

Mahdi Javidshad\* 

## Individualization and Oedipalization in Reza Servati's Adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: An Expressionist Reworking

**Abstract:** This article investigates Reza Servati's *Macbeth*, an Iranian prize-winning adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, to discuss the way the adaptor prunes the source text aiming at presenting his distinctive reading of Shakespeare's play. First, this study is concerned with the way Servati minimalizes the source text and how the process of minimalization serves the adaptor's preoccupation with the psychological complexities of the characters. Second, it is discussed how Servati's changes to the source text takes the Renaissance inclination for individualism a step forward. Third, it is argued that the individualism in Servati's adaptation is aimed at Oedipalization of the play, an attempt that shows the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis. Finally, this article investigates the way Servati's adaptation can be considered as an expressionist reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by making the individualization of the plot subservient to the expression of the typical course that everyman goes through.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, Servati, adaptation, minimalism, Expressionism.

### Introduction

In the last decade, there has appeared a number of adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Iran that each infuses a certain philosophy to the source text. Amir Dezhakam's *Macbeth* (2019) mixes body language with dialogue to present a new narrative of the source text. In this work, Dezhakam incorporates the voices of new characters like commoners whose narratives have been overshadowed by Macbeth's metanarrative (With Amir Dezhakam's Explication). Amin Akbari Nasab's performance of *Macbeth* in 2018 is a faithful approach to Shakespeare's play, but the source text is abridged. The transformation of the witches to servants is one of Akbari Nasab's rare experimentations with Shakespeare's text (A Conversation with Amin Akbari Nasab).

---

\* University of Zanjan, Iran.

Ebrahim Poshte Kouhi's *Macbeth Zaar*, performed in 2012, 2017 and 2019, narrates the story of Macbeth in Hormuz Island where he murders Duncan, the chief organizer of a ritual called *Babazar* so as to become the king of those possessed by the evil spirits called *Ahl-e Hava*. Performed for more than 100 times in the last ten years in various cities in Iran, *Macbeth Zaar* has also been internationally staged in Germany, Russia, Armenia and India (Ebrahim Poshte Kouhi to Stage "Macbeth Zaar"). Behrouz Gharibpour's *Macbeth*, performed in 2007, 2014 and 2018, narrates Shakespeare's play through an opera puppet show in twenty scenes with indigenizing elements (Aran to perform "Macbeth" Opera Puppet Show).

Majid Beshkal presents another puppet show of *Macbeth* in 2018, using native symbols and signs of Bandar Abbas. Discussing indigenizing elements, Beshkal points out, "These indigenous symbols and signs serve novel analysis and ideas, and they are not decorative at all [...] in the design of the mask. I used the form of native trees with a dramatic and non-dramatic emphasis" (We All Have a Macbeth Inside Us). Masoud Tayyebi's *When Hamlet Was Killed by Macbeth's Witches* (2017) creates an intertextual relationship between *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, requiring previous knowledge of the two plays. Tayyebi's adaptation recounts the death of the witches in *Macbeth* who following spoiling the eponymous character go to Hamlet to similarly destroy him (Masoud Tayyebi's New Play Is Staged).

Neda Hengami's *Midday of Scotland* (2016) is a psychological reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. To represent the psychological complexities of Lady Macbeth from different perspectives, Hengami considers five players who simultaneously play this role (Innovation Labelling). Ehsan Zivaralam's *Should Have Died Hereafter* (2017), directed by Seyyed Reza Mousavi, is a character-oriented adaptation in which music, physical movements and special techniques in body performance are considered as the novelty of the undertaking (Macbeth Adaptation on Stage). Asghar Nouri's *Macbeth by Construction Worker* (2014) is an Iranianized account of Macbeth. Directed by Kamran Ghorbani, the adaptation was an Iranian representative in a French festival on Shakespeare (Macbeth through an Iranian Account). And, Hossein Noshir's *Macbeth* (2015) adds Iranian theatrical traditions to the narrative of the source text (Eastern Poetry Beside Scottish Violence).

