STAGING SEXUAL DIFFERENCE: THE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S LADY MACBETH IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND AND GERMANY

Sonja Fielitz
University of Marburg

Introduction

This essay traces a topic that seems not to have found much scholarly interest yet. It deals with one of the most prominent, but also one of the most enigmatic and much discussed[1] female characters of world literature, i.e., Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, and traces its fortunes on British and German stages in a period of time that was particularly interesting with regard to changing concepts of sexual difference.

As the history of criticism and the stage history of *Macbeth* teach us, the reception of the character of Lady Macbeth has undergone major changes through the centuries. So far critics have attributed these changes mostly to different views of the notions of tragedy and to various interpretations of the play and its prevailing themes. Different representations of Macbeth and his Lady on the stage have been attributed mainly to changing artistic concepts and the art of directors, actors and actresses. What has hitherto been left largely unexplored is to relate these changing concepts on the stage to fundamental changes in concepts of sexual difference in the respective societies.

Constructions of gender

It is well known that gender roles are not given by nature. They are cultural constructs, defined by human beings, and they are objects of change over the periods of history. In the Early Modern Period the absolute measure of man (in the sense of mankind) was man (that is, a male person), as only he was seen as a fully developed human being. Women were seen as deficient male beings or 'lesser men'. All biological, physiological and psychological attributes of the female were seen as deficient realisations of the male: women's sexual organs were considered as not fully developed male ones turned inside. The character of women was defined by a deficient quality of humors: women lack the humours generating male vitality, i.e., blood and heat; instead they have too much phlegm causing passivity and indulgence. Female mildness is caused by a lack of male courage, female adaptability and flexibility by a lack of male readiness. Thomas Laqueur has named this construct the one-sex-model.

As this one-sex-model did not establish clear oppositions between the characteristics of manliness and femininity, and femininity was seen as at any rate heading for the ideal of manliness, rare exceptions were possible: under favourable conditions some women could achieve full manliness. In this case one spoke of the "heroic woman", or "virago", characterised by bodily and mental strength, steadfastness, audacitiy and other typical "male" attitudes. That this ideal could be realised, was proved by Queen Elizabeth I, an exceptional woman who acted in a "male" position of power.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the one-sex-model

The women in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are allotted clear and limited gender roles. Lady Macduff plays an entirely maternal and domestic role, which she lives out in a traditional portrait of a mother caring for her child. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, refuses this alloted role. Lady Macbeth, who wants to outdo her husband in readiness for

blood, certainly is based on the one-sex-model,[2] and she is depicted as supernaturally evil throughout the play. When she soliloquizes: "Yet do I fear thy [my husband's] nature: / It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness / To catch the nearest way" (1.5.15-17) and resolves instead to align herself with the male principle, she summons infernal powers to "unsex" (1.5.40) her ("unsex" was a neologism, as stated in the OED). She implores them to strengthen her deficient female attitudes so much that she could develop into a (cruel) man. When she calls up the spirits to unsex her and take her milk for gall (1.5.47), and then vaunts her readiness to murder "the babe that milks me" (1.7.55), she is making an attempt to divest herself of her female nature and enter the male world that maintains itself by violence.[3] This becomes clear by "divert crueltie" (1.5.42) and "make thick my blood" (1.5.42) so that "the access and passage to remorse" (1.5.43) are stopped, a typical attitude associated with women. For her, manliness clearly excludes pity, compassion, remorse and nurturing ("I have given suck..."; 1.7.54sqq).

Behind these two images of women (Lady Macduff and Lady Macbeth) a strict mapping of gender roles can be detected: a woman has no business pushing herself into the public realm and no business seeing to outdo her husband in fearlessness, boldness and readiness for blood. In the world of *Macbeth*, such a woman is an abomination.

The two-sex-model

In the late seventeeth and eighteenth centuries the concept of the one-sex-model changed. Due to Enlightenment and Descartes' philosophy, a duality of body and mind was established, two seperate categories of body and mind established. Now man and woman were regarded as equal in terms of their intellectual powers. Women were granted the same mental faculties as men, so that reason now could also be claimed by women. With regard to men's and women's bodies and social identities, however, sexual differences were still present. But in the course of the eighteenth century, this construct was to change again. Due to the new scientific interest in anatomy and physiology

and the change from thinking in analogies to thinking in dualisms and oppositions, man and woman were no longer seen as two bodily variants of one (male) ideal, but as two ontologically different beings. Sexual differences then also denoted different ways of feeling and behaviour. The anatomically and physiologically based two-sex-model asserted itself as the normative model of gender.

