

SHAKESPEARE'S VALIDITY THROUGH MACBETH

Lampit lit.

Armed

“When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.”
-William Shakespeare-

I would like to thank my tutor, my teachers for helping me with some parts of my research, the specialists Ramon Ferrer and Bet Piella for helping me to contact some interviewed professionals, my parents for offering help and being there when I needed it, the professionals David Plana, Ernest Villegas, Guillem Balart, Joan Carreras, Marta Marco, Oriol Broggi, Sergi Belbel, Víctor Sunyol, Xavier Albertí, Xavier Boada and Lluís Soler for answering all my questions. Also, the actors and actresses Antoni Anglada, Montse Anglada, Jordi Arqués, Rosa, Baulenas, Anna Bussanya, Ivette Callís, Marc Casanova, Júlia Cervera, Abel Cobos, Marcel Cobos, Dolors Collell, Neus Colomer, Pep Colomer, Àngela Coma, Montse Damian, Mercè Estrada, Pep Font, Xevi Font, Irene Gutiérrez, Emili Jané, Núria Jané, Pep Jané, Miquel López, Laia Monforte, Josep Maria Pradell, Abel Reyes, Mima Riera, Montse Rodríguez, Joan Roura, Maria Soler, Marian Toril and Susagna Tubau for being in the videos.

I want to dedicate this project to everybody who helped Shakespeare to get into our times, directors, actors, translators, editors and even singers among others.

Abstract

Keeping in mind that British history, literature and theatre are topics which can be both amazing and boring depending on the kind of people you talk to, the project is focused on Shakespeare and finding out how current he still is.

After doing such things as learning about his era, analysing *Macbeth*, searching his concepts in current series and interviewing some important people for Catalonia's theatre, we came to a conclusion: Shakespeare is and will always be current, since humans are in constant change, but his concepts are always with us.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Macbeth, validity and youth.

Tenint en compte que la història britànica, la literatura i el teatre són temes que poden ser fascinants o avorrits segons el tipus de persona amb qui parlis, el projecte es centra en Shakespeare i en descobrir com de vigent és.

Després de fer coses com aprendre sobre l'època, analitzar *Macbeth*, buscar els seus conceptes a les sèries actuals i entrevistant algunes persones importants pel teatre català, hem arribat a una conclusió: Shakespeare és i sempre serà vigent, ja que els humans pateixen canvis constants, però els seus conceptes estan sempre amb nosaltres.

Paraules clau: Shakespeare, Macbeth, vigència i joventut.

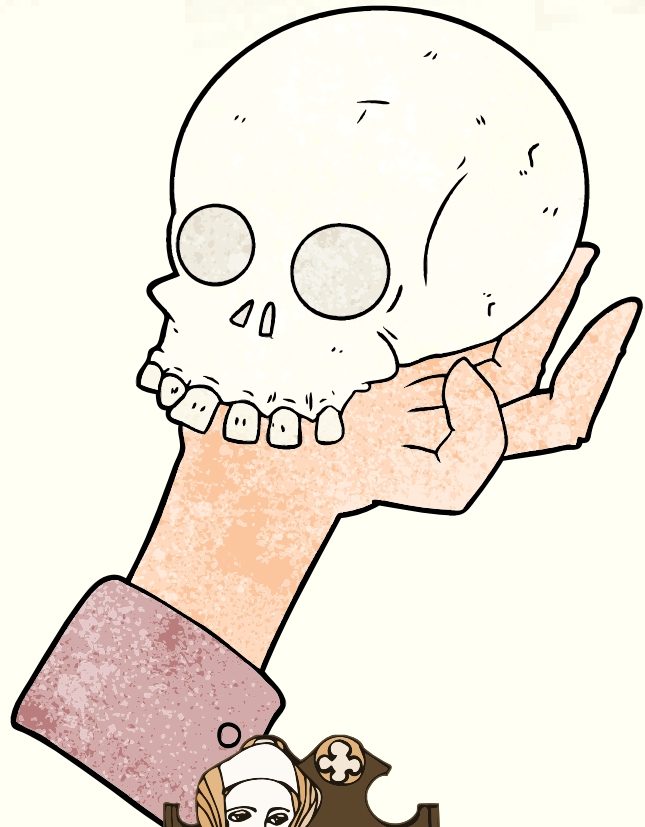
Teniendo en cuenta que el interés por la historia británica, la literatura y el teatro son temas fascinantes o aburridos según el tipo de persona con el que hables, el proyecto se centra en Shakespeare y en descubrir como de vigente es.

Después de hacer cosas como aprender sobre la época, analizar *Macbeth*, buscar sus conceptos en las series actuales y entrevistando algunas personas importantes para el teatro catalán, llegamos a una conclusion. Shakespeare es y siempre será vigente, ya que los humanos sufren cambios constantes, pero sus conceptos están siempre con nosotros.

Palabras clave: Shakespeare, Macbeth, vigencia y juventud.

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Theoretical Part



William Shakespeare published *Macbeth* 4 centuries ago, but its concepts and feelings are still current. I would like to know why this is like that, when people from the 17th century were really different from us. We have similar feelings and, amazingly, we identify ourselves with characters from a theatre play which is 400 years old.

“Com un vers que porta escrit 400 anys, pot estar parlant clarament de mi?”, this quote from the song “Apunto Shakespeare” by Els Amics de les Arts, was the one to make me have grown interest in this subject. The quote translation would be, “How can a verse written 400 years ago be clearly talking about me?”. I remember hearing it and thinking that it was true and feeling interested in the subject. I heard many current love songs, such as *Love Story* by Taylor Swift and *I Love You Will You Marry Me* by YUNGBLUD, talking about *Romeo and Juliet*, which made me wonder how teenagers see this author. Furthermore, I talked with people I know from my age who do not know him, but they have the same feelings he wrote about and shared with the world. Many of them have seen film adaptations of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, or even other stories inspired by it, like *West Side Story* or “*Mar i Cel*”. Moreover, as a kid, I grew up watching Shakespeare's plays and movies, and he became my favourite writer at a very young age.

Historical context

By the end of the 14th century, the house of Tudor became the ruling family of England (Britannica, n.d.), after the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485). The 15th century had a big economical instability caused by the changes in religion when



Fig. 1, Henry VIII

The Six Wives of Henry VIII



Fig. 2, The Six Wives of Henry VIII

Henry VIII (fig. 1) broke England from the Church in 1527. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022)

This was because he wanted to divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon (Pruitt, 2018). That was the first of 6 wives (fig. 2), divorcing 2 of them, Catherine of Aragon and

Anne of Cleves, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard were beheaded, Jane Seymour died, and finally, Catherine Parr was the last one as well as the one who saw him dying. (Ponti, 2021)

The main religion in England was Anglicanism. However, in 1534 it was divided between different beliefs: Anglicanism, Baptism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Puritanism. (Wikipedia, n.d.) Not only did he break with the church, but also he united Wales with England. In that period, corsairs



Fig. 3, Sir Francis Drake

appeared, the most important one was Sir Francis Drake. (Fig. 3)



Fig. 4, Bloody Mary

Mary I, also known as Bloody Mary, (fig. 4) was the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon (Simons, 2022). She became queen in 1553. She restored Roman Catholicism after many years. She was called because she oppressed and executed Protestant rebels. (McIlvenna, 2018)

Elizabeth I started her reign in 1558 and began a colonial expansion, one of the most important things was when the British forces, in 1588 defeated the “invincible Armada” from Spain. (Tudors & Stuarts, n.d.) Theatres during Shakespeare's era were basically amphitheatres and indoor playhouses (Britannica, n.d.). They were built outside the city walls because the government believed that they were loud and attracted undesired people as well. (Shakespeare's Globe, n.d.)



