipping from a hip flask throughout the opening scenes to really hammer home the idea of people with PTSD using alcohol as a coping method. But I felt the text didn't lend itself to that enough that I could justify adding it to my production, because throughout the first two acts Macbeth has a different coping method; his loved ones. In Acts 1 and 2 Macbeth leans on his wife and his good friend Banquo for strength, calling his wife his 'my dearest partner of greatness' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.47) and wanting to discuss weighty matters with his friend, presumably grateful for his sage advice 'The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak Our free hearts each to other' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.39)

and 'Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve, We would spend it in some words upon that business.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.67) Compare this to Macbeth in Act 3. He sees an enemy in his friend 'Banquo was your enemy[...] So is he mine' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.107) and has him killed, and pushes his wife away, preferring to 'keep alone' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.111) and thinking that she should keep 'innocent of the knowledge' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.115) of his deeds.

This self-isolation is common among veterans suffering from PTSD, 'veterans may isolate themselves because they view themselves as toxic' (Marvasti, 2012), and that was something I wanted Macbeth to do to himself before he started drinking. In act 5 Scenes 3 and 5 Macbeth gives commands over a staff of just two (in my production the only people who stay with him are the two Murderers, who are stuck on the sinking ship of Macbeth's reign, and all Macbeth's servants lines are split between them), charging around the stage in just a dressing gown and his underwear, drinking from a bottle of wine to dull his nerves. I wanted to show just how isolated Macbeth is, so during his speech in Act 5 Scene 3 I had Macbeth sitting alone with a bottle of wine

I have lived long enough: my way of life

Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf;

And that which should accompany old age,

As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

I must not look to have; but, in their stead,

Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201)

In this speech, alone, I had Macbeth realise he had come too far, and that everything he had fought so hard to achieve is nothing but an empty crown. I directed Andrew to really take his time with this speech, mourning the loss of his life, paying particular attention to the words 'honour', 'love', 'obedience' and 'troops of friends'. I asked Andrew with each word to think of something Macbeth has given away for his crown: he lost his honour when he killed Duncan while he was a guest in his house, he lost his love when he pushed Lady Macbeth away, preferring to be alone, he lost the obedience he was owed when he let his men see him for what he was, turning them to the English side, and he lost his friend when his paranoia turned him against Banquo. This moment of reflection is interrupted when one of the Murderers enters, speaking in a soft, patronising way, like you would to a child, to the mad King. Macbeth drunkenly boasts that he will 'fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd' and demands that the Murderer

'Give me my armour.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201) The Murderer tries to placate him 'Tis not needed yet', but Macbeth insists he will 'put it on.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201) He then asks the second Murderer about his wife, to which she responded 'Not so sick, my lord, As she is troubled with thick coming fancies, That keep her from her rest.' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201) In the text this exchange is between Macbeth and a Doctor, but in my production Macbeth has lost the allegiance of all but these two cutthroats, so when he demands that the Murderer 'Cure her of that' (Shakespeare, 2010. p.201) it is an impossible task issued by a drunk man who doesn't really understand his situation or care about his wife. I directed Andrew in this scene to snap into being an aggressive drunk when the Murderers enter, snarling and not listening to their advice, further isolating himself from them. I wanted Macbeth's only method of self-medication to be something that isolated him further from the people around him, creating a self destructive cycle, totally isolated from everyone; 'drinking [as] an attempt to cope with PTSD' has destroyed all semblance of 'intimacy and friendship' (U.S. Department of Veterans affairs, No date)

'Coming home from war is difficult. Reintegration into civilian life, especially, is hard.' (O'Donnell, 2016)

Another aspect of the trauma of war that I wanted to show, was the reintegration issues in society that many soldiers feel when they return. Soldiers often find the 'transition back to your life at home can be difficult and stressful' (Real Warriors, No date) causing an 'inability to fit into their own families again' (Jones in Eidelson, 2013). This inability to reintegrate as well as the 'aggressive or violent' (Collins, No date) mood swings that are often associated with PTSD can cause 'problems [to] arise when military personnel leave the forces and try to fit back into normal life' (Herbert, 2010) which in some cases lead to instances of domestic violence. 'Male veterans with PTSD are two to three times more likely than veterans without PTSD to engage in intimate partner violence' (Bannerman, 2010), and I wanted to use this frightening statistic as a tool to create my Macbeth.