This polarisation of the sexes was a European phenomenon, but with national variants. Thus it will be my concern here to trace the character of Lady Macbeth on English and German stages in the second half of the eighteenth century, the very period in which this fundamental new orientation in gender-construction took place.[4]

Choice of texts

In order to relate the different interpretations of Lady Macbeth on the stage to this changing concept of sexual difference, it is necessary to study a variety of texts, i.e., not only editions, translations and stage adaptations, but also the criticism of the time as well as different concepts of the role played by the actresses, and the reactions of the theatre critics to these varying theatre concepts. The latter, in particular, reveal whether a new concept on stage was accepted or turned down at least in these parts of society that read Shakespeare and attended the theatres. Our field of research is more complicated in Germany than in England, where we have to deal mainly with Garrick's widely accepted adaptation of 1744. In the German-speaking countries we have to look at a number of different translations and highly different stage adaptations based on these translations before we can assess the concept of the actress playing Lady Macbeth.

The basic questions we have to put to all these texts are as follows: how is the relation between husband and wife defined? What is the function of Lady Macbeth in the play? Is she only the demonic seductress of her husband, possessed by fiendish spirits and closely allied to the witches? Is she just mad, and are the various forms of death she meets in the translations and adaptations a just punishment for her meddling

with the spirits? Or does she act from private motives? Does she act out of ambition or love? Is she portrayed as a woman who suffers, and is she allowed a tragic dimension that arouses compassion in the audience?

Lady Macbeth on the British stage

In eithteenth-century England the parts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were most prominently acted by David Garrick and Mrs Pritchard, and John Philip Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons. Their depictions certainly had influence on the continent: Garrick's version of *Macbeth* (1744) is to be found in Bell's edition of Shakespeare's plays (1773), and it is highly probable that the title page of *Macbeth* in this edition inspired Gottfried August Bürger for his translation of the witches' parts (1777) (see below).

David Garrick and Mrs Pritchard

Since Garrick aimed at expelling Davenant's operatic version of 1665 from the stage and at presenting the text of *Macbeth* as faithfully as possible, he consulted two of the most prominent scholars of the time, Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson, the latter of whom merely detested the character of Lady Macbeth. His possibly academic verdict seems to have been transferred to the stage, when Lady Macbeth was given the role of the scapegoat in Garrick's production. Garrick played Macbeth as an honourable murderer who was urged on to his deeds by his wife. He and Mrs Pritchard achieved a balance of contrasts, as her approach helped Garrick to bring out Macbeth's honesty and vivid imagination. According to Campbell, Mrs Pritchard's features, "it is generally allowed, were rather expressive than pleasing; nay, to judge by her picture in Mathew's collection, they were coarse and ugly" (138). With regard to Lady Macbeth's soliloquy "unsex me here" (1.5.40sqq) we are told that Mrs Pritchard before and after the murder of Duncan presented the image of a mind "insensible to compunction and

inflexibly bent to cruelty" (Bartholomeusz 49). Mrs Pritchard's Lady Macbeth of 1744 was still Shakespeare's "fiend-like queen" (5.11.35).

Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble

Sarah Siddons was the most famous of all English Lady Macbeths. She acted the part from 1785 to 1817, more than 30 years, so that it is highly probable that her interpretations were also popular on the continent. She impersonated the part in a completely different way from Mrs Pritchard. In the case of Sarah Siddons, we fortunately have a statement by the actress herself: In her *Memoranda* Mrs Siddons left us the following "Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth":

> In this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature, in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty. You will probably not agree with me as to the character of that beauty. Yet, perhaps, this difference of opinion will be entirely attributable to the difficulty of your imagination disengaging itself from that idea of the person of her representative which you have been accustomed to contemplate. According to my notion it is of that character which I believe is generally allowed to be most captivating to the other sex—fair, feminine, nay, perhaps even fragile—[...]
> Such a combination only, respectable in energy and strength of mind, and captivating in feminine loveliness, could have composed a charm of such potency as to fascinate the mind of the hero so dauntless, a character so amiable, so honourable, as Macbeth, to seduce him to brave all the dangers of the present and all the terrors of the future world; and we are constrained, ever whilst we rather abhor his crimes, to pity the infatuated victim of such a thraldom. (qtd. in Campbell 11, 14)

These remarks make it clear that Sarah Siddons did indeed see a feminine nature and a feminine side to her Lady Macbeth. With regard to Lady Macbeth's words "I have given suck", Siddons says in her "Remarks":

> Even here, horrific as she is, she shews herself made by ambition, but not by nature, a perfectly savage creature. The very use of such a tender allusion in the midst of her dreadful languages, persuades one unequivocally that she has really felt the maternal yearnings of a mother towards her babe, and that she consider-ed this action the most enormous that ever required the strength of human nerves for its perpetration. Her language to Macbeth is the most potently eloquent that guilt could use. It is only in soliloquy that she invokes the powers of hell to unsex her. To her husband she avows, and the naturalness of her language makes us believe her, that she had felt the instinct of filial as well as of maternal love. But she makes her very virtues the means of a taunt to her lord:—"You have the milk of human kindness in your heart", she says (in substance) to him, "but ambition, which is my ruling passion, would be also yours if you had the courage. With a hankering desire to suppress, if you could, all your weaknesses of sympathy, you are too cowardly [sic] to will the deed, and can only dare to wish it. You speak of sympathies and feelings. I too have felt with a tenderness which your sex cannot know; but I am resolute in my ambition to trample on all that obstructs my way to a crown. Look to me, and be ashamed of your weakness". (qtd. in Campbell 18-19)

