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Katabasis in Rupert Goold's Macbeth (BBC, 2010): Threshold-Crossing, Education, Shipwreck, Visionary and Trial Katabatic Experiences

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Rupert Goold's stage production of Macbeth opened at the Minerva Theatre in Chichester, went to the Gielgud Theatre (London) and toured to the Harvey Theater in New York (2007-2008) before, in 2010, BBC, PBS and Illuminations Media turned it into a TV film.1 Set in a twentieth-century regime displaying the iconography of Stalin's dictatorship, Anthony Ward's decor was "confined within a windowless basement kitchen, perhaps a few tiers above hell" (Nicholas De Jongh). Unsurprisingly, several reviewers compare these aspects of the scenography with a living hell. However, the recording turned those hellish textures into a dominant motif. As producer John Wyver explains, "[the team] transplanted the stage production to a richly visual location and shot it across three weeks just like a feature film. Our setting was the eerie below ground world at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire." Although part of Goold's J-horror and slasher pastiche from the stage production remained, much of the filmic language he used in the theatre was eliminated.2 Yet, katabasis re-focused Goold's reading of Macbeth. Recording the performance inside the tunnels, passages and rooms and inter-connected floors like "different levels of Hell"3 with an infernal lift turned katabasis into the production's defining feature. Therefore, Goold's film is unique since it exposes layers of meaning latent in the source text and various stage and film productions of the Scottish Play.

For Harry Morris, Shakespeare's allusions to evil done against "guest," "kinsman," "subject" and "lord" portrayed in Divine Comedy prove Dante's influence in Macbeth (qtd. in Paul A. Jorgensen56). E. K. McFall revises studies on Dantean references in Macbeth until 2006. Robert S. Miola affirms that the play's "portraits of sin, punishment, and damnation stand worthily next to those of Dante's Inferno" (xvi). S. Schoenbaum connects the Porter's allusions to the coldness of Inverness ("But this place is / too cold for hell," 2.3.13-14) to the ice in Dante's Hell and assumes that other Medieval infernal journeys like the Harrowing of Hell must have been familiar to the playwright (373-374). Serdar Örtük draws parallels between Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost and Macbeth: "If it were not for the ambitious desire of kingship Satan and Macbeth would have led gallant lives, free of the tragic fall they experienced" (5). Goold links Macbeth to a journey through Hell when describing the play's appeals: "the marriage of (…) anxiety, darkness, sleek depravation, three strange women to the

infernal, hell, the after-life, perpetual burning… It's just very potent" (See "Interview with Rupert Goold" in DVD).

In performance, these associations continue. Jonathan Gil Harris relates the smells of fireworks and special effects of the first Macbeth performances to the invocations of hell fires during the Gunpowder Plot (474-475). David Garrick's re-writing of the last scene links the hero's death to a Marlovian downfall: "I cannot rise! I dare not ask for mercy – It is too late, hell drags me down; I sink, I sink – my soul is lost for ever! – Oh! – Oh!" (qtd. in Bernice Kliman 23). In Roman Polanski's film, Macbeth enters a cave to reach the Witches, who inhabit an underworld matriarchate outside masculine rule (1971). Gregory Doran represents the Macbeths' fall by their ascents and descents through the three levels – upper circle, ground floor, and cellars – in the London's Round House (2001). In Justin Kurzel's film the Anglo-Scottish army burn the forest of Birnam to force Macbeth to leave the castle. The hero sallies forth into the battlefield portrayed against an infernal backdrop (2015). Nevertheless, despite the recurrence of Shakespeare's Scottish Play in twenty-first century film, katabasis has never received sufficient visibility in screen Macbeths.

My contribution to ongoing discussions on the Scottish Play's cross-fertilizing with cinema will be an exploration of katabasis in this stage-screen production. Scholars have explored intertextuality in Goold's Macbeth. Also, political readings on the stage performance and the film have appeared. Some attention has been paid to the film's indebtedness to Hell's imagery too. Andrew J. Power regards the lift in Goold's production as a "symbolic portal, through which dark forces can ascend, whether they be evil spirits from the foundations of a building or devils from the underworld itself" (447). For Pierre Kapitaniak, the lift is "a direct way to evil and then to hell" (61). Warren Chernaik adds that in this work, "Evil exists, in the form of cruelty, ambition, and the willing service of military or political masters, without any real hope of redress: the quotidian universe is a kind of hell, and there is no prospect of heaven" (50-51). However, no one has studied the implications of katabasis as a narrative in the production.