But the text doesn't support Macbeth being domineering towards his wife as soon as he arrives home, in fact the very opposite seems to occur. This however does fit in with the way that PTSD affects people (PTSD can take 'months or even years [...] to appear' (NHS, No date), it slowly takes over a person's brain and then their life. To fit in with the way that PTSD takes affect I had Macbeth's isolating and abusive behaviour towards Lady Macbeth be a gradual process, that takes place as the power dynamic shifts in their relationship; Macbeth starts the play reeling from the effects of war and becomes a tyrant, Lady Macbeth starts the play a powerful woman and ends up succumbing to madness. I wanted to show the power transition be one of the symptoms of the

Macbeth's strained mental state that eventually leads to him being violent towards his wife.

At the beginning of the play, Macbeth is in a weakened state, the war and its horrors have drained him of his bloodlust, and though he mentions the Witches' prophecy that he will be King to Lady Macbeth (maybe knowing the plan she will formulate) he has 'no spur to prick the sides of [his] intent' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.57) and wants to allow fate to run its course. It is Lady Macbeth who must reinvigorate his ardour for violence, calling his love for her ('from this time such I account thy love' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.59) and his manhood ('then you were a man' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.61) into question, eventually convincing him to continue with their plan to kill the King. In my direction of this scene, I have Lady Macbeth moving around Macbeth in an intimidating, almost predatory, manner, circling him and speaking to him in an extremely patronising tone, clearly showing to the audience where the power in the relationship lies. This scene is also the first instance of on-stage violence in the play; when Macbeth feels cornered by his wife's accusations he begins to get frustrated, yelling out at her 'prithee peace' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.59), almost begging her to stop on the following line 'I dare do all that may become a man; Who dares do more is none.' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.59). Feeling that she is losing the fight, Lady Macbeth simply strikes her husband across the face, the unexpected blow taking all the fight out of him as she continues to 'pour [her] spirits in [his] ear' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.47) showing that when necessary she could be violent too. One of Lady Macbeth's most famous lines shows her to be an equally bloodthirsty companion for her husband. When her husband's desire for blood seems to wane, she reminds him

LADY MACBETH : ...[I] know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me – I would while it was smiling in my face have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums and dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this (Shakespeare, 2010, p.61)

However after the death of Duncan, Macbeth no longer has any qualms about committing murder, the final piece of his moral code has died along with the King, leaving him an incredibly violent and unpredictable man, and leaving Lady Macbeth as a shadow of her former self. In Act 3 Scene 2 Lady Macbeth is shown to no longer be the 'dearest partner of greatness' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.47) she was in Act 1, instead he keeps away from her ('Why do you keep alone' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.111) and no longer shares his plans with her

LADY MACBETH: What's to be done?

MACBETH: Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck (Shakespeare, 2010, p.113-115).

Lady Macbeth is completely cut off from her husband, the power they have gained taking away the man she loves and leaving her 'without content' and 'dwell[ing] in doubtful joy' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.111). To show this isolation I started the scene with Lady Macbeth being followed by one of her husband's soldiers, becoming frustrated at constantly having someone following her, instructing Isobel Crossley, the actress playing the soldier, to follow as close to her as she could, acting like she fears straying too far from Lady Macbeth after presumably being told to stay by the Queen's side. I decided on having the soldier do this after looking at how people under dictators like Kim Jong Il react to orders, taking them literally, as 'Any manifestation of disloyalty or dissent is brutally punished' (Discovery News, 2011). As the soldier leaves to find Macbeth, Lady Macbeth is left alone, out from under the intense scrutiny of her husband's soldiers for the first time on stage since Duncan's death, and begins to obsessively scratch and wipe her arms. I directed Emma Busby, the actress playing Lady Macbeth, to mimic the hand-washing she later does in her sleep-walking scene whenever she is alone, or unobserved (ie. subtly at the banquet scene, under the table), to show the mental strain that she is under throughout the play.

When Macbeth enters, she stops rubbing her hands, attempting to speak softly to him but receiving only the cold shoulder as he walks past her. Throughout this scene she attempts to make a connection; touching his face and arm, speaking softly and kindly to him, the exact opposite of how she acted towards him in Act 1 Scene 7. In the same manner, the man who earlier in the play was aggressively bullied by his wife, is now the aggressor; pushing her, shouting at her and towering over her, attempting to use his size to intimidate her. Lady Macbeth attempts to remain strong during this confrontation, and I have directed Andrew to enjoy this stubbornness. To show his power over her he grabs her hard by the face and pulls her in, kissing her hard even as she pushes him away, stepping back and ignoring the fact she resisted, and extending his hand out to her on the line 'so, prithee go with me' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.115), and laughing and walking away when she refuses to take his hand, enjoying getting under her skin.