Moreover, this "feminine" interpretation of the actress was confirmed by a number of English and German critics. As Ernst Brandes reports in his *Bemerkungen über das Londoner, Pariser und Wiener Theater*:

> *Gerade diese Stärke und Veränderung des Ausdrucks, scheinen vorzüglich die heftigen, weiblichen Rollen, die*

> *Heldinnen, die starken Seelen, für den höchsten Gipfel ihrer Kunst zu bestimmen. [...] Die Übergänge von einer Leidenschaft zur anderen. Wuth in einem und Zärtlichkeit in einem anderen Augenblicke drückt sie nicht allein aufs vollkommenste aus, sondern sie weiß sogar alle diese Übergänge beim Zuschauer zu erregen. Ebenso vortrefflich ist sie in dem ungleich schwereren, in dem ganzen Ausdruck des Charakters, den sie sobald sie auf der Scene erscheint, darstellt, und den sie niemals in der Action, noch im stummen Spiele vergißt. Die Begeisterung des hohen Enthusiasmus, den Ausdruck des Augenblicks, wo die Seele den Gedan-ken oder den Entschluß einer großen und starken Tat auffängt, habe ich zuvor nie gesehen. Mit alle dem ist sie nichts weniger wie Virago, wie Mann-Weib. In der äußersten Wuth ist sie doch immer noch ihres Geschlechts. ... Die Siddons hat eine starke, reine, helle, durchdringende Stimme, ganz fürs Klagen und Trauren einer großen nicht schwachen Seele gemacht. Es ist der melancholische und doch starkschmetternde Ton der Nachtigall, fähig unser ganzes Nervensystem auf einmal zu durchdringen. Glauben Sie nicht, daß er deswegen ins Männliche fällt, wenn er gleich nicht empfindsam kläglich geziert tönt.* (159)

And the British critic Campbell also testifies to this "feminine" representation of Lady Macbeth:

> [...] the language of preceding critics was rather unmeasured when they described her [Lady Macbeth] as "thoroughly hateful, invariably savage, and purely demoniac". It is true, that the ungentlemanly epithet, fiend-like, is applied to her by Shakespeare himself, but then he puts it into the mouth of King Malcolm, who might naturally be incensed. Lady Macbeth is not thoroughly hateful, for she is not a virago, not an adultress, not impelled by revenge. On the contrary, she

> expresses no feeling of personal malignity towards any human being in the whole course of the part. (46)

All in all Mrs Siddons played Lady Macbeth as a woman who is possessed by ambition for her own and for her husband's future. Feeling her husband to be too weak, she allows the spirits to take possession of her. In doing so, however, she does violence to her female nature, as is most impressively shown in the banquet scene and in the sleep-walking scene. Of the former Campbell tells us: "Lady Macbeth tries to resume her wonted domination over her husband, yet, not withstanding all this self-control, her mind must even then be agonized by the complicated pangs of terror and remorse" (26). Of the latter Campbell comments:

> Please observe that he [Macbeth] has been continually pouring out his miseries to his wife. His heart has therefore been eased, from time to time, by unloading its weight of woe; while she, on the contrary, has perseveringly endured in silence the uttermost anguish of a wounded spirit. [...] her feminine nature, her delicate structure, it is too evident, are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crimes. Yet it will be granted that she gives proofs of a naturally higher toned mind than that of Macbeth. The different physical powers of the two sexes are finely delineated, in the different effects which their mutual crimes produce. Her frailer frame, and keener feelings, have now sunk under the struggle–his robust and less sensitive constitution has not only resisted it, but bears him on to deeper wickedness, and to experience the fatal fecundity of crime. (33)

Thus we can conclude that Sarah Siddon's Lady Macbeth of 1784 clearly attests to the realisation of the two-sex model on stage. This Lady Macbeth (to come back to the questions raised above) is no longer the demonic seductress of her husband, possessed by fiendish spirits and closely allied to the witches as Mrs Pritchard had acted her. This Lady

Macbeth is portrayed as a woman who suffers and is thus allowed a tragic dimension that arouses compassion in the audience.