I am borrowing Rachel Falconer's definition of the katabatic chronotope in her analysis of Primo Levi's If This is a Man. Following Falconer's work, I will show that Goold's Macbeth reads as a multi-layered series of underworld experiences. She defines them as the chronotopes of Hell: "threshold-crossing," "hell as education," hell as "voyage and shipwreck experience," "visionary experience" and "trial experience".4 Rather than encouraging fidelity criticism, katabatic theory situates Goold's Macbeth in communication with a literary tradition, which has been, for Antonio Sánchez-Escalonilla, "adopted by cinema in the last century" (149). The characters' katabases take place in a post-Apocalyptic filmscape where World War II newsreel fragments intermingle with a futuristic eco-tragic barren world, a physical and psychological space resembling those environments found in several recent Shakespearean films and which "register cultural concerns toward a global wasteland of literal nothingness, technological alienation, spiritual destruction, and the effects of globalization" (Melissa Croteau 2). My approach will be intertextual and based on the study of the katabatic chronotope in this extra-historical filmscape. I am not trying to demonstrate that Falconer's katabatic theory influenced Goold's work. Rather, this critical focus provides insights into Goold's film. Therefore, I will define katabasis in contemporary literature

relying on Falconer's theory. Secondly, I will explore Falconer's katabatic chronotopes in this production and, to conclude, I will provide an example of their interrelation.

Katabatic Theory

Generally, in Western literature, the descent to the underworld (katabasis) is followed by an ascent (anabasis) after struggle, degradation and suffering culminating with an encounter with an absolute alterity. A renewed identity, the rescue of a beloved one, or acquisition of power and wisdom follow (Falconer 2007: 3; Holtsmark 25-26). However, this master narrative has changed geographies and shapes through history. Opposing the traditional Catholic reading of Hell as a site of punishment and reform, Falconer claims that, in the post-World War Two and post-9/11 zeitgeists, Hell is a "place of unjust suffering" (2007: 18). If a violent world, as she suggests, is equated to Hell, people can liken it to preexisting katabatic stories (2010: 221).

For Falconer, there are mainly two cultural views of Hell. We interpret katabasis as either a meaningful or as a meaningless trial (2007: 31-33). Since hell exists in the material world in the form of unprecedented waves of terrorism, war and violence, according to Falconer, searching for routes through Hell is an advisable course of action (ibid: 5-6). Nonetheless, redemptive katabatic accounts and narratives proclaiming the need to destroy an absolute evil have been transferred to non-fictional contexts too lightly. Invoking Hell's imagery outside literature, as the scholar indicates, transforms perceptions of facts "from historical occurrence" into perceptions of those facts as mythical absolutes (ibid: 1). Success stories of victims' solidarities in times of terrorist attacks, commendable in themselves, have often metamorphosed into dogmatic condemnations of an Eastern bloc to legitimize military intervention in the Middle East.5 The alternative that Falconer's katabatic theory proposes to Manichean discourse is a questioning one. The katabatic struggle does not necessarily lead to favorable outcomes, though it often does. The forms of action taken after the return from Hell are what matters. These experiences are multiple and take on the form of different chronotopes not necessarily subject to historical judgement but subject to the reader's evaluation. For Falconer, questions that matter are:

Does the hero return with knowledge or understanding of the causes of suffering (…)? Or does the encounter with the demonic leave him a stranger to himself without an answer to the question why the innocent should suffer (…)? Does he return safely, achieving his heart's desire (…), or does the underworld rob him of love, wholeness, selfhood (…)? (2007: 33).

These questions justify Falconer's decision in the third chapter of her seminal work to read katabasis based on Levi's work. Her definition of the Hell chronotope is indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope theory. For Bakhtin, Dante's world implies the synchronization of diachrony, i.e. it replaces temporal divisions with "purely interpretative, extratemporal and hierarchized ones (…) at the same time, the human beings who fill (populate) this vertical world are profoundly historical, they bear the distinctive marks of time" (157). This effect translates to the film since, according to

Boika Sokolova, "the historical proximity of the [communist] period and the complex texture of the filmic narrative, position it closer to modern concerns than it might originally seem" (2013: 150). Likewise, such historicity roots this dystopian fantasy in communication with contemporary reality.