Among the Iranian adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Reza Servati's *Macbeth* (first performed in 2010) has found a special place in that it could receive the Special Jury Award from the International Section of the 28<sup>th</sup> Fajr International Theater Festival in 2010. In addition, the play won the Best Director Award and the Best Costume and Stage Awards at the 12<sup>th</sup> International University Theater Festival. Servati's adaptation has also been staged internationally in Italy, Georgia, and Russia, and it was awarded the prize for the best show in the Theater for Children and Youth Category at the

19<sup>th</sup> International Theater Festival 'The Rainbow' held in Saint Petersburg, Russia ('Macbeth' Awarded in Russia). In his interviews, the adaptor describes the play as "a nonlinear narrative of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' in a nightmarish atmosphere which depicts Sisyphus' eternal punishment for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in a minimalistic performance and acting style" (Servati to Stage Iranian Adaptation).

Born in Tehran in 1983, Servati is an MA graduate of directing from Tarbiat Modares University. A prolific adaptor, he has produced many plays including *Inexhausted*, *Wonder of Creatures*, *Impression of Howling Wind Sound*, *Woyzeck*, *The List of the Dead*, *Body Wash*, and *Crime and Punishment*. For some of them, Servati has been awarded national and international prizes the most important of which are the Special Awards of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>th</sup> Fajr International Theater Festival respectively for *Wonder of Creatures* and *Woyzeck* (German Duologue; Thirty-First Fajr Theater Festival). Servati's *Macbeth* keeps to be the most award-winning of his productions and of all Iranian adaptations of Shakespeare's play.

Servati's adaptation is worth studying as the adaptor imposes his unique philosophy on the source text. Though Servati seemingly considers Shakespearean tradition a monument that should continue to be upheld, he is perceptive and creative enough to seek out his own reading of it. Such a creation shows itself in the minimalization of the plot and character to not only suit the adaptation to the taste and tolerance of contemporary audience, but to turn the Shakespearean play into an expressionist production. In fact, a remarkable feature of Servati's undertaking is its advancement of individualism in the plot and the character, while simultaneously it gives the final product a universal aspect by representing the collective psychological courses that all humans experience.

### Minimalism

Due to the political theme and the dramatization of the effective overthrow of the tyrant in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the play has been abundantly performed and adapted. *Macbeth* is the story of unbridled ambitions, temptations, murders, and revenge. It begins with temptation and the resultant loss of hierarchy, concluding with the restoration of hierarchy. Tempted by the prophecies of three witches, Macbeth murders King Duncan and becomes a tyrant compelled to commit a series of other murders to keep his illegitimate throne. Macbeth's wife, Lady Macbeth, is one of the sources of temptation for regicide. She who tries to stifle Macbeth's pangs of conscience before and immediately after the murder ends up with suicide as a result of the very voice of conscience. In addition to these characters, there are many other ones including Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Fleance, Macduff, Lady Macduff, Siward, Hecate, Captain, etc. all of

whom contribute to Macbeth's story in their own ways. While studying a given adaptation like Servati's, the first issue coming to mind is to investigate how the adaptor treats this large number of characters.

Compared with its Shakespearean counterpart, Servati's *Macbeth* is both faithful and unfaithful to the source text. On the one hand, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth meticulously articulate the poetic dialogues of the source text. On the other hand, some characters and subplots are omitted from the production. In fact, the adaptor tries to prune the source text by focusing on some scenes with the final aim of minimalizing the production to be aligned with the patience of the modern audience and of expressing his distinctive reading of the play.

One of the eye-catching aspects of Servati's adaptation is the question of language, which is as poetic and musical as possible. As Kenneth Portnoy (106) points out, "The greatest problem with a Shakespearean adaptation is poetic language. Some adaptors have attempted to deal with the language by updating it to make it more accessible to a mass audience. For the most part, these adaptations have failed." The risk of updating language is possibly rooted in the audience's expectation of classical aura while watching classics. Unlike many of his fellow Iranian adaptors, Servati does not embrace the risk of updating language and goes to one of the most poetic translations of *Macbeth*.