Ellen Terry and Henry Irving

The two-sex-model was perfectly realised and fully developed by Ellen Terry acting opposite Henry Irving at the end of the nineteenth century (1888). Her depiction of Lady Macbeth is described as "domestic and practical. She was familiar, realistic and her conversation before the murder had a 'tetchy briskness'", as the critic of the *Liverpool Daily Post* (31st December 1888) tells us (qtd. in Bartholomeusz 200). "The great fact about Miss Terry`s Lady Macbeth, wrote a contemporary reviewer in the *Star* (31st December 1888), is her "*odeur de femme*". After reading Macbeth's letter she fell into a chair by the fireside, gazing fondly at his miniature while reflecting on his character. When he arrived, she rushed into his arms, "clinging, kissing, coaxing, flattering, and even her taunts, when his resolution begins to wane, are sugared with a loving smile" (qtd. in Williams 24sq). This clearly indicates how the Lady's steely (male) qualities are tempered with (female) tenderness. By 1888 the two-sex-model had certainly conquered the representation of Lady Macbeth on the British stage.

Lady Macbeth on the German stage
The textual and theatrical situation

Mrs Pritchard's and Sarah Siddon's achievements and their different interpretations of Lady Macbeth were fairly well known in Germany, mainly through Davies whose *Dramatic Miscellanies, consiting of critical observations on several plays of Shakespeare with a review of his principal characters and those of various eminent writers, as represented by Mr Garrick, and other celebrated comedians. With anecdotes of dramatic poets, actors etc.* (1786) soon came out in German translation, but also through the accounts of travelling theatre enthusiasts. It can be doubted, however, whether they influenced

German interpretations of the role either on the stage or in criticism, because the textual and theatrical situations of the two countries were quite different.

Mrs Pritchard and Sarah Siddons had based their interpretations on more or less the same text, i.e., Garrick's adaptation of 1744. In Germany, however, the textual situation was entirely different. Whereas in England Shakespeare was a celebrated dramatist who was well on the way to become the National Bard and a cultural icon, in Germany Shakespeare was well known and admired in literary circles, but his plays were largely unknown to a wider public. For academic circles, Wieland's translation had been published since the seventeen sixties (*Macbeth* is included in volume VI, published in 1764), but his wordy prose proved unsuitable for the stage. With regard to the theatrical situation in Germany, there was no cultural centre like London where various theatres competed with each other before audiences that were both experienced and sophisticated. Instead, the German situation was characterised by quite a number of decentralized theatres, travelling actors' companies and audiences who knew very little of Shakespeare's plays. For a wider public, Shakespeare was mainly the author of crimes.

Adaptations based on Wieland's translation

In the last decades of the eighteenth century various stage versions of *Macbeth*, all based upon Wieland's translation, competed with each other on the German stage. As far as Lady Macbeth is concerned, Wieland had made small alterations pointing to the Lady's character as he saw her: In 1.7 he had Macbeth exclaim "*Welch ein Weib*" pointing to her as the driving force, and in 2.5. when the lady says "*Helft mir von hier, oh!*" Wieland inserted the revealing stage direction not found in the English original: "*(Sie tut als ob sie ohnmächtig werde)*", thus presenting the Lady as a cunning dissembler who pretends that she faints.

By far the crudest German stage version of *Macbeth* was Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger's highly successful *Macbeth* (Vienna, 1782) the

first version of *Macbeth* for the German stage.[5] Stephanie wrote it for the traditional All Souls Day Performance and "enriched" the play with a speaking statue of Don Juan. Stephanie borrowed Gonerill from *King Lear*, who in his case is not only Macduff's daughter and Lady Macbeth's best friend, but also Macbeth's erotic object, regardless of the fact that she is in love with Fleance. Stephanie's Lady Macbeth is presented as a brutal murderer who confesses that it was she who first thrust her dagger into Duncan's body when she killed him helped by Macbeth and Banquo. Lady Macbeth turns mad when Duncan's statue suddenly starts speaking and demands revenge. In the last act she comes onto the stage with two daggers in order to protect her husband, but in her madness she mistakes Macbeth for Duncan and kills him. She awakes from her madness and, full of remorse and fear of death, runs through the castle that was set to flames by Malcolm's army, crying for help until she falls over her husband's body. The couple is consumed by the flames.

All in all, Stephanie's adaptation presented Lady Macbeth as a brutal killer, a suitable wife for the traditional stock tyrant Macbeth, and a woman who in her fit of madness becomes a fury and the instrument of revenge when she kills her husband. Stephanie shows no interest at all in exploring the feminine nature of this character.[6] Another version based on Wieland's translation was the adaptation by Franz Joseph Fischer that was put on stage in Prague, Dresden and Leipzig. For Fischer[7] *Macbeth* was a play about the making of a hateful tyrant and the delusions of oracles. He turned Macbeth into an unmanly half-hearted, henpecked husband who is relentlessly pushed forward by his wife who, for her part, is motivated by her fanatically pursued ambition.