Falconer subdivides the Hell chronotope into sub-chronotopes concretizing the exploratory paths of katabasis. In opposition to Dante's work – where the author-narrator is the only developing character –, as the literary critic goes on, contemporary katabatic odysseys consist of inter-illuminations of different individuals' understandings (2007: 64). She describes Levi's narration via "a testing of different routes simultaneously rather than [through] a quest for a singular revelation" (ibid). The routes she distinguishes will be, as already said, the basis for my analysis. The "threshold" chronotope marks the intersection between spaces, be these symbolic or physical. The "education" chronotope associates katabasis with bildungsroman (ibid: 70). The "visionary" chronotope involves a retrospective understanding of Hell as a "fully realised other world" (ibid: 72). The "trial" chronotope implies retrospective judgement of past events (ibid: 75). Finally, the "sea voyage and shipwreck" chronotope metaphorically designates a search for knowledge and its transmission across the katabatic route (ibid: 81).

Threshold-crossing

Goold presents various thresholds – the sewers, the mansion gates, tunnels leading to the mansion's gardens or to redeeming outside light – charged with symbolic and simultaneous literal meanings. According to Bakhtin, thresholds metaphorically mean "the breaking point in life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change [that] life, the fear to step over the threshold)" (248). These thresholds, as Falconer indicates, prove that there are many paths through Hell (2007: 69).

One threshold the Macbeths – Kate Fleetwood and Patrick Stewart – cross is related to their age difference. They also belong to different social spheres: she is upper class; he is a soldier promoted for merit. Nevertheless, both share features which alienate them from the community they inhabit. As Ritu Mohan and Mahesh Kumah Arora indicate, "[Lady Macbeth's] slightly alien features suit the role, showing Lady Macbeth as a character already a little unnatural and inhumane" (182). As for Stewart's Macbeth, his coarseness, clothing and unfashionable manners present him as a thug serving the elites. In coherence with the horror film imagery of the production, Goold emphasizes the characters' alterities in a misogynistic and classist world. The first scenes portray Macbeth walking through the woods while war continues. Amidst carnage and explosion, the soundtrack plays "Wait for Me," based on Konstantin Simonov's poem "To Valentina Serova." The lines "Wait for me and I'll come back / Dodging every fate" echo the Macbeths' desire to overcome all obstacles to triumph. Yet, their crusade transcends the simple pleasures of love and points at a deeper obsession with preeminence. Stewart says that the Macbeths experience "sexual fantasies" about absolute power ("Interview with Patrick Stewart" in DVD). These fantasies are hinted at accompanied by allusions to violence. When Macbeth leaves his weapon on the kitchen counter, Lady Macbeth raises her hands and "surrenders" to the soldier entering the kitchen. This sexual role-playing in which the man invades the domestic space to

brutalize its inhabitants in war time is a prolepsis to Stewart's Macbeth's entrance into Macduff's domestic space since he himself will take part in the family massacre.

Their overcoming of class barriers involves physically and symbolically crossing thresholds. Symbolic crossings take place in the lift, which, as it seems, descends with the Macbeths inside several times. When Macbeth resents Malcom being named successor, an insert shows the lift going up as a metaphor of Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" (1.7.27). Inside the lift, Lady Macbeth reads the letter Macbeth has sent her. Only the midsection of her body is visible and she reads without affect, which emphasizes the downward journey itself (1.5). Later, the blood on her chest when she returns from Duncan's room shows she has finished the job – killing Duncan – which Macbeth left unfinished (2.2). When they hear Macduff's knocking, they enter the lift again, which marks another step into their symbolic descent into evil. We should be cautious with romanticizing the relationship too much. When he reaches power, Macbeth misogynistically dismisses Lady Macbeth's company. L. McJannet and E. Winerock explore this in their analysis of the "mop dance." In the banquet scene: "Macbeth initially dances with Lady Macbeth, who in her blood-red evening gown is the only noblewoman present, but in the second iteration, she ends up with the mop" (2016: 70). So, the last shot showing their re-union in their descent downward after death does not undoubtedly mean a triumphant re-union but, much more likely, the eternal attachment of two lovers whose mutual regard has been seriously damaged (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the lift.