Among the prominent translations of *Macbeth* by such translators as Farangis Shademan, Alaeddin Pazargadi, Abdolrahim Ahmadi, and Dariush Ashouri, Servati's adaptation uses Ashouri's translation because it is the most poetic translation of the work available in Persian. Though Servati's production is classified as adaptation, the play's faithfulness to the linguistic features of the source text gives it an orthodox aspect and characterizes it as a conservative deviation. Moreover, the application of the poetic language suggests that Servati is not interested in infusing his production with social or political topicality. Thus, one cannot expect to have a realistically rendered Macbeth; rather, the audience come across an adaptation whose adaptive nature is to be looked for in the alterations it makes in pruning the source text. In other words, while the presence of Ashouri's translation in Servati's production keeps the adaptation within Shakespearean traditional aura, an investigation of the way the source text is pruned leads one to see how the adaptor presents his distinctive reading of *Macbeth*.

Servati prunes a great deal of plot and characters, and at times displaces the sequence of events of the source text. In addition, some parts of the adaptation such as its opening are creative additions of the adaptor. The play opens with a narrator who, with a candle in hands, remarks:

What bloods weren't shed before this in the olden days, before when human custom gave men human temperament. What crimes weren't committed, the ones one cannot bear to hear. Once upon a time, once a man was beheaded, he would

die. But, now he rises again with twenty prominent scars on head to rouse us. This is more astonishing than the crime. (A conversation with Reza Servati)

Simultaneously, behind the narrator, two similar characters lying on a bed struggle to come out of a cover that has enclosed them. When his monologue ends, the narrator goes to them and unzips the cover, letting them come out. One of the two lying characters, who is later shown to be Lady Macbeth, rises and in a sleepwalking manner moves ahead. The other character, who turns out to be Macbeth, remains in the bed and addresses the narrator:

MACBETH. Treat him! Treat him, doctor!

NARRATOR. This is the malady that the patient should treat by himself.

MACBETH. So, throw you medicine to the dogs. If you could detect and treat the malady of my country, I would give such a big clap for you that its echo would linger on in the air.

NARRATOR. I'm not a doctor. (Servati)

Then, the narrator raises an axe and beheads Macbeth. While the head remains on the bed, the trembling body helped by the narrator rises and, while clapping, moves towards the Lady. This creatively opening, dramatic scene prepares the audience for the centrality of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the play.

In most parts of the adaptation, it is Macbeth and the Lady who are on the stage. The opening scenes of the source text in which Duncan, Malcolm, Captain, Banquo, and Ross are included are all omitted in Servati's adaptation. Such an omission divests the political aspect of the source text, shedding light on its psychological significance. Among the included characters are the three witches of the source text who have turned into male characters wearing military costumes, one of whom acts also as the narrator in the opening scene. In marching movements, they utter some of the witches' dialogues and when Macbeth appears they honor and coronate him in military manners. Duncan whose royal power is an object of desire and temptation is mentioned in the play, but never appears on the stage. Thus, what is present on the stage is Macbeth and his Lady with the temptation for power.

From the very opening when Macbeth and the Lady struggle under the cover on the bed, the audience come to realize the striking similarity between the two: both are bald and the two strongly resemble each other in height and physique. These similarities become more eye-catching when the audience see that Lady Macbeth is a man. The two's clothing characterized by minimalism is also to some extent similar. Both are clothed with simple, torn garments, with the difference being in Lady's thick unitard covering her entire shape under the torn costume. The similarity between Macbeth and the Lady is further emphasized in the scene Lady Macbeth reads Macbeth's letter:

[Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter]

‘They met me in the day of success: and I have learn’d by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me ‘Thane of Cawdor;’ by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with ‘Hail, king that shalt be!’ This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.’

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
 What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;  
 It is too full o’ the milk of human kindness  
 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;  
 Art not without ambition, but without  
 The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,  
 That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
 And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou’ldst have, great Glamis,  
 That which cries ‘Thus thou must do, if thou have it;  
 And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
 Than wishest should be undone.’ Hie thee hither,  
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;  
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
 To have thee crown’d withal. (1:5:1-29)