Fig. 5, The Globe Theatre

William Shakespeare's life



Fig. 6, William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (Fig. 6) was an English poet and playwright, considered to be one of the greatest authors in world literature. He was born in April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon and died on the 23rd of April in 1616, just the day after Miguel de Cervantes died (CNN Español, 2022). His father was John Shakespeare, a gloves' maker. His mother was Mary Shakespeare, a housekeeper.

He was the third of eight siblings. Two of them died a few days after they were born, two more died in their teenage years, two girls were married truly young, and the other one quitted studies to be a butcher. Shakespeare's family was chased because of their catholic beliefs.

He lived his early years in Stratford with his family, studying. When he was 18, he married Anne Hathaway (Fig. 7), who was 26 years old, divorced, and had also been pregnant for 3 months with their first daughter, Susanna. Two years later, in 1585 they would have twins, Hamnet and Judith (Fig. 8). William had some money his father gave him, so he did not need to work and started to raise interest in literature, reading and writing his own poems. He lived with his family in London, since it was a way to



Fig. 7, Anne Hathaway



Fig. 8, Shakespeare and his family

have a better

future. There he started publishing poetry and became interested in theatre. He tended to go to pubs and establishments where actors met, and he made himself known as a

dramatist. In 1595, together with the actors he met, they created a theatre company called *Lord Chamberlain's Men*, where not only he wrote, but also acted. At that time, women could not be actresses, so every feminine character had to be performed by a man. Shakespeare would often dress as a woman and be Lady Macbeth or a witch. His fame grew and he became a celebrity. He was a modern man, he wore an earring and frequented every palace party. His first plays seem to be written between the 1580s and the mid-1590s. During those years Shakespeare wrote plays such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midnight Summer's Dream*, *Richard III* and *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Between 1596 and 1600 he mostly wrote comedies like *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado About Nothing* as well as histories including *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*. In 1599, he made built The Globe Theatre (Fig. 9), where the tickets were sold out for every performance. Thanks to this he made a lot of money and bought lands in Stratford-upon-Avon to go back there with his family since he was tired of living in the big city



Fig. 9, Shakespeare's house called New Place

(Fig. 9). He gave the management of the theatre to the other stockholders. Some of his most important works were written between 1600 and 1607, those are the tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. In 1613, during a performance of *Henry VII*, they had to shoot a cannon. However, the cannon was packed, and the big flame burned the curtain. Furthermore, the building was made of wood, so soon the theatre was burned down in ashes. Despite that, the following day Shakespeare commanded to build it again and a year later, The Globe Theatre was reopened. Until 1614, he wrote his late works were tragedies and fantastical romances, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest* respectively. He kept advising young actors and playwrights. In 1616, after his

friends Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton visited him, William mentioned to his wife that he was not feeling good. He had high fevers, and two days later, from his bed, he requested his notary for writing his will. He died on the 23rd of April 1616 in his house. He was buried in the Holy Trinity Church in his hometown,



Fig. 10, Shakespeare's grave in his hometown

where he can still be visited. His resting place (Fig. 10) has an inscription which says in an ancient way: *“Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear, To dig the dust enclosed here; Blessed be the man that spares these stones, And cursed be he that moves my bones.”*

His plays are highlighted by their vivid, subtle and extraordinary poetry style with an extremely original use of English. (Bevington et al., n.d.) He wanted to improve and reinvent the English language. It is believed that he created more than 3000 new words. Not only that, but also names such as Jessica, which was seen for the first time in *The Merchant of Venice*. His sonnets display sensitivity in a controlled way.

Macbeth's historical context and inspirations

Macbeth was written around 1606. Shakespeare wrote between Elizabeth I (Fig.

11) and James I (Fig. 12) times. His works during Elizabeth's reign contained subjects such as confidence, happiness and love. However, during James I reign, his works were more cynical and dark, and reflected the insecurities of the King.



Fig. 11, Queen Elizabeth I

Shakespeare wrote his plays for everyone, not only wealthy people. He reflected the concerns of the time in his plays, so he usually talked about kings and queens struggling to not lose their power. In that era, not only witches were seen as dark and associated with death, but also Christian countries called them Satan's agents and that their acts at night were evil. (Wikipedia, 2022) In *Macbeth*, and many other plays, Shakespeare wrote about witchcraft and supernatural events,



Fig. 12, King James I

and they became of high interest. It is believed that the characters in *Macbeth* are influenced by James I and his family, since he once was James VI of Scotland, where *Macbeth's* actions take place. (CONTEXT - MACBETH, n.d.) Elizabeth I was the last from the Tudor dynasty, and James I was from the Stuart one. He was the first to translate the first

Bible in English.

Shakespeare wrote different types of plays, such as tragedies, comedies and historical. He based on English Kings' histories. They did not always tell the

truth, but the official version, which means the one that pleased the monarchs. Shakespeare was often inspired by the court policies, apart from what people spoke in the streets.

When James I got to the crown, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*. In that play, we can notice the three witches, who were highly regarded by the King.

Some other works, including *The Merchant of Venice* as well as *Twelfth Night*, were set in Italy. This country was far from England, therefore was sometimes seen as a fantasy kingdom. Moreover, Italians were a common English joke target, most likely given the fact that the Pope lived there. Shakespeare, additionally, made use of histories from ancient books for his non-historical plays. He based on Latin and Greek authors along with adapting tales from other parts of Europe. *Hamlet* is inspired by a Scandinavian myth, yet, *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* comes from an Italian author concurrent to Shakespeare. Adapting pieces from other writers was ordinary back in that day. However, Shakespeare sometimes mixed different scripts and made his own details. Just as he did during his time, nowadays, many popular movies take Shakespeare's ideas, proving this way how current he still is. (BBC, 2022)

Shakespeare appropriated many thoughts from the book by Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (Fig. 13). This volume was published for the first time in 1577 even though Shakespeare used the 1587 version. It was a popular history, known indeed by William and his coetaneous.



Fig. 13, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*

Shakespeare had previously used *Holinshed* for his English historical pieces. *Macbeth* is based on the reigns of Duncan and Macbeth, in *Chronicles of Scotland* even if they had some remarkable differences. For instance, in that book, Banquo was the accomplice of Macbeth in the plot to overcome King Duncan. In spite of

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that, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare remodels Banquo and his heir, to convert them into Macbeth's opponents. That is, undoubtedly in order to charm James I. To portray a King's relative as a murderer would have been absurdly precarious. (Harlan, n.d.)

The curse of the Scottish Play

Many people, mostly in the United Kingdom, use the term “The Scottish Play” to talk about *Macbeth*. In English-speaking countries, it is forbidden to pronounce this name in theatres. In the Barrymore Theatre, in New York, a warning sign was hanging on the door (Fig. 14), which said the following words: “You are about to enter the Barrymore Theatre. The



Fig. 14, Warning sign at the Barrymore Theatre



Fig. 15, Royal Shakespeare Theatre

(Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.)

Producers ask that you please refrain from speaking the name of the play you are about to see while inside these walls.” (Editorial Staff from Theater Mania, 2013).

If you pronounce it in Stratford-Upon-Avon, the Royal Shakespeare Company (Fig. 15) has its own method to try and save everything from the disaster. “Exit the theatre, spin around three times, spit, curse and then knock on the theatre door to be allowed back in...”

This curse comes from the time the play is set in, Scotland from the 17th century. James VI was the king, he was obsessed with witchcraft since her mother's death, Mary Queen of Scots (Fig. 16), who died brutally executed by her cousin, Elizabeth I, in 1587. Two years later, James was



Fig. 16, Mary Queen of Scots

returning from Denmark when the ship where he and Anne, his wife, were travelling, was hit by hard storms, and they nearly drowned. The king accused the witches of causing that storm. From that time on, witches' hunt was usual. As we know, witches appear in this play.

It is believed that the curse started on the day of the play's opening. There's a legend which tells that the actor supposed to play Lady Macbeth died unexpectedly, and Shakespeare had to perform the part. The actor playing King Duncan also died due to the use of real daggers onstage.