Many narratives emphasize that the characters enter and leave hell at will. In Stephen Adly Guirguis' The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Satan says: "If they told you straight up that there was no lock to the Gates of Heaven, then you'd have no incentive at all to even try to be halfway decent (…) [Judas] is free to leave [hell] whenever he wants to – in fact, I wish he would – I could use the room" (99). When Banquo (Martin Turner) and Fleance (Bertie Gilbert) leave Inverness, they cross the mansion gates (see Figure 2). Beyond it, a landscape of cypresses and verdure offers an escape from Macbeth's kingdom: a mansion of cold grey stone. According to Morales Hartley, katabasis also implicates "a hopeful view of salvation within a particular initiatory frame which softens the sense of emptiness related to a more general view of death" (my translation; 136). Banquo chooses to cross the gate to take the path of hope. Miola says that

“Macbeth moves between these two opposed realms, as between blessings and curses, angels and devils, and (…) between heaven and hell” (xv-xvi). However, after challenging fate “into the list” (3.1.50-73), Stewart’s Macbeth, rifle in hand, turns to the mansion to speak with the murderers. He sides with evil.

Figure 2: Banquo and Fleance trying to escape.

More thresholds show escapes for victims of tyranny. Malcom (Scott Handy) and Donaldbain (Ben Carpenter) leave the country running through the corridors toward the light (figure 3). When Malcom returns, he does it with an army going through the tunnels Banquo and Macbeth traversed to meet the Witches (Sophie Hunter, Niam McGrady, Polly Frame) – mediators between this uncanny underworld and the unknown. The context of production allows us to think of this army’s entrance as an allegorical reference to the US army’s invasions of Iraq to eradicate absolute evil. In this light, the demonization rhetoric used by some characters to describe Macbeth (4.3.13, 4.3.23, 4.3.57-58, 4.3.56-57, 4.3.117-120, 5.7.7-8, 5.7.9-10, 5.8.3, 5.9.36) gains contemporary relevance in Goold’s version since, after the disastrous events of 9/11, such rhetoric was fervently used by soldiers, politicians and military leaders. Not only are thresholds open to show ways of escape but to let armies of saviors enter Macbeth’s lair and destroy him.

Figure 3: Donaldbain running to the light.

“Education” and “Sea Voyage and Shipwreck”

Falconer defines katabasis as an educational journey in which the traveler’s wisdom increases by characters’ exchanges of thoughts. This journey is later seen in retrospect in Levi (2007: 70).

One path Falconer points out is the transformation from youth to old age. I read Macbeth’s aforementioned turning from redemptive paths as a conscious turn to evil. Unlike Dante’s midlife crisis (“Nel mezzo dil camin di nostra vita…”), Stewart’s seventy years stress what Goold refers to as the theme of “ambition late in life” (“Interview with Rupert Goold”). In matters of state, this seventy-year-old Macbeth is “young in deed” (3.4.144). He begins a true, honorable and naïve civil servant and ends up a vecchio. The vecchio leaves his idealist younger self behind, knows the world for what it is, loses his capacity for surprise, becomes tougher and more resourceful. While these qualities are not intrinsically regrettable, they can be so when they derive into scorn for well-meaning individuals. The narration “invites us to condemn the vecchio’s wisdom, insisting on a different system of values” (Falconer 2007: 72). Here, Macbeth’s callousness leads him to become a hardened, calculating, and brooding dictator.

Macbeth’s loyalty to the state is tested when he realizes that his military prowess will not be rewarded with a crown. After listening to the first prophecy (1.3), he faces the mannequin made and given life to by the Weird Sisters in a rap-rhythmed reanimation ceremony framed with unintentional camera moves and bleached images. The heart and the military jacket they have used to piece the mannequin together and dress it belonged to the Bleeding Sergeant, whose life pulse they stopped and whose heart they ripped out. Macbeth puts his hand on his chest when speaking to the mannequin. His desires to be king are clear in his intimate conversation with the uncanny figure. However, as his encounter with Duncan’s generals in scene 1.4 show, Macbeth is socially distant from these people, who are more used to indoor interaction than he is. This sequence is

connected to the threshold chronotope: the unbridgeable social gap will force the hero to murder his way to the throne as fair election will not be an option. Macbeth's enraged but slow and calculating visage as he delivers his invocation to the stars (1.4.50-51) invites us to think of Jan Kott's description of the unavoidable mechanism of Macbeth: "history in the play (…) means the death-rattle, the raising of the sword, the thrust of the dagger (…) There is only one theme in Macbeth: murder" (69).