Unlike the source text in which Lady Macbeth reads the letter, Servati’s play involves both Macbeth and Lady in the reading of the letter. At first, Macbeth is shown preparing to write the letter by spreading a sheet with a quill in hand. Remarkably, the ink by which he writes is actually Macbeth’s blood. Before starting to write, Macbeth pierces his wrist with a dagger, using the blood coming out as the ink to write. However, the process is shown metaphorically. The dagger is made of glass and the blood does not stream down, but the eruption is communicated through the reddening of the spot on which Macbeth lies to write. This and other similar metaphorical representations seem to be preparing the audience to consider Lady Macbeth not as a distinct entity, but as a metaphorical character who is in fact a part of Macbeth. Macbeth begins reading aloud the opening lines of the letter, then Lady Macbeth repeats what he

reads, and finally it is only Lady Macbeth that reads the letter. The shift in reading is emphasized by stage lighting. When Macbeth prepares and begins to read, lighting is focused on him. When Lady Macbeth begins to repeat, light is shed on both of them. And when Lady becomes the sole reader, the lighting focus is removed from Macbeth and is solely shed on Lady.

Through emphasizing Macbeth and Lady's similarity in appearance and also applying the lighting techniques, Servati's *Macbeth* seems to be indicating that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are actually two outward manifestations of a single character. The fact that the two share reading a passage that belongs to Lady Macbeth in the source text and that the letter is written by Macbeth's blood, which suggests a close bond between the two, adds to the likelihood of considering the two as one. The unification of Macbeth and Lady as well as the omission of such important characters as Duncan, Malcolm, and Banquo in Servati's adaptation suggest that the adaptor prunes the source text to primarily focus on the character of Macbeth. Thus, minimalism practiced in various aspects including the plot, the costumes and lighting aims to underline the psychological complexities of the central character.

### **Collective versus individual**

The minimalism politics adopted by Servati is in fact an extraction of a distinctive story from the source text. This is clearly stated by the adaptor in his interview: "Regarding the text, I've had a minimalist approach because the modern audience is not patient enough to watch the five acts of *Macbeth* in its classical form. I've extracted a summary from the text which emphasizes the two central characters: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth" (A conversation with Reza Servati). The summary Servati extracts from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is predominantly focused on Macbeth and the lady, and since these two can be taken as the two sides of a single character, it is possible to argue that Servati's adaptation takes the Renaissance inclination for individualism a step forward.

The spirit of the age in the Renaissance compelled authors to resist the kind of characterization in the Middle Ages that saw humans more as types than individuals. The Protestant Reformation and the rise of Humanism paved the way for greater personal experience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Martin Luther's rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church and its imposition of strictly official guidelines for the achievement of salvation led to a greater level of individualistic religious experience. Emphasizing a firsthand experience of the Bible through reading it in native languages, not in Latin, the official language of the Church, Luther struggled to dissociate Christianity from the oppressive institutionalism of the church to finally argue that each individual had a unique relationship with God and that salvation could be achieved only

through each individual's faith (Semenza vii-viii). As religion enjoyed a high status in the sixteenth century, the transition in the outlook on humanity from institutionalism to individualism was extended to literature.

One of the manifestations of the transition in literature can be found in Shakespeare's oeuvre. Having such plays as *Everyman* and *Mankind*, whose titles indicate conventionality and typicality, as their predecessors, Shakespeare's plays were struggling to be disentangled from institutionalism by being concerned with the psychological complexities of individual characters. As such titles as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* indicate, Shakespeare contributed to the Renaissance project of furthering individualism through creating individualistically complex characters who had unique concerns and distinctive means of expressing themselves. Thus, unlike their predecessors, Shakespeare's plays were not blatantly religious and allegorical; rather, they were seemingly conscious attempts on the part of the playwright to extract individuality from topicality.

Shakespeare's celebration of individualism was among beginning instigators of a process that continues to be developed and evolved to date. As Gregory M. Colón Semenza (xii) in *Encyclopedia of British Writers, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* points out, "Between the Renaissance and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English literature and philosophy is defined by a gradual turn inward—away from the necessity of comprehending God as a completely sovereign being and toward the god in man (and, eventually, in woman)." Though Shakespeare's contribution was a significant step forward in implementing individualism in literature, it was still far from the ideal in that the playwright's characters, though characterized by unique personalities, were conventionally members of royalty.