However, this is not the only curse. It is said to be a curse thrown by the witches of those times, who disliked the characters that Shakespeare created with their inspiration.

The fact is that this play has always had accidents. In 1849, in the Astor Place of New York (Fig. 17), fans of Edwin Forrest and William Charles McCready, two rival actors who performed the play in two different productions, fought, causing the death of 20 people and more than a hundred wounded people. (Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.)



Fig. 17, Astor Place Riot



Fig. 18, Laurence Olivier as Macbeth

An actor who was performing as Duncan in Amsterdam, in the 17th century, died after being stabbed by a real dagger. In 1947, during a battle on stage, Harold Norman, representing *Macbeth*, died. Laurence Olivier (Fig. 18) was about to pass out since, during a scene, a counterpoise fell a few centimetres away from the actor. Three actors died during

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a performance of the play in 1942, directed by John Gielgud. In 1948, Diana Wynyard, playing Lady Macbeth, fell in the orchestra's ditch of 4 metres and a half. She decided to do the sleepwalking scene with her eyes closed in order to mock the jinx. (Davenport & Bravo, 2019)

How to know if Shakespeare is still current

There are many things from his times that remind us of our times, for instance, we have: (Cultura Inbal, n.d.)

- *Venus and Adonis* was a poem written during the confinement and closing of the theatres in London due to an outbreak of a plague (1593). A poem about love, passion, and eroticism.
- *The rape of Lucrece* (1594) is a poem talking about sexual violence and the destruction of the woman for the fact of being a woman. A tragic and devastating poem, where naivety, love as well as affection vanish entirely.
- *Sonnets* (1609) describe everything human, the faculty of loving and missing, the fear of death.

Those are in fact current things. Shakespeare always talks about the most important aspects of our lives. In addition, Manuel Ángel Conejero affirmed that Shakespeare blurred the contrast between men and women (Bono, 2001).

There are some things that can relate to Shakespeare's current influence: (Castillo, 2020)

- **Versatility**→ He wrote tragedies and comedies. It is said that he created about 135 characters.
- **Adaptability**→ Shakespeare's plays can be adapted to different sceneries without losing their essence. Love, hate, ambition, revenge, and power can be moved to every culture. Some of the most famous ones are:
 - *King Lear* has been readjusted in feudal Japan. *Ran* (Fig. 19)
 - *Richard III* in a fictitious fascist England. *Richard III* (Fig. 20)
 - *Hamlet* in Wall Street. *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Fig. 21)
 - *Romeo and Juliet*, in many films.



Fig. 19, Ran



Fig. 20, Richard III

However, not every play is so adaptable. *Macbeth*, for instance, is thoroughly Scottish, as well as *The Merchant of Venice* which can only be set in there. Nonetheless, these plays of meticulous location have been moved successfully. *King Lear* and *Macbeth* have been adapted to middle-age Japan in *Ran* and *Throne of Blood*, both directed by Kurosawa. This is thanks to social relationships, material life, and values, which are the same. On the other hand, *Hamlet* had an attempt to adapt to Wall Street in the last years of the 20th century, in the film *Hamlet* (2000), directed by Michael Almereyda. This attempt does not accomplish its purpose, since Wall



Fig. 21, *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Street and Elsinore have nothing to do with each other. *The Merchant of Venice* became a film in 1973, with Laurence Olivier in the leading role. The action takes place in the 19th century. The pact of the loan in exchange for meat is implausible since it is unlikely that in Italy in the 19th century, such a law could be accepted.

- **Shakespeare wrote his plays for everybody.** This means the queen watched the same plays at the court than her population at the public theatres. The film *Shakespeare in love* shows exactly this, with a bit of exaggeration, Queen Elizabeth I disguised herself in the theatre among gentlemen, affluent people, apprentices, and promiscuous women. During the author's life, he could see how this changed abruptly. In 1608, during the James I reign, Shakespeare's company, King's Men, opened a new theatre called Blackfriars, for a wealthy audience, in contrast to The Globe, which allowed everyone in it. This kind of thing that happened with Shakespeare's plays does not happen nowadays. Neither theatre nor cinema is affordable for everyone. In Shakespeare's times, theatre was not only a cultural event, but also a school: politics, morals, and tradition among others could be learned there. The Elizabethan stage used a kind of set design that made it easy to perform scenes after scenes that were supposed to happen in different places. Those sets were really poor, so the important thing was the characters' descriptions of places.

- **Imperialism** also helped Shakespeare a lot to get to our times. The fact that many people now use English as their second language without being native, that we listen to music in this language, and we know many important British people is due to Imperialism, since Great Britain was the dominant country. That could be another reason for clarifying why Shakespeare is more popular worldwide than



Fig. 22, Imperialism



Fig. 23, Harold Bloom

Pirandello, Cervantes, or even Molière.

Harold Bloom (Fig. 23) described in his book *The Invention of the Human* that Shakespeare ended every human possibility, from the past and yet to come. He added that we are all acting in Shakespeare's playwrights. In other words, many scholars explain that

Shakespeare did not imitate life, but life imitates

Shakespeare.

Besides, Alexandre Dumas (Fig. 24) once said that Shakespeare's plays included more human types than the rest of the authors combined. He went further and added that after God, Shakespeare is the one who has created the most and that those who do not agree have simply not read or seen his plays.



Fig. 24, Alexandre Dumas

It is sometimes said by non-English speakers that Shakespeare's works are lost in their translation, and that those who can understand them are fortunate to hear them in their original language. However, we can ask ourselves if Shakespeare's language can be understood due to its complicated vocabulary in works like *Coriolanus*. Nevertheless, were we to take a look at the audience enjoying other plays, such as *A Midnight's Summer Dream*, we would notice that

there are many kids who follow every single thing. Many contemporary works use a mix of parts from Shakespeare's plays with modern English, those are works such as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, by Tom Stoppard or the film *My Own Private Idaho*, directed by Gus van Sant, where some characters quote *Henry IV* dialogues. (Gamerro, n.d.) To outline, his works can be understood by everyone, even so, without understanding every word.

When we think about *Hamlet*, we cannot help but ask ourselves whether he was a lunatic or he pretended to be so, exactly the same question we inquire of current politicians. An article by Nicholas Bakalar in *The New York Times* (Bakalar, 2019) expresses that eating meat and lactics tends to damage our mental health. Shakespeare predicted so in *Twelfth Night*, a character called Sir Andrew affirms that he eats too much meat and that harms his brain. John Carlin compares *Hamlet* to Brexit in an article in *La Vanguardia* (Carlin & Malet, 2019). Instead of asking themselves "To be or not to be?", they question "Brexit or not Brexit?". Furthermore, England has a high index of depression, which the journalist designates as "a country of Hamlets". Ben Crystal points out that we all can feel identified as Shakespeare's characters, Othello's jealousy, Romeo and Juliet's true love, and Hamlet's thoughts about what happens after we die, we all have felt the same at some point.

Catalan professional theatre adaptations of Macbeth

These are some of the different professional plays performed in Catalonia during the 21st century. Some of them are adaptations and some others are only based on the original play.

- OBS (2000)→ The characters act moved by images. Macbeth is a husband without personality. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth is a stripper who uses her body to manipulate everyone. By *La Fura dels Baus*, directed by Pep Gatell, starring Iván Altamira and Svenja Beneke. (Mediavilla, 2000)
- *Shakespeare x4* (2011) → Directed by Carles Fernández, starring Dani Arrebola and Laia Martí. (Nauivanow, n.d.)
- MCBTH (Fig. 25) (2012), Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (Barrena, 2012)→ Directed by Àlex Rigola, starring Joan Carreras and Míriam Iscla. (TNC, n.d.)
- *A Floresta Que Anda* (2017) → The performance transforms the stage into an art gallery. That is the place to debate about the influence of nowadays power systems over our lives. Directed by Christiane Jatahy, starring Julia Bernat. (Temporada Alta, n.d.)
- *Macbeth. Teatrebrik* (2018)→ The action takes place in a mean world, in a desert from a post-apocalyptic time, without water, apart from being full of battles for survival. Directed by Joan Gómez, starring Rafel Ferré and Íngrid Calpé. (Recomana.cat, n.d.)