Macbeth's totalitarian career brings in the confirmation of his absolute power. As Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey say, Macbeth does not "want to be King to actually do anything with the acquired political power. Everything is in the desire, the hunger, the passion to pit the self against power, and by destroying power, to authenticate the potency of the self, the force of desire, the triumph of the will" (44). Like Laurence Olivier did in his celebrated 1955 stage performance (Wills 4-5), Stewart plays his character as low-key in the first acts. He "was [trying to] from this very quiet – almost modest – beginnings, to build the man whose appetite for mayhem and slaughter grew in front of your eyes" ("Interview with Patrick Stewart"). Stewart's iconic head in the ballroom re-signifies the Stalinist cult to personality Macbeth wants to establish. Such Orwellian display is linked to the ubiquity of Macbeth's presence in Scotland. After Banquo has challengingly voiced his inner thoughts to Macbeth's face, he discovers that an intercom has been recording his criticisms (3.1.1-10). Metaphorically, although his eyes are in the banner, Macbeth's ears are at the other end of the room thanks to the wiring system. His eyes and ears control the room and, by extension, all Scotland. Macbeth's spectrality leaves trails of corpses whenever his agents emerge to the surface: Banquo's murderers reach him on the Trans-Siberian express; several assassinations take place outside the underworld; in England, Malcom and Macduff seem to fear surveillance too.7 Macbeth's anabasis does not bring peace and wisdom but violence, discomfort and fear. His ascent spreads Hell outside its confines.

Macbeth allies with younger hands capable of military action. These interactions between older and younger characters encourage examination of Macbeth's growth process. He is momentarily complicit with the Bleeding Sergeant, a comrade who praises Macbeth before dying. In this production, the Sergeant delivers his speech to Duncan's generals while The Weird Sisters dressed like nurses – stitch his wounds (see Figure 4). When Duncan and his followers abandon the Bleeding Sergeant, as already said, the Sisters end the Sergeant's life. They use his reanimated corpse at the morgue where Macbeth finds them for a second time as mouthpiece to deliver prophecies (4.1). The sergeant's reanimated corpse advises Macbeth to "Beware the thane of Fife" (4.1.71). An encounter with a friendly familiar ghost takes place, which makes this journey to the Witches' morgue more nuanced than the encounters with the Three Apparitions in the source text. In other scenes, Hywell John (the sergeant) plays the First Murderer, another youth under Macbeth's influence (see Figure 5). While the sergeant laughs hysterically at his own injuries, the murderer is foreign to the military profession. Although he evidently regrets his actions, he learns his trade quickly. He takes part in numerous state crimes, – including the Macduff family massacre – but, ultimately, decency leads him to change sides. Before his accession to the throne, Macbeth acts as a father figure to a young child-faced servant (Oliver Birch) in the Macbeths' household. Later, Macbeth detaches from this filial figure and scorns him when he brings news of Malcom's approach. Per contra, Macbeth promotes the porter (Christopher Patrick Nollan), a potential child molester. So far, the porter has been inhabiting the darkest corner of the underworld watching TV and drinking. He acts as a

filial figure to Stewart's Macbeth since they are similar in complexion and both share a desire to eliminate the upper class, a wrathful impulse they get to satisfy in the butchering of the Macduffs. Before confronting the English army, Macbeth says "I 'gin to be aweary of the sun" (5.5.48) – a pun referring to both the "sun" and the "son" – while gently caressing the porter's head. Macbeth develops an attachment to violent young men and disgusts those wanting to side with decency.8

Figure 4: The Bleeding Sergeant reporting the battle at the underground hospital.

Figure 5: First Murderer brings news of Banquo's death. In the background, Macbeth's Stalinist banner symbolizing his regime.