It was in the Romantic era that individualism came to its acme through the dethronement of omnipresent royal characters from their rank in literature. The titles and content of such Romantic poems as "The Solitary Reaper," "Lucy Gray" and "Michael" testify to the individualistic project that William Wordsworth (935) one of the greatest theoreticians of Romanticism, tried to advance in literature: "to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men." The Romantic individualism was furthered through the efforts of modernist and postmodernist writers. As classic works of modernist literature, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) were so individualistic in characterization that they depicted a single day in the lives of their characters. Postmodernism has been the final blow to the inclination for institutionalism and typicality by extending the idea of individualism in literary characterization to the consideration of readers as important contributors to the process of interpretation. The often-quoted proclamation "death of the author" best exemplifies this inclination for giving

centrality to individual readers. Considering this centuries-long course of evolutionary individualism, the question that might arise is whether Shakespeare's plays would be written in their present structure if the playwright was a twentieth-century writer. The answer is somehow guessable: most probably no.

Servati seems to be having this idea of evolutionary individualism in mind when he decides to adapt Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The way he prunes the source text indicates that the adaptor evolves its individualism into a modernist one. In fact, Servati turns Shakespeare's play into a twentieth-century text in which the central character's psychological complexities are the sole concern. This is why Lady Macbeth needs to be taken as a part of Macbeth, not as a distinct character. This appropriation of Lady Macbeth for the representation of Macbeth's psychological complexities is seen in other occasions. For instance, in his monologue following the witches' disappearance, Macbeth utters Banquo's dialogue: "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / And these are of them.—Whither are they vanish'd?" (1:3:79-80) Or, some of the dialogues uttered by the omitted characters of the source text are articulated by witches, who themselves are the outward manifestations of Macbeth's temptations. In fact, it is possible to argue that all characters in the source text are appositely appropriated to serve Macbeth's individuality.

The aforementioned instances indicate that there is a close relationship between minimalism and individualism in Servati's *Macbeth*. Appearing in different facets including plot, characterization, scenery, and costume, minimalism is exercised by Servati to modernize Shakespeare's play and adapt it to the current philosophical approaches to man. Though the play creates a conventional and institutional mood by alluding to nobility, it undermines it through exercising minimalism in costume. Servati's Macbeth is not clothed proportionately to an army general or the king of Scotland, and his Lady Macbeth does not wear her formal outfit. Though she changes her outfit following Duncan's murder, her outfit is a simple cape with no royal splendor which is apparently intended to act a sign to indicate that Macbeth is now the king. The simple, torn garments are actually indications of the realities under the royal costumes. The cuts on the two's cloths signify the psychological shortcomings that may be hidden under majestic appearances. Thus, minimalism in costume design is another attempt at furthering the ideal of individualism.

In Servati's *Macbeth*, the relationship between minimalism and individuality is also demonstrated in a specific use of scenery. In most parts of the play when Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, whether alone or together, are on the stage, light is merely shed on them while there is no decoration around. Since the scene is predominantly dark except for the place where the two stand, the audience can focus primarily on actions and reactions of the characters. The audience are driven to the conclusion that there is nothing but the central

characters on stage and that the two are the only source of entertainment and contemplation. In fact, the minimalism acted upon the scenery is another contribution to the achievement of individualism in the play.

### Oedipalization of plot

Servati's minimalism serves the inclination for individualism, and in turn the individualism in question serves the reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in psychological terms. Due to the way Servati prunes the text and also the way he adds some creative scenes, one can argue that the adaptor's minimalism sheds a greater deal of light on the psychological concerns of the source text. In the source text, Macbeth's insatiable thirst for power is represented through the regicide he commits. Being the most horrible of all the possible crimes Macbeth could commit, regicide is informed by some Oedipal motivation. If Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are taken to be the two sides of a single character, Lady's apprehensive words in the following monologue suggest the Oedipal aspect of the regicide:

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,  
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't. (2:2:9-13)