The adaptations of the late 1770s and beginning 1780s, especially by Schröder[8] and Bürger (see below), continue to present the traditional portrait of Lady Macbeth as a reckless and demonic fury who pushes her husband on his career as a murderer and tyrant. In Schröder's *Macbeth* (first night 21.6.1779), Macbeth is presented as a victim of demonic forces using Lady Macbeth and the witches as their tools. His *Macbeth* was not a success at all; it was performed only five times.[9]

Gottfried August Bürger

Bürger had no dramatic experience when Schröder asked him in 1777 to translate the witches' scene for his production of *Macbeth*. Just like Wagner's *Macbeth, ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen nach Shakespeare* (Frankfurt/ Main 1779), Bürger's version was also influenced by the *Sturm und Drang* movement.[10] As late as 1782 Bürger's translation of the play was completed[11] and printed in 1782 by Dieterich in Göttingen under the title *Macbeth, ein Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen nach Shakespeare*.[12] As the subtitle *Schauspiel* [play] indicates, Bürger did not want to present a "high tragedy", but rather convey his notion of Shakespeare as a *Volksdichter*, i.e., a poet for the whole nation. *Macbeth* was particularly attractive to him, because it did not have a classical plot, but a plot taken from England's national history. According to this concept, he wrote a rather individual version of the play by altering a lot, re-arranging scenes and exchanging speakers.[13] With regard to the *dramatis personae*, Bürger tried to replace noblemen by people of lower social rank.[14] Significantly for his concept of a *Volksschauspiel*, he cut the part of King Duncan, which clearly indicates a reduction of the ceremonial character of the play. Just as in Garrick's version, Macbeth is the noble seduced who is the victim of these demonic forces. (Bürger inserted no less than seven witches' scenes.)

Quite interestingly with regard to the *Bürgerliche Trauerspiel*, in Bürger's version Lady Macbeth is given the traits of a caring house-wife who becomes a vessel for the demoniac powers when they take possession of her. In order to illustrate this Bürger inserted a drastic report about her death, a scene which must have come into being before October 1777, as Bürger wrote to Boie on 22nd January 1778: "*Goecking, dem ich sie [die neuen Macbeth-Szenen] vorigen Michaelis vorlas, wurde von einer, die den Tod der Lady Macbeth enthält, bis auf Mark und Bein durchschauert. Denn die Lady stirbt bei Shakespeare so kurz weg. Ich habe sie erst ein bischen zappeln lassen, daß einem die Haare dabei zu Berge stehen.*" In the drama, this reads as follows:

> KAMMERFRAU *(hereinstürmend): Kommen Sie, lieber Doktor,*
> *um Gottes willen, kommen Sie! Die Königin – hat's weg.*
> ARZT: *Was? Doch nicht tot? Unmöglich!*
> KAMMERFRAU: *Ja! Ja! Ja! – Das war ein Aufruhr in ihrem Bette!*
> *Wie mit halb erdrosselter Kehle rief sie: Hilfe! Hilfe! Dann*
> *gab's Ach und Krach. Als ich her-zulief, zuckte, röchelt' und*
> *schnappte sie zum letztenmal. Was für Klauen ihr das Gesicht*
> *auf den Rücken gedreht und die blauen Flecken gekniffen*
> *haben, mag der allmächtige Gott wissen.*
> ARZT: *Das ist ohne Zweifel ein Schlagfluß, Madam. Ein*
> *Aderlaß hilft vielleicht noch.*
> KAMMERFRAU: *Oh, vergeblich! Vergeblich! Wer kann Gottes*
> *Gericht aufhalten?*
> ARZT: *Ich werde gleich kommen, wenn ich's dem König*
> *gemeldet habe.*

Here we clearly see the interpretation of Lady Macbeth as a witch who is taken off by the devil.[15]

Friedrich Schiller

Bürger's version came under heavy censorship by Friedrich Schiller to whom the witches' scenes seemed to be "*eine recht Bürgerische Pfuscherey, so arg als irgend eine von ihm*", not a very favourite opinion, which he shared with Goethe and Schlegel, who called Bürger's *Macbeth* "[das] misslungeneste"[16] of all of his works. Schiller's version of *Macbeth* was first staged in Weimar on 14th May 1800 and it clearly marks the transition from the period of *Sturm und Drang* to the classical period,[17] as it was the first German version of a Shakespeare drama in the stylistic congruity of blank verse. Schiller's version has not a single passage in prose. Even the porter scene, the conversation between Lady Macduff and her son and the sleep-walking scene are given in blank verse. Schiller thus relied on Goethe's Weimar conception of the stylized production which keeps the audience at a certain aesthetic

distance from the theatrical action. In his adaptation of *Macbeth* Schiller frees the "realistic" ("*den naiven*") Shakespeare from his historical setting and adopts him for his idealised ("*den sentimentalischen*") way of presentation which became so characteristic for the German *Klassik*. This concept had fundamental implications for the characterisation of the *dramatis personae*. Macbeth is once more depicted as a noble ("*edel*") hero, as a virtuous general ("*ein heldenmüt'ger Feldherr*") who fights valiantly for his king. His Macbeth remains noble to the end, and his cruelty is reduced rather drastically, when Schiller cuts the murder of Lady Macduff and her son, as this scene would have cast a rather savage light on the noble hero.