Later in the play as Lady Macbeth sleepwalks through the castle at night, obsessively washing her hands, writing messages on paper and switching between coldly repeating the taunts she said to her husband and crying over how far they have gone, she is observed by the Gentlewoman (in my version of the play, the Soldier who followed her in Act 3 Scene 2 watches her) and a Doctor. In this scene Lady Macbeth switches through various different emotions: laughing, crying and screaming with anger, and her mood is very erratic. At one point she looks back at her two observers and seductively starts to

take her robe off, in her mind performing some kind of striptease for her husband, exposing her back and shoulder to the horrified watchers, which are covered- in bruises and scratches. She is no longer his companion at all, but another one of the victims of Macbeth and his violent tendencies.

## Conclusion

PTSD is not a black and white illness. Not all people suffering with it become violent, or go mad. It is a complex psychological disorder that is different in every case. Some people recover with therapy and support, and others may never recover. While my production of Macbeth doesn't portray people suffering from PTSD in a positive light, these are people that have not been able to seek the help they needed. That's what I wanted to show, the aggressive nature of a disease that takes over your entire life, transforming who you are and sometimes making you do terrible things. I'm sure there is a story in itself of the rehabilitation of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, but Macbeth is not that story. All I could show, as much as I could with a story that's over four hundred years old, were the horrors modern warfare can have on a person's psyche; to fairly represent the stories of Jimmy Johnson and Victor Gregg, who both suffered with PTSD in different ways but never received the help they needed. Representing Macbeth as a man reeling from the horrors of war doesn't excuse his actions, but it might help us understand his actions, and it might help us understand the men and women who suffer with this disease.



## Conclusion

The number of serving and ex-forces personnel being awarded compensation for mental disorders has hit record levels, leading to fears that we are [seeing] the true cost of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in the form of the mental scars left on those who had to fight them. (Lusher, 2016)

We are now starting to see the debilitating effect that one of Britain's latest wars is having on the brave men and women that fought it, and we are still only seeing 'the tip of the iceberg.' (Lusher, 2016) An intensely masculine culture that discourages those suffering from the aftereffects of traumatic and/or violent situations to seek help, means that these people 'traumatised by their experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq' (Lusher, 2016) are not able to get the help they desperately need and deserve.

Suffering from the "hidden wounds" of mental trauma' (Lusher, 2016) these people are discharged and unless they seek the help, do not find recompense and support readily available (unlike those with visible injuries, the men and women [suffering from] mental trauma are being left to struggle against an Armed Forces Compensation Scheme determined to give them as little as possible.' (Lusher, 2016)

Through my research, I hoped to explore the issues that face the military today: the toxic affect that hyper-masculinity can have on a person, the real price of violence and the damaging effect that war can have on your brain. These are issues that are discussed in academic circles: there are countless studies researching into the damaging effects these three things (and a combination of the three) of are having on people, but I wanted to explore it through performance as these people, using my research and a play that is over four hundred years old to examine an issue that has been a problem for as long as there have been wars ('ancient cultures were well versed in [PTSD.])' (O'Donnell, 2016)

Theatre is a medium that can transcend time, with some pieces being equally as relevant in the present day as when they were written. Shakespeare especially is used to create discussions on modern issues: the backstabbing politics of *Julius Caesar* was transported to a prison block in Phyllida Lloyd's all-female production (2012) that '[tapped] into the anti-authoritarian instinct that runs through the play' (Billington, 2012) or the oppressive weight of jealousy in *Othello* transported to a modern-day barracks in George Rodosthenous' production (2011) (retitled *Othello Rising*.) And with my research into *Macbeth*, I wanted to do that – bring an issue as damaging as PTSD to the forefront of the performance, using my research to guide the production.

The research I undertook for this project has dramatically changed the way I view the process of directing, and has given me a greater variety of tools to use in my

performance making. It too has given me a greater appreciation for the men and women who serve our country, regardless of politics or reasoning, the terrifying effects that war can have on a person are something we still do not understand, and in my attempt to understand them I hope I brought about a greater understanding to a sensitive issue: if in no one else, then in myself.

Ancient cultures understood something fundamental about returning soldiers and PTSD and mobilised the rituals of their cultures to support their transition and heal their traumatic ruptures. A similar effort is needed to support armed forces personnel today. The beginning of a military career is characterised by ritual. Daily patterns, drills, uniforms, and passing out parades mark out the first few months of life in the armed forces. But coming home after war is a different story. A ritualised homecoming [...] might help to promote the healing of PTSD. (O'Donnell, 2016)

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