Fig. 25, MCBTH

- *La Mala Diccio* (Fig. 26) (2021) → We are under a malediction made by capitalism and power abuse. Directed by Xavier Albertí, starring



Fig. 26, La Mala Diccio

Paula Malia and Jordi Oriol. (Teatre Lliure, n.d.)

- *Birnam* (Fig. 27) (2021/ 2022) → While an elderly actor is getting ready to perform King Duncan, starts to question many things about the language, the play, theatre and himself among others. Written by Víctor Sunyol, directed by Joan Roura, starring Lluís Soler. (La Perla 29, n.d.)



Fig. 27, *Birnam*

- *Macbett* (Fig. 28) (2022), Teatre Nacional de Catalunya → A comical adaptation by Eugène Ionesco. Directed by Ramon Simó, starring Joan Carreras and Anna Alarcon. (TNC, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (2023) → An Opera by Verdi. Directed by Jaume Plensa, starring Luca Salsi and Sondra Radvanovsky. This is one of the many Verdi versions performed in El Liceu. (Liceu, n.d.)



Fig. 28, *Macbett*

Movies about Macbeth

Here we can see some of the many adaptations of *Macbeth* on the big screen. Not only are there movies based on the original play, but also there is a big range of genres.

- *Macbeth* (1911), United Kingdom→ Directed by William Barker, starring Frank Benson and Constance Benson.
- *When Macbeth Came to Snakevilla* (1914), United States→ A different story based on a *Macbeth* play. Directed by Roy Clements, starring Harry Todd and Evelyn Selbie. (IMDb, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (1916), United Kingdom→ Directed by John Emerson, starring Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Constance Collier. (IMDb, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (Fig. 29) (1948), United States→ Directed by Orson Welles, starring Orson Welles and Jeanette Nolan. (Film Affinity, 2010)
- *Throne of Blood* (Fig. 30) (1957), Japan→ The same story set in Middle-age Japan. The characters are samurais. Directed by Akira Kurosawa, starring Toshiro Mifune and Isuzu Yamada. (Viquipèdia, n.d.)
- *Siberian Lady Macbeth* (1962), Yugoslavia→ Based on a book called *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, written by Nikolai Leskov. Directed by Andrzej Wajda, starring Olivera Markovic. (*Lady Macbeth En Siberia* (1961) - Filmaffinity, n.d.)
- *Cabezas Cortadas, (Severed Heads)* (1970), Spain→ *Macbeth* set in a dictatorship. Directed by Glauber Rocha, starring Francisco Rabal. (La Vanguardia, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (Fig. 31) (1971), United Kingdom→ Directed by Roman Polanski, starring Jon Finch and Francesca Annis. (Film Affinity, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (1979), United Kingdom→ Directed by Philip Casson, starring Ian McKellen and Judi Dench.



Fig. 29, *Macbeth* (1948)



Fig. 30, *Throne of Blood*



Fig. 31, *Macbeth* (1971)

- *Macbeth* (1983), United Kingdom→ Directed by Jack Gold, starring Nicol Williamson and Jane Lapotaire. (MUBI, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (1987) → Opera by Verdi. Directed by Claude d'Anna, starring Leo Nucci and Shirley Verrett. (Letterboxd, n.d.)
- *Men of Respect* (1991), United States→ They change royalty for gangsters. Directed by William Reilly, starring John Turturro and Katherine Borowitz. (Wikipedia, n.d.)
- *In the Flesh* (1998) → Adults film. Directed by Stuart Canterbury, starring Kylie Ireland and Mike Horner. (IMDb, 2019)
- *Scotland, PA.* (Fig. 32) (2001), United States→ *Macbeth* in the 70s. Directed by Billy Morrissette, starring James Le Gros, Maura Tierney and Christopher Walken. (IMDb, n.d.)
- *Macbeth: The Comedy*, (2001) → A comical version of *Macbeth*. Directed by Allison L. LiCalsi, starring Erika Burke Rossa and Juliet Furness. (IMDb, n.d.)
- *Maqbool* (2003), India → *Macbeth* set in India, the witches are replaced by corrupt policemen. Directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, starring Irrfan Khan. (Wikipedia, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (2010), United Kingdom→ Directed by Rupert Goold, starring Patrick Stewart and Kate Fleetwood. (Wikipedia, n.d.)
- *Macbeth* (2015), United Kingdom→ Directed by Justin Kurzel, starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard. (Filmaffinity, n.d.)
- *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (Fig. 33) (2021), United States→ Directed by Joel Coen, starring Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand. (Wikipedia, n.d.)



Fig. 32, *Scotland, PA.*



Fig. 33, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

Shakespeare and today's youth from my own experience

Shakespeare has been one of the most important and popular authors since the 17th century, but does today's youth know him?

Being an actress myself, I have worked in 3 Shakespeare productions with teenagers, which was a whole different experience.

I have known Shakespeare since I was a little kid, it must have been this way because my family has a close relationship with theatre, and they wanted to transmit it to me. In my theatre group, there was always a bit of ignorance about classic theatre and Shakespeare. Most people had only heard his name and did not even know that *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* was one of his works.

The first time I portrayed something by Shakespeare was in 2020. I was doing a summer theatre course, and we played three monologues from *The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. We did whole body work, doing more choreographies than monologues, so it was a different way and perspective to see Shakespeare.

The following year, in 2021, in the same summer course, we performed different parts of different plays, which were *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. I played Gertrude in *Hamlet* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. We updated the scenes into the current world and situations, so we could see how current Shakespeare still is.

In 2022, in the theatre course I do every year we performed a version of *Midnight's Summer Dream*, and I had the opportunity to play Puck (Fig. 34), which as an actress, I can say is my favourite character to play, I had never focused that much on my body and my movements and I had so much fun.



Fig. 34, Me as Puck

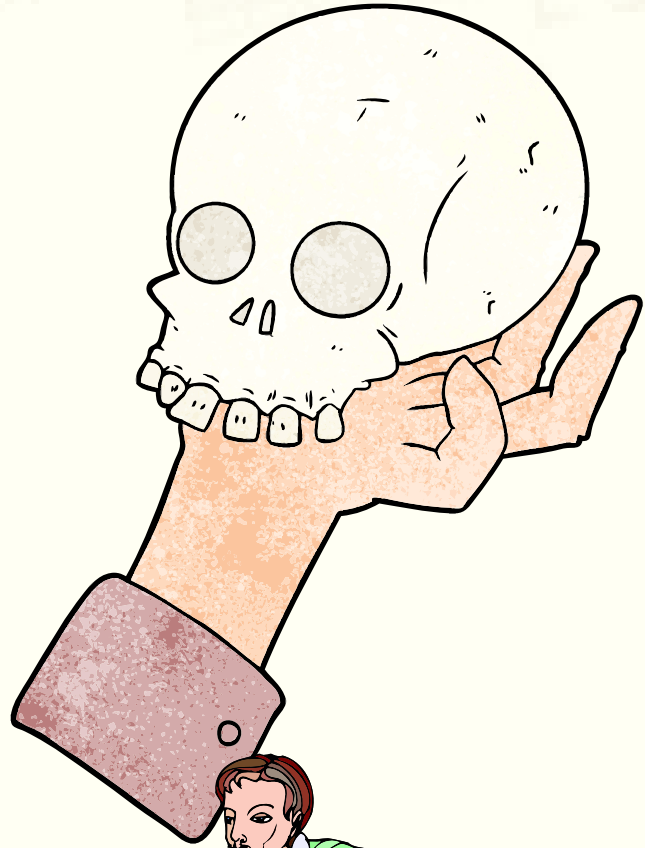
In this play, I could actually see that there are still many young people who sadly do not know Shakespeare and even do not respect him because of his way of writing. It is so sad to see how new generations are losing their admiration for him.