Within this concept, many of the evil traits that were withdrawn from Macbeth are transferred to his wife and the witches—again you will say. Lady Macbeth is closely allied to Schiller's version of the witches, which he turned into classical furies, acting chorus-like on the stage. Goethe fully agreed with this interpretation of Lady Macbeth whom he called "*Überhexe*" [superwitch]. Quite interestingly in Schiller's version we find a new intimacy of the couple: Shakespeare's "Leave the rest to me" (1.5.72) in Schiller's version becomes "*In allem anderen überlass' dich [you] mir*", signifying the couple's intimacy, as Shakespeare's "the rest" could also refer to the reception of Duncan.

We can thus state that in Germany, until well into the first decades of the nineteenth century, the character of Lady Macbeth was denied any tragic quality, any conflict in her as a woman, a wife and an accomplice in the murder. This rich potential in the orginial was left unexplored.

Johann Karl Gustav Wernich

There was, however, a small minority of performances and critical voices presenting a very different portrait of Lady Macbeth. It is interesting that the first attempt in Germany to present Lady Macbeth not as a fury, but as a woman who endures a tragic fate comparable to her

husband's, was achieved by an actress, Mme Nouseul, on the basis of a little known version by Johann Karl Gustav Wernich, who rewrote Eschenburg's translation (the fifth volume of Eschenburg's[18] prose[19] translation, including *Macbeth*, had been published in 1776.) Wernich wrote his version for the production of *Macbeth* in the Berlin National Theatre in 1778. From the text of Lady Macbeth he cut all allusions showing her criminal energy, and he also cut the allusion to her suicide in Malcolm's final speech. Here a woman was presented whose tragic development the audience followed with sympathy and compassion so that the reviewer of the *Literatur- und Theaterzeitung* (1778) reported as follows:

> *'Zerrissen wäre das Innere der Zuschauer geworden, als die Lady in Wahnsinn gefallen war?' hören wir fragen. Zerrissen durch die Lady Macbeth? Das begreif ich nicht. Wie ein so kaltblütiger, unnatürlicher Bösewicht von einem Weibe, so ein Stück von weiblichem Richard, etwas Anziehendes für uns bekommen kann! Sehr wahr, aber ebenso wahr, dass wir an der Lady endlichem Schicksahl Anteil nehmen konnten und müßten. Zwei Worte lösen diess schein-bare Rätsel. Hätte die Schauspielerin uns die Lady so geliefert wie sie Shake-speare geschildert, so würde sie uns unstreitig nicht zu Theilnehmung, zu innigem Mitleid bewogen haben. Sie ist auch ein übermenschliches Ungeheuer, der einzige giganteske Karakter, unseres Bedünkens, der Shakespear'n entschlüpft, und daher war es nicht möglich, etwas anderes für sie als Abscheu zu empfinden. Mme Neuseul vermenschlichte diesen Karakter, ließ uns bloß das Weib sehen, da im Taumel der durch die schmeichlerischen Bilder königlicher Größe erhitzten Phantasie Pläne durchtreibt, für denen sie bei kälterem Blute zurückbeben würde, und so wußte sie uns in ihr Interesse zu ziehen, Antheilnehmung zu erwirken.[20]*

The impact of this Lady Macbeth was so strong that Zelter praisingly wrote in a letter to Goethe of 26th December 1825, no less than 45 years

after he had seen Mme Neuseul's performance: "*In Mme Neuseul fand ich meine Lady Macbeth, eine schönste, nicht ganz junge Frau, die einen tapfern gefeierten Mann beherrscht, von dem sie keine Kinder hat. Das liegt tief in ihrer Seele und der Brief holt es herauf.*" It was not until 1809 that Friederike Bethmann played Lady Macbeth in a similar way.[21]

Other actresses followed her example which in the following year became the standard. This interpretation was fully supported by Ludwig Tieck and other writers who followed his lead. Tieck saw Macbeth and his wife as young and in love with each other, and his noble assumption, that Lady Macbeth has been turned into a witch by love for her husband, clearly testifies to the realisation of the two-sex-model on the German stage at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

As this sketch of different representations of Lady Macbeth on British and German stages in the second half of the eighteenth century has shown, the gradual emergence of sexual difference was indeed realised in the theatrical systems of these two cultures. My approach of applying the theoretical model of sexual difference to stage productions of two European cultural systems seems to be highly rewarding, as it can open up new ways of interpretation from the angle of performance criticism and crosscultural transfer. For theatre historians it can also explain why different interpretations of female roles on the stage came into being. As we have seen, it is not only interesting to trace the change from a one- to a two-sex model on the written page—as it has hitherto been done—but also with regard to the stage. Finally my analysis has shown that translations, adaptations and theatre reviews are by no means 'minor' documents of reception but a highly illuminating body of texts within their representative cultural systems.