This is further substantiated by Macbeth's use of the word "parricide" in his denunciation of the murder when he projects his own Oedipal impulses onto Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain (Reid 120). Considering the murder of Duncan as "little else than parricide," prominent psychoanalysts Otto Rank, Sigmund Freud, and Ludwig Jekels unanimously equal Macbeth with Oedipus (Marino 225). Bloom (4) observes that Macbeth is "troublingly sympathetic" because "he represents our own Oedipal ambitions." Though Macbeth is responsible for a succession of other murders including those of the king's guards, Banquo, Lady Macduff and her family and household, and Young Siward, it is the murder of Duncan that can be regarded as Oedipal. Robert Lanter Reid (118), referring to L. Veszy-Wagner, "Macbeth: 'Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair'" (1968), classifies Macbeth's murders in terms of human bond, associating his murder of Duncan with the elimination of father figure: "Macbeth murders first a politically authoritative *parental ruler*, then a *brotherly friend* (his "chiefest friend" according to Holinshed), and finally a *mother and her children*." Faced with these significant murders, Servati's adaptation

excludes two of the three to be focused primarily on Macbeth's dealings with the "parental ruler."

The emphasis on the murder of the "parental ruler" in Servati's *Macbeth* means that the adaptor further Oedipalizes the plot. Though the plot of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is characterized by Oedipalization, Servati's minimalism and the resultant individualization make the theme stick out. It is most probably due to this emphasis that Servati insists on striking similarities between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to indicate that the two are in fact one. It is remarkable that Freud in his critical study of *Macbeth* points to this unity. In his article entitled "Some Character-Types Met within Psycho-Analytic Work" (1916), Freud (165) refers to Jekels' insightful comment about Shakespearean characterization and applies it to Macbeth and Lady:

Ludwig Jekels, in a recent Shakespearean study, thinks he has discovered a particular technique of the poet's, and this might apply to *Macbeth*. He believes that Shakespeare often splits a character up into two personages, which, taken separately, are not completely understandable and do not become so until they are brought together once more into a unity. This might be so with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In that case it would of course be pointless to regard her as an independent character and seek to discover the motives for her change, without considering the Macbeth who completes her.

Considering Lady Macbeth's reluctance to kill Duncan because the king resembles her father, Freud's consideration of the two as one further supports the claim of Oedipal relationship in the play. Also, Macbeth's accusation of Malcolm and Donalbain through the expression "cruel parricide" (3:1:33) is a defense mechanism that refers to his inner turmoil coming from the violation of paternal rules. Since the defense mechanism in question appears in the form of projection, one can see how other characters in general reflect the psychological complexities of Macbeth. This interpersonal association is in some cases detectable between Macbeth and other male characters such as Banquo, Malcolm and Donalbain, but comes to its acme between Macbeth and Lady to the point that it finds intrapersonal significance. Concerned with the complementary role and intrapersonal relationship of Lady Macbeth with Macbeth, Freud (165-166) proceeds to elaborate on it by referring to the events of the play:

the germs of fear which break out in Macbeth on the night of the murder do not develop further in *him* but in *her*. It is he who has the hallucination of the dagger before the crime; but it is she who afterwards falls ill of a mental disorder. It is he who after the murder hears the cry in the house: 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep . . .' and so 'Macbeth shall sleep no more'; but we never hear that *he* slept no more. while the Queen, as we see, rises from

her bed and, talking in her sleep, betrays her guilt. It is he who stands helpless with bloody hands, lamenting that 'all great Neptune's ocean' will not wash them clean. While she comforts him: 'A little water clears us of this deed'; but later it is she who washes her hands for a quarter of an hour and cannot get rid of the bloodstains: 'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' Thus what he feared in his pangs of conscience is fulfilled in her; she becomes all remorse and he all defiance. Together they exhaust the possibilities of reaction to the crime, like two disunited parts of a single psychological individuality, and it may be that they are both copied from a single prototype.

Servati seems to be a true disciple of Freud in that he apparently finds it futile to regard Lady and Macbeth as independent characters. Knowing that the true psychological message of *Macbeth* is communicated through seeing Macbeth and Lady as two sides of a single character, Servati minimalizes the source text to present a Freudian reading of the play. In Servati's play, when Macbeth's voice is merged with Lady's through reading aloud Macbeth's letter, the unification of the two that Freud envisages is symbolically achieved. Also, when the audience come across the fact that against their expectations a man plays the role of a woman, they undergo the experience of defamiliarization, and as a result they are invited to contemplate and participate in the process of interpretation.