Falconer's analysis of the education chronotope shows that Levi's former selves – the young idealist and the vecchio– are evaluated by his current self: the narrator of his katabatic account. The narrator feels ashamed by his old pessimism (2007: 71). Macbeth is detached enough to evaluate his own story. Yet, the effect is the opposite of self-condemnation. This Macbeth "has been cursed by a depth of vision, an ability to

conjure up the rippling consequences of every action he undertakes, that eventually leads him to the bleak plains of existential emptiness” (Brantley 2008). He grows more vigorous and, at the same time, more attached to the vecchio’s nihilism. In the “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow…” speech (5.5.18-27), he addresses the viewer in close-up. After concluding the speech, a shot showing Malcom’s troops’ entrance into the mansion briefly interrupts his communication with the audience. We return to Macbeth, who still inquisitorially interrogates us waiting for some explanation from us, the viewers. Life is meaningless: What evidence can we offer to the contrary? There are no signs of self-questioning in Macbeth’s cynical interrogation.

The “voyage and shipwreck” chronotope requires an explanation here. Falconer borrows this metaphor from Levi’s allusions to Dante’s Ulysses (“The Canto of Ulysses” in Levi 127-134). Levi has been exchanging thoughts and ideas with Jean Samuel, the Pikolo in Levi’s chemist kommand. After bonding with the young guard, Levi recites Ulysses’ speech and tries to translate it for him. He explains the meaning of “setting forth” invoked by Ulysses: “[I] t is a chain which has been broken, it is throwing oneself on the other side of a barrier (…) it is when the horizon closes in on itself, free, straight ahead and simple” (Levi 132). Falconer suggests that Levi’s use of the lines relate to Ulysses’ intellect and to his desire to gather and communicate his knowledge (2007: 81). Macbeth’s journey can be compared to Ulysses’ since both heroes’ voyages lead to more knowledge of their destinies. Macbeth’s encounters with ghosts of the past – the Sergeant’s and Banquo’s – and the future – Fleance’s replicas in the ballroom – increase his knowledge of the katabatic world he inhabits. Before the knife-fight with Macduff, he delivers the lines, “Before my body I throw my warlike shield” (5.8.32-33) while he empties a bottle of wine over his head, a baptism preluding entry into the unknown. Falconer defines this unknown “as the opposite of the Freudian uncanny; it is unknown and uncharted, not mythic and familiar territory” (2007: 82-83). When Macbeth is about to defeat Macduff, a streak of white light spread by the Witches distracts him. An illuminated gate to the unknown opens and the Witches seemingly invite Macbeth to follow them. When he meets the Witches eye-to-eye, he smiles with satisfaction. “Enough,” he says (5.8.34). The scene concludes with the witches crossing the gate while we hear Macduff’s blade stabbing his contender (see Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6: Macbeth smiles at the Witches before dying.

Figure 7: The Witches cross the gate to the unknown.

Macbeth is not interested in society or in sharing knowledge with others but in testing the limits of his power. Can this passage toward the concealed depths of the universe be regarded as the crossing of a barrier? Sokolova's questions on the Macbeths' disappearance into this uncharted land are poignant: "Might the Macbeths be reincarnations of past perpetrators, returned to pester other generations, as happens in horror movies? Are they now zombies going to sleep after they have had their glut for food sated, have they joined a magical reality only to come back when time is ripe?" (Sokolova 2013: 168). Her hypotheses are spot-on. However, classical katabasis offers an alternative interpretation. We do not have evidence that Macbeth takes part in any utopian new world. As already suggested, the punishment seems to be subjection to a Sisyphean descent, a psychological paralysis of never-ending downward movement.

"Visionary" and "Trial" Chronotopes

Falconer describes the "visionary" chronotope as one that presupposes retrospective looks to the katabatic experience (2007: 72). Where Goold's work resembles Levi's,– both departing from Dante's Inferno – is in his treatment of secondary characters as unfinished personalities (2007: 73).9 In this, Goold follows a tendency to "flesh out" secondary characters in Shakespeare film which was, according to Philippa Sheppard, established by Trevor Nunn and Kenneth Branagh (2017: 76). The characters' reflections prove that visionary reasoning on their infernal sojourn takes place. Ross (Tim Treloar) is interrogated and tortured by Lennox to tell him where Macduff has gone (3.6).10 When Ross visits the Macduff family, he realizes the part he plays in the regime. The "cruel are the times when we are traitors…" (4.2.18) lines are spoken to himself rather than to them. Upon this realization, he leaves them. We deduce that before setting forth for England, he regrets his decision and goes back to protect the children and Lady Macduff. Nevertheless, Macbeth and his henchmen are one step ahead of him. When Ross reenters the dressing room, the camera hints that their bodies lie butchered in the shower room.