Before finishing, I want to add that I once had the occasion to see *The Royal Shakespeare Company* performing *Measure for Measure* (Fig. 35) in Girona, and it was outstanding. This company shows what theatre really is, sticking together, nobody pretends to be better, everyone shines in their own way.



Fig. 35, *Measure for Measure* by the RSC

I think Shakespeare, along with other classic authors, should be a discussed topic in literature lessons in order for younger generations to know him, and teen theatre companies should go to the theatre to see his plays more often.



Practical Part



Analysis of Macbeth

Macbeth is Shakespeare's shortest and most sanguinary tragedy. It states the story of a brave Scottish general named Macbeth, who gets a prophecy from three sinister witches, that he is to become king of Scotland. He soon gets devoured by ambitious thoughts as well as pushed to action by his wife and assassinates King Duncan. He quickly grabs the throne for himself.



Fig. 36, James McArdle and Saoirse Ronan as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

The beginning of his reign is distraught for being wracked with culpability and horror. Later, he becomes a tyrannical ruler, since he is obliged to perform more executions to defend himself from mistrust. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are rapidly driven towards arrogance, madness and death.

Macbeth is believed to be written in 1606, at the beginning of the reign of James I, who had previously been James VI of Scotland. James was a regular in Shakespeare's acting company. *Macbeth* mirrors Shakespeare's close relationship with the monarch. *Macbeth* is a big name in Scottish history, the playwright pays tribute to James's Caledonian ancestors. Besides, the witches' prophecy that tells Banquo he will establish a line of kings refers to James's family, which claimed to be the descendants of Banquo. There is a huge idea about bad kingship, portrayed by Macbeth and good kingship, impersonated by Duncan, that resonated at the royal court. *Macbeth* is Shakespeare's strongest and most passionate play, yet, not the most complicated one. This piece dives crazily from the beginning to the end, whilst, for instance, *Othello* and *Hamlet* inspect the intellectual dilemmas confronted by their subjects, apart from exceptional distinctions of their subjects' characters.

Plot overview



Fig. 37, The Three Witches, RSC's production from 1987

At the beginning of the play, three witches (Fig. 37) appear, and quickly the play moves to a military camp. There, the King of Scotland, Duncan receives the news that his commanders, Macbeth and Banquo, have beaten two attacking armies, Ireland and Norway.

These generals meet the witches when they are going across a moor. The sorceress augury says that Macbeth will soon become Thane of Cawdor, that is a rank of Scottish nobility, and in time, King of Scotland. Banquo will start a line of Scottish Kings, but he will never become one of them. The witches disappear, and the two militaries are hesitant about the prophecy. However, some kind Duncan's men congratulate Macbeth and Banquo for their victory, and tell Macbeth that he has been named Thane of Cawdor after the previous one betrayed the country fighting for Norway, and Duncan sent him to death. Macbeth thinks of the prophecy and is uncertain of the remaining thing, that he would become King. He pays a visit to Duncan, and they arrange a dinner that night in Inverness, at Macbeth's castle. He writes to his wife explaining everything that had happened. Lady Macbeth is certain of the prophecy. Moreover, she desires the crown and pushes Macbeth to kill Duncan in order to take it. When his husband arrives in Inverness,



Fig. 38, Daniel Craig and Ruth Negga in *Macbeth*

she convinces him to murder the king that night. Their plan is to get the two chamberlains drunk enough for them to black out in order to blame them the next morning since they will not remember anything. That very night, while Duncan is sleeping, Macbeth stabs him. However, during the murder, he is having many doubts and supernatural warnings, such as a vision of a dagger covered in blood. The next morning, the dead King was found and Macbeth kills the two chamberlains as an act of fury for their crime, and he soon takes possession of the crown. Duncan had two sons, one of them, Malcolm escapes to England, and Donalbain, the other, to Ireland, afraid of their father's killer.

Macbeth cannot stop worrying about the prophecy and what it said about Banquo founding a new King's line, therefore he hires a group of criminals to kill him. However, they fail to murder his son Fleance. Inasmuch as this guy is alive, Macbeth's power is not safe. That night, there is a banquet, where Banquo was heading when he was ambushed, in that feast, Banquo's ghost visits Macbeth, and he starts behaving oddly. He decides to go to the witches' cavern. They show



Fig. 39, Ian McKellen and Judi Dench in *Macbeth*

him more prophecies that advice him to be conscious of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who did not want Macbeth to become king. Not only cannot this man be harmed by any other man born of a woman, but also he is safe as far as Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane castle. Macbeth knows both things are impossible, and that makes him feel safe. Macbeth commands to take hold of Macduff's castle and kill his wife and

children, since he has travelled to England to join

Malcolm. This news gets to Macduff, and he wants vengeance. Malcolm has raised an army in England, and after Macduff joins him, they part to Scotland to dare Macbeth. Scottish nobles give their support to Malcolm since they are terrified of Macbeth's behaviour, as he acts as a murderer as well as a tyrant. At

the same time, Lady Macbeth becomes a sleepwalker in which she laments the blood in her hands, for this reason, she ends up committing suicide. When Macbeth hears the news about her wife, he falls into deep desperation. Nonetheless, he has to fight, therefore, he waits for Malcolm's army and buttresses Dunsinane. He is idle, numb with fear. The English army is moving forward on Dunsinane, protected by limbs from Birnam Wood. That means that wood is certainly coming to Dunsinane completing half of the witches' prophecy. In the battle, Macbeth fights violently, but the English army defeats his army and castle. Macbeth meets with Macduff on the battlefield. Macduff explains he was not born of a woman, as he was ripped from his mother's womb. Macbeth realizes he is going to die, even so, he fights and struggles until Macduff kills and decapitates him. Malcolm becomes King of Scotland.

Characters

- **Macbeth** (Fig. 40)→ Macbeth is a Scottish general. He is also a successful captain in King Duncan's army. Not only this, but he is also Thane of Glamis. He is married to Lady Macbeth, with whom he lives in a castle in Inverness. He is a fearless soldier, apart from being powerful and ambitious. Yet, he also has his flaws, since he is not upright as well as easily tempted into murder. When



the story begins, he has achieved a victory for Duncan, killing MacDonald. He encounters three witches who wick his thought by prophecies, one of these says that he will become Thane of Cawdor, and eventually he does. Following these prophecies, he murders Duncan and comes to be King of Scotland. However, he does not have the required

aptitudes to lead, resulting in tyranny. In addition, he constantly responds with brutality and murder, owing to the fact that not only does he worry about the fidelity of those close to him, but also is tormented by phantoms. Most of his attempts to retain the throne end up in murders. In the end, he is killed by Macduff in battle. He is different from other characters in Shakespeare's plays, like Iago in *Othello* and Richard III, as he is not satisfied with being a criminal.

If we want to study this character in depth, we can see that at the very beginning he appears to be a bold and skilled combatant. Not until he mingles with the witches do we see this desire which will absorb him, as well as make him feel insecure. Macbeth is the character Shakespeare uses for presenting how ambition plus fault can affect a weak man. However, due to his lack of strength, we can notice the contrast between him and other evil Shakespeare characters, such as Iago (*Othello*), Richard III (*Richard III*), and Edmund (*King Lear*).

Before murdering Duncan, he is concerned, even, about abandoning his mission. Nonetheless, his wife puts pressure on him, which makes him feel obligated to do it. After this event, Lady Macbeth starts to lose her strength of character and isolates her husband.