Remarkably, the play begins with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth lying on a bed and ends with the two talking in bed. This dreamlike opening and closing inside which the story is narrated is another indication that the adaptor aims to have a psychoanalytic reading of the source text. In an often-quoted statement, Freud (qtd. in Lear 90) argues: "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind." This presupposes that dreams are a place where unconscious desires and anxieties are manifest. Since Servati opens up a view of the unconscious world of the protagonists, he is further authorized to represent characters psychoanalytically and take the two to be one. Presenting the unconscious world on stage, Servati takes Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to be the animus and anima of one another and juxtaposes the two sides to reveal the psychological complexities of an individual man on stage.

Though Servati's *Macbeth* is highly individualized, the individual character on stage has a collective message as he represents collective desires and anxieties of all humans. Taking Macbeth's regicide as parricide, the story of Macbeth and his apprehensive struggle against the paternal power is in fact the story of all humans. Servati's minimalism to finally unify Macbeth and Lady Macbeth leads to an emphasis on such a struggle. Even in the source text the Oedipal struggle is evident, though it may be somehow overshadowed by political discussions and the relatively large number of characters on stage. Discussing the parental violation in the play, Reid (121) argues:

By furtively killing the king they not only destroy the bond with this androgynous parent, they also violate the illuminating and consolidating powers of their own superego, or conscience, inducing a deeper regression into self-divisive and annihilative ego defenses.

Reid's argument, like that of Freud, sees the Oedipal relationship between Macbeth and Duncan as happening within the aggressor's unconscious. Such commentaries are actually critical attempts to shed light on an aspect of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, namely psychoanalysis. Servati brings such commentaries to his dramaturgy to highlight the psychoanalytic aspects of the source text and to further emphasize that the struggle the audience see is not merely the one between a general and a king, but the one between all humans and parental power existing in their unconscious mind.

Thus, the nightmarish opening and closing scenes of Servati's *Macbeth* suggest the nightmarish life that everyman may have from his or her beginning to end. Servati's emphasis on the nightmarish Oedipal sufferings everyman may experience makes it possible to regard his adaptation as an expressionistic production. Defining the term, Stanley Hochman (234-235) points out:

The expressionists took a highly subjective view of reality, attempting in their dramas to capture man's subconscious reality in terms of dramatic images, no matter how distorted and grotesque [...] The expressionist playwright, whose viewpoint is first and foremost subjective, also tends to give only the main character, his spokesman, any psychological depth; the other characters are seen only through the hero's eyes and are therefore distorted.

The characteristics Hochman enumerates are all present in Servati's adaptation. Servati's subjectification of plot serves its Oedipalization to finally provide psychological depth to the central character. Also the emphasis Servati puts on the Sisyphean nature of his adaptation suggests the repetition of Macbeth throughout history. As it was aforementioned, Macbeth and his other half, Lady Macbeth, struggle under a cover to be let out. When the cover is unzipped, they are actually reborn into the world. Since the concluding scene is similar to the opening one in that the protagonists begin and end in bed, it is possible to conclude that the dreamlike nature of the adaptation aims to expose the cyclic nature of the collective unconscious. This issue is mentioned by Servati (Reza Servati: *Our Macbeth*) in an interview:

We have a nightmarish approach to the performance. All through, it focuses on presenting a nonlinear narrative of a play about punishment, death, and the repetition of the punishment in a nightmarish and absolutely expressionist atmosphere. What the characters did was in vain, and if the whole play was in vain, we wouldn't stage it! This cycle should be seen in order that criminals appear in front of the audience.

Servati's *Macbeth* and Lady Macbeth are a single entity capable of being repeated throughout ages. Though Servati convincingly argues that his nightmarish adaptation repeats criminals on the stage, due to the emphasis on the individualized power relations between the protagonist and father figure, Servati's unique *Macbeth* represent the story of everyman. In fact, *Macbeth* and Lady Macbeth are minimalized to have a further universal aspect and they are repeated on stage to reflect the collective psychological complexities of man including the unbridled thirst for power and the resultant anxieties and consequences.