Macduff and Malcom, who converse inside an English chapel, also negotiate their respective katabatic transits and, although Malcom's self-examination seems sincere, their ultimate resolution involves moving against a "hell-kite." Goold stresses this ideological focus neatly. Macduff shows pictures of Macbeth's Gulags. Likewise, Ross brings written reports of several state assassinations. Kapitaniac concludes that "Goold

opposes two blocks: the righteous White Russian Christian faction and the evil Red Soviet Communist regime" (61). Doubtless, Malcom's "Christian faction" think they are the righteous ones, although, as we shall see, there is evidence to the contrary. As they leave the chapel, the altar in the background marks the Messianic import of their crusade. Malcom is left before the chapel's gates ready to assume his leadership of the Army of the Good. The contrast between the illuminated chapel and the bleak threshold the Prince is about to cross suggests that his crossing of the infernal gates to combat this absolute other (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Malcom before the chapel's entry. Ross sits on the bench.

This visionary chronotope, as Falconer says, grants a level of superiority to the observer who analyzes katabatic events (2007: 74). Those who overthrow Macbeth assume this necessary moral superiority over the tyrant. Nevertheless, as Ross' example proves, these characters also judge themselves. As audience members, we are invited to pass judgement on these generals too. Falconer alludes to the example Levi provides in relation to the Auschwitz experience as a "trial" since this chronotope reinforces an "obsessive orientation towards the past on this particular pathway through Hell" (2007: 76). Ross' realization that everyone is a traitor is explored. Lennox is capable of foreseeing who the next winner will be and quickly changes sides. He guesses Macbeth's dishonesty when he justifies his killing the grooms in Duncan's chamber. He is the third murderer in Banquo's assassination. Though Fleance escapes, he shoots the second murderer when he protests ("We have lost the best half of our affair," 3.3.24). When he finds out about Macduff's flight to England, he wastes no time and runs to inform Macbeth. However, he has been meticulously compiling information to incriminate his lord. These files buy a position in Malcom's new government. Angus bugs dissident conversations and transcribes them for the regime. As for Duncan, as Sokolova adds, there are reasons to doubt the legality of his rule from the very beginning (2013: 158). This white army has many black spots on its record.

Intersections of Chronotopes

In scene 5.2, several Scottish nobles – Menteith, Caithness, Lennox and Angus – exchange reports on the state of Scotland under Macbeth's rule. They confirm the arrival of the English army and comment on Macbeth's fortification of Dunsinane.

These reports legitimize the nobles' changing sides. In the film, the lines are re-assigned to First Murderer, Angus and Lennox. Angus runs through the sewers and reaches the ladder to climb out to the outside. Feeling somebody is following him, he gets ready to shoot. First Murderer comes and reports the English army's arrival. After hearing this, Angus gives his rifle to the murderer and asks whether he knows if Donaldbain is with Malcom. A voice is heard from the corridor ("For certain, sir, he is not," 5.2.8). It is Lennox, who comes with a file with the names of all the gentlemen accompanying Malcom. Valuable as the files are, First Murderer, who has witnessed the pleasure Lennox has had in following Macbeth's orders, strikes him and points at him with his borrowed AK-47. Lennox responds with a cynical smile. His implicit statement seems that whether the murderer killed victims following orders or for pleasure makes no difference. Angus and the murderer need to believe that there is a dissimilarity since they side together to judge Lennox's engagement with Macbeth. A low angle shows a self-righteous Angus while he condemns the tyrant's actions and cause. Like the Murderer, he kicks Lennox, who is still not moving from the floor. However, a silent pact is established: the three together will join Malcom's forces.