He starts to live a few variations of character, he keeps assassinating people to hold the power, and he also suffers from regrets, especially when Banquo's spirit visits him, as well as despair after his wife's passing. This shows the fact that his ambition is too much to stop committing crimes, but also too careful to be content with his murderer's life. When the play is about to finish, he may be seen as a pleased person since he can come back to being a soldier until he dies in combat.

Differing from other Shakespeare's tragic personas, Macbeth never contemplates performing suicide.

*"Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword?"*

(*Macbeth*, act V, scene VIII). There's a full cycle, starting with Macbeth winning a battle and ending with him dying on the battlefield.

- **Lady Macbeth** (Fig. 41)→ She is Macbeth's wife, they live in a castle in Inverness. At the beginning of the play, she has been waiting for his husband to return from battle. She is an ambitious woman, she aspires to power and position. At that point, she is thought to be the strongest and most cold-blooded of the couple. In spite of the faith, the couple has in each other to plot together, as well as the impression of being intensely in love, her impact on his spouse is mostly sexual. She is the one who



Fig. 41, Maggie Smith as Lady Macbeth

persuades Macbeth to destroy Duncan and take the crown. Therefore, they become partners in crime, which fortifies their affection. Nonetheless, after the killing, she feels culpable and turns mad until she finally perpetrates suicide.

Inspecting this character, one of the most terrifying and powerful female characters not only in Shakespeare's plays but also in literature, we can notice that from the beginning, when we meet her, she is already plotting the murder against King Duncan. We also spot that she is firmer, malevolent and more driven than her spouse. She is witting that she will need to force Macbeth to kill. Even so, she aims to be a man to do it herself. There is a connection between genre and authority. Macbeth often hints that her wife is a woman with the essence of a man, this creates a connection between masculinity, ambition and power. She is the perfect way for Shakespeare to weaken Macbeth's thought that "undaunted mettle should compose Nothing but males." (*Macbeth*, act I, scene VII).

Not only does this play show women using what was known by that time as female techniques for fulfilling their ambitions, by controlling and manipulating, but also how they are as keen and sinful as men. Lady Macbeth steers her husband, when he is doubtful about killing Duncan, she makes him doubt his honour, prior to him committing this crime for verifying himself. Just right after this event, she is the one to calm him. However, she gradually loses her mind, driving mad, until she sleepwalks as well as attempts to wipe fictitious blood off her hands. Her diplomacy turns into feebleness until she finally kills herself.

- **Three Witches** (Fig. 42)→

They are three spooky sisters with magical abilities, whose identity is undefined, although we know they are servants of Hecate. Hecate is a classic Greek divinity, who was often related to the moon.



Fig. 42, The Three Witches in the production of *Macbeth* in the Shakespeare's Globe

A few centuries later, she

was identified with magic as well as witchcraft. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022) Not only do they compare Greek and Roman mythological Fates, who knitted the strings of mortal fate, but also take a depraved pleasure in using their wisdom to play as well as eradicate human beings (McDonalds, n.d.). At the beginning of the play, they conspire against Macbeth using prophecies which incite him to kill Duncan and to plot and order the deaths of Banquo and Fleance (Greenlane, n.d.). Furthermore, he ends up believing in his own eternal life.

These weird sisters are honestly intriguing to investigate through, indeed. They have these gloomy ideas, as well as mystic powers. They use these bad energies to play with Macbeth across his Achilles heel, ambition.

Shakespeare makes them talk in rhyming couplets so as to distinguish them from other characters, this can be found in one of their most popular quotes: "Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burns, and cauldron bubble." (Macbeth, act IV, scene I)

In spite of the fact that this way of speaking can sometimes be seen as comical and dim, they are the most damaging roles in the play. Speaking in rhymes or in song style is also a typical feature of magical figures since Antiquity. The audience is always left with the question of if the witches are free women who toy with human lives or destiny assistants who only say the unavoidable. On the one hand, as we have already said, they can remind us of the classical Fates ("Moirai" in Greek, and "Parcae" in Latin) and the Nordic "Norns", and this fits more the second of these options. (Schäfers, 2014) The Greek "Moirai" and Roman "Parcae" sewed human lives to later cut the strings, ending them this way. The three witches resemble these mythological figures due to being 3 supernatural women who symbolize the past, the present and the future. However, unlike these witches, "Moirai" have their own cults, where alms are offered in order to enhance somebody's life, and their prophecies do not have links with guilt or culpability. The Nordic "Norns" are even more similar to these witches than the classical "Moirai" or "Parcae". Firstly, they are linked not only with destiny, but also with magic. Secondly, "Norns" don't receive any ritual worship, and they live on the edges of the other Gods' lands. Moreover, they cannot be persuaded to change things. And finally, their prophecies are related to guilt, as in the case of the 3 witches.

On the other hand, these 3 witches have links to contemporary English, Scottish and Continental imagery of witches. In the 16th century, there was a massive witch hunt in England (Castelow, n.d.). These events were

becoming more ordinary between the 16th and 17th centuries, since James VI was pretty interested in the witch trials. During those times witches were seen as old women, they had to be poor and usually own a cat. Those who had sunken cheeks, snaggletooth and a bit of a moustache were thought to have the “Evil Eye”. There were many women hanged and tortured just for having these marks. In 1612, the Pendle Witches, a family of three generations, were forced to walk through the crowded streets of Lancaster, just to end up hanged.

Shakespeare fancied keeping these three characters out of human understanding, that is why the play does not offer us answers.

- **Banquo** (Fig. 43)→ He is a friend of Macbeth who has a son named Fleance. He is a noble and brave general. The witches' prophecy dictates that Fleance will receive the Scottish throne. Unlike Macbeth, his ambitious thoughts do not turn into motion. He would be the route Macbeth decided not to take. He suspects his friend when his prophecies are being real, therefore, his companion orders his murder. Hence, his ghost torments Macbeth.



Fig. 43, Billy Boyd as Banquo

- **King Duncan** (Fig. 44)→ Duncan is the King of Scotland, he has two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain. He has faith in Macbeth, even though he betrays him and kills Duncan in order to become the king. His personality is virtuous, benevolent, he is killed by Macbeth in his castle while Duncan is paying a visit there. This decease means



Fig. 44, David Acton as Duncan

the end of Duncan's order, as far as Malcolm, does not occupy the throne.

- **Macduff** (Fig. 45) → He is a Scottish noble, Thane of Fife and the husband of Lady Macduff, with whom he has children. He is loyal to Duncan, the reason why he is hostile to Macbeth's kingship from the beginning, since he suspects him of murdering Duncan. He joins Malcolm to overthrow Macbeth, and he becomes the leader of that crusade. In the end, he fights and kills Macbeth.

- **Malcolm** → He is the eldest son of Duncan, his brother is named Donalbain, and he is the Prince of Cumberland. At the beginning of the play, he seems feeble and sceptical about his power, since he leaves Scotland when his dad is murdered. He was supposed to receive the power after his progenitor's death, that is why he can overcome Macbeth. He has Macduff's



Fig. 45, Nigel Cooke as Macduff

- and English support and finally becomes king, after Macbeth's end.
- **Hecate** → Is the Greek and Roman goddess of witchcraft and the one who aids the witches to perform the prank on Macbeth.
- **Fleance** → He is Banquo's son. If the conjurers' prediction comes true, he will become Scotland's king. Therefore, Macbeth tries to kill him, unsuccessfully.
- **Lennox** → He is a Scottish aristocrat
- **Ross** → He is a Scottish Thane faithful to Duncan. He talks to Macbeth to tell him the piece of news that he has been proclaimed Thane of Cawdor. Not only this, but he also talks to Macduff to tell him his relatives are dead.
- **The Murderers** → A gang that murders Banquo, Fleance and Macduff's family in order to follow Macbeth's orders. Yet, they fail in the attempt to murder Fleance.

Shakespeare's validity through *Macbeth*

- **Porter**→ Intoxicated guard of Macbeth's fortress.
- **Lady Macduff**→ Macduff's spouse.
- **Donalbain**→ Duncan's youngest son.
- **Themes**→ Crucial ideas which are talked about in a literary work

Themes, motifs, symbols and language

(Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.)