### Conclusion

Servati's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is an expressionist reworking of the source text to emphasize the psychological complexities of the central character. Servati detects and extracts a distinctive text from the source text to delve into Macbeth's unconscious world. As a result, the adaptor makes everything, even Lady Macbeth, subservient to this representation. The minimalism exercised on the source text and the resultant individualism is an attempt to achieve the extraction in question. Lady Macbeth is represented as a male character bearing facial and bodily resemblance to Macbeth to communicate the idea that she is a part existing in Macbeth's psyche. However, the emphasis on the cyclic nature of the tragedy that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth experience removes any local relevance, giving the individualized text a universal aspect and a global audience. Thus, Servati's *Macbeth* can be taken as the nightmarish story of everyman involved in a power struggle against authority of all kinds.

### WORKS CITED

- A Conversation with Reza Servati. Iran Theater. 1 May 2010. <https://theater.ir/fa/19466>
- A Conversation with Amin Akbari Nasab. Iran Theater. 3 November 2018. <https://theater.ir/fa/113047>
- Aran to Perform "Macbeth" Opera Puppet Show. *Tehran Times*. 11 February 2018. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/421163/Aran-to-perform-Macbeth-opera-puppet-show>
- Bloom, Harold (ed.), *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010.
- Eastern Poetry Beside Scottish Violence / Hossein Noshir Comes to Fajr Festival with "Macbeth." Honaronline. 6 January 2015. <https://theater.ir/fa/44255>

- Ebrahim Poshte Kouhi to Stage "Macbeth Zaar." Iran Theater. 6 March 2018. <https://theater.ir/en/105607>
- Freud, Sigmund. *Writings on Art and Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- German Duologue "Pandora 88" Grabs Fajr Grand Prize. Mehr News. 21 February 2011. <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/44745/German-duologue-Pandora-88-grabs-Fajr-Grand-Prize>
- Hochman, Stanley. *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama: An International Reference Work in 5 Volumes*. Vol. 1. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.
- Innovation Labelling: A Look at *Midday of Scotland*. Directed by Neda Hengami. Honaronline. 2 February 2017. <http://www.honaronline.ir>
- Lear, Jonathan. *Freud*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.
- Macbeth Adaptation on Stage after Tough Rehearsals. Honaronline. 16 May 2017. <http://www.honaronline.ir/Section-performance-3/98840-macbeth-adaptation-on-stage-after-tough-rehearsals>
- 'Macbeth' Awarded in Russia. Financial Tribune. 28 May 2016. <https://financialtribune.com/articles/art-and-culture/42414/macbeth-awarded-in-russia>
- Macbeth through an Iranian Account in France Shakespeare Festival. Iran Theater. 28 July 2014. <https://theater.ir/fa/40888>
- Marino, James J. "All Macbeth's Sons." In *Childhood, Education and the Stage in Early Modern England*. Eds. Richard Preiss and Deanne Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017: 225-244.
- Masoud Tayyebi's New Play Is Staged. Iran Theater. 10 September 2017. <https://theater.ir/fa/98860>
- Portnoy, Kenneth. *Screen adaptation: a scriptwriting handbook*. Routledge, 2012.
- Reid, Robert Lanier. "Macbeth's Three Murders." In *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010: 117-130.
- Reza Servati: Our Macbeth is a Different Macbeth. Farhang va Honar. 2 May 2010. <http://fhnews.ir/fa/news/14920>
- Semenza, Gregory M. Colón. Introduction. *Encyclopedia of British Writers, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Ed. Alan Hager. New York: Facts on File, 2005: vii-xii.
- Servati, Reza. *Macbeth*. By William Shakespeare. CD-ROM. Tehran: Beethoven Music Center, 2012.
- Servati to Stage Iranian Adaptation of "Macbeth" in Georgia. *Tehran Times*. 29 May 2010. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/220352/Servati-to-stage-Iranian-adaptation-of-Macbeth-in-Georgia>
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. *Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works*. 2nd edition. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, William Montgomery. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Thirty-First Fajr Theater Festival Names Winners. IRNA. 31 January 2013. <https://www.irna.ir/news/80522513/>
- We All Have a Macbeth Inside Us. Iran Theater. 28 July 2018. <https://theater.ir/en/108816>

With Amir Dezhakam's Explication of the Word "Common Understanding," "Macbeth" was Inaugurated in Memory of Flood Stricken People. Iran Theater. 7 April 2019. <https://theater.ir/fa/119365>

Wordsworth, William. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth: With Introduction and Notes*. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1914.