Conclusion

In Goold's film, Hell is not a place we access or abandon. Ultimately, it is an all-present reality. Goold uses this underworld to emphasize Hell's everywhereness. Therefore, it is negotiation with such derangement what makes the difference. When analyzing Scotland, PA, George Moore points at the tendency in Shakespeare films to portray "certain punishment [for the Macbeths] for daring to transgress their social rank." As he continues, this "runs the risk of aligning the film too closely with the cosmic determinism of Shakespeare's Scottish play" (2017). In this film, Macbeth's absolute evil does not mean cosmic determinism nor does it distract us from other less cosmic but more plausible degrees of evil. Since state crimes cannot be carried out only by one man, the film demands our judgement of quotidian forms of evil. When Macduff arrives with Macbeth's head, Malcom holds it while the thanes kneel before him. "The gory ending does not promise a bright future, but we have to trust the man who holds the bloody object," says Sokolova (2012: 94). Nonetheless, only trusting Malcom does not seem satisfactory since he will not rule alone. A mid-shot reveals Malcom's delivering his final speech with Lennox still carrying his AK-47 near him: Is this Goold's hint that history will repeat itself? (see Figure 9). How longer will we be bound to face the Spectre of Jan Kott's interpretation in Macbeth films? Goold says he did not want to give the impression that a "second Macbeth" would come ("Director's and Producer's Commentary"). However, this shot stands in contrast to Goold's statement. Malcom's focus on Macbeth's head seems another distraction from what his real problems will be: Can we trust these men?

Figure 9: Malcom holds Macbeth's head surrounded by the thanes.

Despite doubts, during their respective journeys, many of Macbeth's generals find room for decency. Attempts to help others have been seen. Katabasis is a self-questioning passage for all since conclusions depend on what individuals make out of their journeys. If contemporary violence can be narrativized as katabasis, as Falconer argues, the phenomenon can also be transformed, resisted and destroyed (2007: 5). Nevertheless, affirmative katabatic narratives can be a distraction when they focus on demonizing the absolute other. Again, returns from hell do not lead to Paradise but to keep on alert, to negotiation with individual and collective trauma derived from the journey.

This essay has shown Goold's approach to the katabatic subtexts of Shakespeare's Macbeth. The film's katabatic echoes are not an unaltered vision of Shakespeare's medieval echoes since the contemporary katabatic sphere does not reduce itself to be a disciplinary site of punishment and reform. Rather, it is an interrogation. Courtney Lehman says: "Adaptation is, on some level, always an act of mourning: a quest to ontologize what is not there, what is no longer there, or what never was in the first place" (2017). Goold ontologizes what various scholars have presented as one of the many sources of Macbeth but which, so far, has been anecdotic in film adaptation. Falconer's katabatic studies help prove that negative or dogmatic interpretations of katabasis can be politically and philosophically challenged by the multiplicity of the phenomenon. Reducing Goold's film's ending to the simple choice of "optimistic" or "pessimistic" endings would seem to me, again, sidetracking from nuanced criticism.

Notes

1 The film was first broadcast in the USA on 5 October 2010 (PBS) and in the UK on 12 October 2010 (BBC Channel Four).

2 For instance, on stage the banquet scene was played twice: one time with the Ghost and another time without. This repetition was not possible in the film version.

3 See Director's and Producer's Commentaries in DVD.

4 See Falconer's analysis of Levi in the "Auschwitz as Hell" chapter in her seminal book on contemporary katabasis in literature (2007: 63-88).

5 Falconer provides examples from the media, the press and politicians which defined the attacks in New York, London or Bali as katabatic experiences. Likewise, social and political discourses transformed inhabitants of Eastern countries into Absolute Others. When troops were sent to Iraq, messages were transmitted that God had sent the soldiers on a mission to destroy Evil. See Falconer (2010) and Falconer's chapter "Katabasis in the Twenty-First Century" (2007: 224-231).

6 Though Bakhtin's studies did not focus on film, as Keith Harrison affirms, the Russian scholar's work 'potentially is applicable to any system of signs, including the semiotics of images (…) Bakhtin's thinking can give context to the disparate cinematic re-utterances of Shakespeare's plays' (2017: 2).

7 For an exploration of surveillance as a structural and as a thematic theme in the film, see Víctor Huertas Martín, "Rupert Goold's Macbeth (2010): Surveillance society and society of control," SEDERI 27 (2017): 81–103.

8 Kurzel also has Macbeth have contact with younger soldiers. As Philippa Sheppard suggests, the repeated appearance of this Soldier boy's ghost suggests a highlighting of 'Macbeth's heirless state' (2018).

9 Goold says he wanted to 'individuate' the thanes, whom he did not want to be 'a bunch of guys with kilts' that he had seen in other productions (See "Interview with Rupert Goold").

10The Lord's lines are re-assigned to Ross.

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