Notes

1. A.C. Bradley called her "the most commanding and perhaps the most awe-inspiring figure that Shakespeare drew" *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), quoted in John Wain (ed.), *Shakespeare: Macbeth. A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 127. Freud called her "a person who collapses on reaching success" (Wain, p. 139) and sees the only weak point in her character in her childlessness: "I believe, Lady Macbeth's illness, the transformation of her callousness into penitence, could be explained directly as a reaction to her childlessness, by which she is convinced of her impotence against the decrees of nature, and at the same time reminded that it is through her own fault if her crime has been robbed of the better parts of its fruits" (Wain, p. 143). He sees the couple as representing two sides of one person: "Together they exhaust the possibilities of reaction to the crime, like to disunited parts of a single psychical individuality..." (Wain, p. 146).

2. In Shakespeare's source, Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), Lady Macbeth is only mentioned as the ambitious wife who instigates her husband to murder in order that she may herself become queen. There is no mention of her subsequent fate and of the development of her character.

3. *Macbeth* is a play abounding in the terms such as "man" and "manliness" (they occur more than forty times in the drama) and throughout the play manliness is equated with the power to kill.

4. In doing so I base my approach on the postmodern premise that texts are always culturally embedded in a network of both source and target cultural signs. As culture is regarded as a shifting mass of signs rather than a single entity, theatre productions are neither produced nor received in a vacuum, but always take place in a continuum of discourses. Recent historical approaches in literary theory have increased the awareness of the importance of cultural negotiations at certain times and in certain places, as opposed to abstract rules that would always be valid. According to this, I will trace the cultural strategic choices various British and German actresses made for their representations of Lady Macbeth and trace the functions of their specific versions of Shakespeare's play. As both the norms and con-straints of the source culture *and* the target culture play their part in this process of crosscultural transfer, dramatic texts are especially interesting, as they are particularly subject to the expectations of the target audience and the constraints imposed by the target theatrical system as a social institution and a semiotic system.

5. Stephanie made up his own German prose text, but he also frequently had recourse to Wieland's prose version.

6. This crude version was highly successful on German and Austrian stages; it was performed in Vienna until 1778, when Stephanie withdrew it as unfit for the newly founded *Burgtheater*. But it continued to be performed in German cities until 1796.

7. *Macbeth. Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen von Shakespear. Für das Prager Theater adaptirt und herausge-geben von F.J. Fischer.* In his preface Fischer had explained that—against Stephanie's adaptation—the audience wanted to see Shake-speare's *Macbeth* with as few alterations as Schröder's *Hamlet*. Fischer had used Wieland's translation and his version follows Shakespeare's original rather faithfully. The main alteration is that King Duncan does not appear on stage and this means a significant loss of ceremony. Fischer sticks to the witches's scenes, but right after the witches, Macbeth and Banquo turn up. In the last act Donalbain is killed by Macbeth instead of Siward, then Macbeth is killed.

8. Schröder was born in Schwerin in 1744 and after the death of his step father Ackermann in 1769 he took over the theatre in Hamburg together with his mother. In 1776 he travelled to Brunswick, Dresden, Vienna and Prague where he got to know Franz Heufeld's most influential *Hamlet* adaptation.

9. Schröder's *Macbeth* was staged only five times, for the last time on 28th December 1779. Schröder included the play in his repertoire every ten years (in 1789 and 1798 he staged it three times each year); in 1798 he used Bürger's translation which had been printed in 1783.

10. While Wagner was a member of the circle around Herder and Goethe in Straßburg, Bürger had close connections to the *Göttinger Hain*.

11. Bürger's version shows only traces of Schröder's reworking of the play, and also of Eschenburg's translation, because Bürger considered Eschenburg's translation as boring ("*matt*" and "*lendenlahm*"). Nevertheless he took over many passages from Eschenburg for which he gives the following explanation in his Preface: "*In dem ungebundenen Teile, worin kein anderer als Shakespeare selbst Wort für Wort reden durfte, habe ich jene Übersetzung nur da angenom-men, wo nicht anders verstandener Sinn, anders gefühlte Kraft des Originals, oder meine eigene Weise, Sprache und Ausdruck zu handhaben, mich nötigten, davon abzuweichen.*"

12. It was performed in Hamburg on 3rd and 7th December 1789, then three times in March 1798 and never again in Hamburg. On 28th December 1787 it was presented

in Berlin, in presence of Emperor Wilhelm II, set to music by J.F. Reichart that turned the production into a kind of opera. The part of Lady Macbeth was played by Caroline Döbbelin. The production was highly successful; it was performed forty times, until Schiller's version replaced it on 17th September 1806. Bürger's *Macbeth* was performed for the last time in Leipzig in 1824.