- **The Corrupting Power of Unchecked Ambition**→ This is the main theme. Destruction is created when ambition is unruly on account of moral limits. Macbeth and his wife are a clear representation of this theme. Macbeth is not actually doomed to do diabolical things for nature law, but he desires power. At the point when he



murders Fig. 46, Patrick Stewart and Kate Fleetwood in *Macbeth* Duncan,

he does it against his own good rationality, and it turns out to become anxious with guilt as well as neurotic that resulting in frenetic insanity, whereas Lady Macbeth achieves her goals in a more driving way, although she is incapable of resisting the repercussion of her immoral acts. Desire helps in both cases, even though what makes the couple not only go out of their minds but also commit these crimes are the witches' prophecies. This play makes us view violence as an addiction, once you use it, you can never stop.

- **The link between inhumanity and masculinity**→ The characters in the play do always have issues with their genre. For instance, Lady Macbeth, steers her husband suspecting his masculinity. Moreover,



Fig. 47, Joseph Millson as Macbeth

not only does she tend to hope she was “unsexed”, but also does not oppose him when he says that a woman like her should only have sons. Macbeth also questions the murderers’ manhood to order them Banquo’s killing. This pair of deeds show us that this

couple associates masculinity and aggression.

The play demonstrates to the audience that women are also a font of malice and barbarity. Therefore, it has been criticized not only for being Shakespeare’s most male chauvinist play, since women behave paradoxically to how women had to at that time.

- **The contrast between tyranny and monarchy**→ Duncan is described as a good king, whereas Macbeth is known as the tyrant. In the third scene from the fourth act, this distinction converses between Macduff and Malcolm. Malcolm wants to test Macduff before trusting him, hence he pretends to explain how he would be as a king, worse than Macbeth. He says that he wants personal power and that he has a savage personality, which seems to describe the current king. He adds that the perfect monarch should not only show order and justice, but also solace and affection. The ruler should be faithful to Scotland above his own interests. However, Macbeth only provides Scotland with chaos, along with a habit of murdering those he sees as a threat.

- **Motifs**→ Recurring structures that can help to develop and apprise the most significant topics in the play.

- **Illusions**→ During the play, there are many illusions and visions as reminders of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's sins. Before murdering Duncan, Macbeth sees a blade scattered with blood, which floats and points towards the king's room. This vision symbolizes the bloody way Macbeth is about to take. Later on, Banquo's spirit appears sitting on a chair during the feast, this reminds Macbeth of how he made his friend get killed. Lady Macbeth is also



Fig. 48, The Vision of the Dagger

- **Violence**→ *Macbeth* is a brutal play. Most of the homicides are off-stage, however, the characters tell a detailed description of every one of them. In the first scene, the battle where Banquo and Macbeth fought is described. Additionally, during the whole play, there are many references to the couple's dirty hands because of the blood. The play includes two battles, one at the opening where Macbeth defeats the invaders. However, the play closes with another battle, where Macbeth is beheaded. In the end, the scene seems to be covered with blood.

- **Prophecy**→ Macbeth is persuaded to do what he does in order to follow the witches' prophecies. They say that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and then King. Furthermore, they add that



Fig. 49, The Three Witches in MCBTH

Banquo's heirs will be kings, that Macbeth should be careful with Macduff, that until Birnam Wood gets to Dunsinane he is safe, as well as that no man born of a woman can harm him. Throughout the play, every prophecy, besides Banquo's one, comes to reality. It is yet to know if the prophecies come true for themselves or if they are meant to be. The predictions about Birnam Wood and the man born of a woman have to be understood in a literary way, like riddles, they do not always be what they seem.

- **Symbols**→ **Objects or characters used to embody abstract ideas.**
 - **Blood**→ Blood is everywhere throughout the play. In the second scene from the first act, there is a description of the battle between the Scots and the Norwegians. When Macbeth starts to commit murders, the blood symbolizes culpability, and the couple starts to feel that their crimes have left a mark that cannot be removed. After Duncan's death, Macbeth is mourning it, therefore, his wife comforts him, although later she is the one who cannot forget what they have done.

- **The weather**→ This is a typical thing in Shakespeare's tragedies. Murder is always accompanied by unnatural weather phenomena. The witches always appear with thunder and lightning. The night in which Duncan dies, there's a horrific storm.



Fig. 50, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth with blood on their hands

Language

Shakespeare had some key terms, which were used in almost every single play. (Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.)

- **Iambic pentameter**→ This kind of verse is very common in Shakespeare's plays and also in the works of other English authors of his time. The basic sequence is a soft beat followed by a strong one. This sequence is repeated 5 times. This kind of rhythm resembles the so-called iambic trimeter of ancient Greek and Roman theatre. In *Macbeth*, iambic pentameter is used almost all the time.
- **Prose and verse**→ This combination is established by prose, a colloquial way of speaking which does not have a set rhythm or structure, and verse, which unlike prose, does have a set rhythm and structure. Almost all the play, *Macbeth*, is composed of verses. When you read it, the parts which look like a poem are written in verse. On the other hand, the parts which look like a usual book are using prose. Not only is this latest mainly used by the lower-status characters, which could be the murderers as well as the porter, but also used by the characters who are turning mad, Lady Macbeth.
- **Rhyming couplets**→ Those are a pair of lines written in iambic pentameter which end in a sound or rhyme. It is used to outline the conclusion of a character's discourse. In *Macbeth*, many characters use it

to conclude their talks and reflections. Macbeth employs it to gather everything at the end of his soliloquies, which are often at the closing of a scene. Here is an example of Macbeth's soliloquy at the end of Act 1: "Away, and mock the time with fairest show:

False face must hide what the false heart doth know." (Shakespeare, 1606, I, VII, 565)

- **Antithesis**→ This is when the inverses are put together. We can see some cases in *Macbeth*. For instance, in the first scene, the witches say: "When the battle's lost and won." (Shakespeare, 1606, I, I, 5), as well as: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair:" (Shakespeare, 1606, I, I, 10). There are some others which are used in many passages in the play, which are 'Light and dark, heaven and hell, and false and true.'
- **Trochaic tetrameter**→ It has a rhythm which sounds "strong-soft, strong-soft", that is to say, the opposite rhythm to the one presented before, iambic pentameter. In the trochaic tetrameter, there are eight syllables in each line. Trochaic verses were pretty common in ancient Greek and Roman theatre. The witches talk in this verse and their lines are shorter, which makes them appear oddly unlike.
- **Shared lines**→ Lines of iambic verse shared by two or more characters. It is frequently used to show a connection between characters. In *Macbeth*, those are mostly used by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, along with the witches.

Analysis of Shakespeare's language

Shakespeare's choices of terms, structures and rhythms explains the audience something about each character, relationship or mood.

- **Macbeth**→ He has multiple soliloquies which tell a lot about him, his thoughts, ambitions and dreads. Paapa Essiedu (Fig. 51), a British actor from the Royal Shakespeare Company, affirmed that when he first reads a



Fig. 51, Paapa Essiedu as Hamlet

soliloquy, he looks for 3 crucial things which help him to understand how his character is feeling. These are:

- Punctuation→ It presents a perspicacity into the tempo of a character's thoughts.
- Line endings→ Almost every most important matter of a talk is said there.
- Repeated sounds→ It helps the actor to select the most significant pictures in a speech.
- **Lady Macbeth**→ When we meet her for the first time, she is talking about the news her husband gave her about the witches' prophecy and Duncan's visit. Mark Quartley (Fig. 52), another young British actor from the Royal Shakespeare Company, shares what is crucial for his understanding of a character's feelings, when he first reads a monologue.