13. Shakespeare's drama is not sacred for Bürger in his aim to meet the expectations of a bourgeoise audience. In his opinion that the reader could restore the very passages he had omitted from Shakespeare's "treasury", as he called *Macbeth*, indicates that Bürger assumed that a reader could get hold of another German version or even the English original (Wieland had translated for people who did not know Shakespeare's dramas!)

14. The porter scene is almost completely cut, the porter, who is a character of low social rank in this version, utters only two phrases: "*Wahrhaftig, Sir, wir schwärmten bis zum zweiten Hahnschrei*" and (with reference to Macbeth): "*ich will ihn wecken*". Furthermore Lady Macbeth's waiting gentlewoman is replaced by a *Kammer-frau* [chambermaid] of inferior rank.

15. "*Bürger übershakespearete hier Sha-kespeare und ließ die Lady durch den leibhaftigen Gottseibeiuns ihr Ende finden. Ganz in Übereinstimmung mit seiner Auffassung ihres Charakters. Diese Überhexe, dieses Teufelsweib, musste nach populärem Rechtsgefühl schließlich vom Teufel geholt werden*" (Kauenhowen 43).

16. A.W. Schlegel's *Werke*, Leipzig 1846-47, Vol. XIII.

17. In "*über den Zusammenhang der tierischen Natur mit seiner geistigen*" (1780) Schiller uttered his attitude towards Lady Macbeth as follows: "*Die Schauer, die denjenigen ergreifen, der auf eine lasterhafte That ausgeht, oder eben eine ausgeführet hat, sind nichts anderes als eben der Horror, der den Fabrizitanten schüttelt. Die nächtlichen Jaktationen derer, die von Gewissensbissen gequält werden, und die immer mit einem febrilischen Aderschlag begleitet sind, sind wahrhaftige Fieber, und wenn Lady Macbeth im Schlaf geht, so ist sie eine phrentische Delivantin.*"

18. Eschenburg also translated the 14 dramas Wieland had not translated: *Die lustigen Weiber zu Windsor, Der Liebe Müh ist umsonst, Ende gut, alles gut, Zähmung eines bösen Weibes, König Heinrich der Fünfte, König Heinrich der Sechste (3 teile), König Richard III, König Heinrich der Achte, Troilus and Kressida, Koriolanus, Cymbelin, Titus Andronicus*. In his 13th volume (1813). He also translated *Perikles, Prinz von Tyrus; Ein Trauer-spiel in Yorkshire (The Yorkshire Tragedy); Der*

Londoner Verschwender (The London Prodigal) and passages from *Lokrin, Ein Trauerspiel; Sir John Oldcastle; Leben und Tod Thomas Lord Cromwells; Die Puritanerinn, oder die Witwe in der Watlingstrasse*. For his task Eschenburg used the editions by Dr. Samuel Johnson (1765) and Johnson and Steevens (1773).

19. He takes over Wieland's only exception in verse, i.e., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Eschenburg himself renders *Richard III* in verse.

20. In addition, Schink, in his *Galerie der Teutschen Schauspieler, Zusätze und Berichtigungen*, wrote about Neuseul's Lady Macbeth: "... *es ist die Menschlichkeit, die überall durchschimmert und nirgends Theaterfirle-fanz und Komödiantenflittern sehen läßt.... Stolz und Wut, Rache und Verzweiflung, Wehmut und Ermatten der Seele im Kapf der Leidenschaft, ... jeder Affekt, jede Emfindung, sie haben einen Namen, welche sie wolle, erscheien überall bei ihr in ihrer wahren, unüberkleisterten Gestalt.*"

21. The *Morgenblatt für die gebildeten Stände* wrote about her presentation as follows: "... *im Gefühl der Schwäche, ich möchte sagen: der Nervenschwäche ihres Geschlechts, beschwor sie die Geister, sie zu entweiben. Diese beiden Elemente, Begierde nach dem höchsten irdischen Rang und Gefühl der dem blutigen Mittel nicht gewachseenen Weiblichkeit, gaben der Rolle eine Wahrheit, eine Natur, ein Leben, eine Wärme, die selbst dieser teuflischen Gemütsart Anteil ver-schaffte, weil man sie in einem Kampfe menschlicher Beschränkung erblickte. Sie wälzte sie um, mehr instruktmäßig als listig, die Last der gräßlichen Vollziehung auf den stärkeren Mann und fachte ihm den Mut an, der ihr fehlte.*"

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