Fig. 52, Mark Quartley as Ariel in *The Tempest*

- Imagery→ The images that the language creates
- Metre→ Shakespeare's rhythm in his verses.
- Word selection→ The verbs and adjectives chosen in a speech.

Concepts from Shakespeare in current series

We have some proof to demonstrate that many Shakespeare things are still current. Here there are some examples of present series inspired by Shakespeare. (Goodman, 2022)



Fig. 53, Lost

The first one is *Lost* (Fig. 53), this TV show tells the story of a group of people who survived a plane crash on a mysterious island. All of them have their past and secrets. The thing is the play *The Tempest* by the Bard, explains the tale of a group of survivors on a ship on a weird island.

Each of them has their own ambitions.

Sons of anarchy (Fig. 54) is a series about a motorcycle gang. However, it has a big connection to *Hamlet*. Both main characters are in a similar situation since their father was killed by someone close. That means both are good people in a dark situation.



Fig. 54, Sons of Anarchy



Fig. 55, Succession

The following series is *Succession* (Fig. 55), this awarded show talks about a family and an elderly magnate who have to

discuss their future and the time to come of their firm. So, this would be a comedic version of *King Lear*, where the monarch has to divide his reign between his heirs.

Next on the list, we have *House of Cards* (Fig. 56), where the lead is a Congressman with ambitions for power. His ascension to authority is similar to *Richard III* ones, cool-blooded and Machiavellian. Moreover, the protagonist's wife is based on Lady Macbeth and her desire for power.



Fig. 56, House of Cards

As we have learned in this project, *Macbeth* expresses in perfection the self-destructive ways to achieve power, *Breaking Bad* (Fig. 57) portrays this in modern days. No sooner has Walter White, the main character, started



Fig. 57, Breaking Bad

cooking meth because of his cancer diagnosis and his family, than he becomes corrupted by power, and he soon behaves like a tyrant.

Another series based on Shakespeare's plays is *The Hollow Crown* (Fig. 58), this one is a little bit different since it is literally an adaptation of plays, there are *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, and *Richard III*.



Fig. 58, The Hollow Crown



Fig. 59, Game of Thrones

Last but not least, *Game of Thrones* (Fig. 59), the series treated some fascinating plots like murder, betrayal, love, and lust, which were also discussed in Shakespeare's plays back in the 16th century. Characters like

Cersei Lannister or Daenerys Targaryen are as obsessed over power as Macbeth. The role of Littlefinger is clearly influenced by Richard III.

However, we should focus on *House of Cards*, since it is clearly based on Macbeth's characters and plot. It is said that Frank Underwood (Fig. 60), the series' main character, is the modern American Macbeth. Frank is a congressman with a big desire for power. His biggest ambition is to become President of the United States. Despite using unfair ways to get it, the viewers love him. Not only due to the fact that he speaks candidly to the fans, but also because he makes clear from the beginning that he does not trust anyone. However, since he describes his feelings to the spectators, they may feel as if they are the only ones he has faith in.



Fig. 60, Frank Underwood



Fig. 61, Claire Underwood

Frank's wife, Claire Underwood (Fig. 61), longs for power, just as Lady Macbeth. When her husband tells her he is now Secretary of State, she is let down, and why he is not doing anything about it. After a while, Frank tells her they need to do whatever it takes, but they have to act together. President Walker is similar to King Duncan, he has the power and in this case, trusts Frank. In spite of not being murdered, Frank puts him in a situation where Walker has to retire from his position. In *Macbeth*, the couple accuses two chamberlains of the crime, in *House of Cards*, they accuse Raymon Tusk, who is a strong businessman and friend of the president. Furthermore, since Frank sees Tusk as a potential threat, he worsens his relationship with the President by meddling in some trade agreements in China.

There is also the equivalent of the three witches, represented by three reporters who perceive the situation from the outside. Banquo also has his own portrayal, Peter Russo (Fig. 62), another congressman who is an alcoholic but not in the spotlight yet. (Vollmer, 2016) However, Underwood helps him to become popular, and they become friends. Later on, he sees his friend Russo as a danger, thus he puts him back into the world of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution. Nonetheless, he knows too many things that could ruin Frank's fame, therefore, he leaves him sleeping and drunk in the car, turns the engine on and locks him in a garage in order for him to die. A few episodes later, Russo's ghost, like Banquo, chases him in his dreams. (Huffpost, 2014)



Fig. 62, Peter Russo

Videos: Lady Macbeth's monologues and Macbeth's monologue performed by actresses and actors from Osona

For this part, I wanted to create different videos of professional and amateur actors and actresses from Osona. I could get in touch with most of them easily. However, I used the help of Jordi Arqués, to whom I am deeply grateful. His help was very useful in deciding some actors and actresses who I did not think of and contacting them.

The first thing I did was picking a monologue for each genre. Yet, it was not that easy, due to having many women and not enough sentences for all of them. Keeping this in mind, I was forced to choose another monologue and divide these women in two groups. The translation I used was by Josep Maria de Segarra, which is in verse. The aim was to show how people from different ages and professions perform it, thus I did not give them any indications on how to do it. I am delighted with the result, every person does it in their own way and has their special thing, which is amazing. You can find the videos in the following link.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eME05O__sYYc4KRFDxqzPmlPoqyQXwR4?usp=sharing

Interviews with professionals¹

1. **David Plana** (Fig. 63)→ Born in Manlleu, David Plana is a television writer, dramaturge, theatre director and script doctor. David is also the writer and director of some theatre plays. He won the national Catalan theatre awards (Premis Butaca) in 1998 and in 2002. (Plana, n.d.)



Fig. 63, David Plana

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Of course, Shakespeare talks about topics such as the fight for power, ambition, and highest and lowest passions among others.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? My favourite character is Hamlet, in his most famous monologue he tells us "conscience does make cowards of us all" and this is contemporary, we are "Hamlet characters".

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I am more or less in favour of revising the classics, although I sometimes think there is laziness about it. Therefore, it has become an easy formula, which shows a lack of creativity and risk.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? This does not only happen with Shakespeare. I like to say that happiness does not give any plot.

¹ You can check both the script and the audio interviews in the appendix.

2. **Ernest Villegas** (Fig. 64)→

Born in Manlleu, Ernest Villegas is an actor. He has appeared in films and series. However, he is famous for his roles in theatre plays such as “La Plaça del Diamant”, a Catalan classic, apart from acting in Shakespeare's plays, such as *Richard III*, *A Midnight's Summer Dream*, *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*. (Llibreria Papereria Pergamí, 2013) He was a nominee for the National Catalan Awards (Premis Butaca), in 2020. (Marco & Macías, n.d.)



Fig. 64. Ernest Villegas

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? I think so. Lifestyles change, yet the human condition does not.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? Hamlet along with King Lear are somehow the two great characters of Shakespeare, and as an actor, you want to face them someday.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? Someday, a companion asked why we insist on playing theatre, and then another fellow answered, because we have probably done it correctly sometimes, and I think that happens, so it is important to revise, update and change the vocabulary of the classics.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? From my point of view, Shakespeare's evil characters are powerful because they generate conflict. Conflicts are crucial in every theatre play.



Fig. 65. Guillem Balart

3. **Guillem Balart** (Fig. 65)→ Born in Lleida, (Doladé, n.d.) Guillem Balart is a young actor, known for his role in *Hamlet Aribau* in 2021 (Cervera, 2021), “*Carrer Robadors*” (Colás, 2021) and “*La malaltia*”. He was a nominee for the “*Butaca*” awards in 2022 as best breakout actor.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Definitely yes.

Shakespeare talks about the most human emotions.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I have just played *Hamlet*, so I would say he is my favourite character.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? Adapting classics is useful for new generations or new theatre-goers, being able to hear these lines as well as words. However, they need to have some kind of contact with current society, so adjusting the classics into our society is lovely and necessary.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Because Shakespeare could provide humanity to people who we consider bad. Nevertheless, we could contemplate what is being good or bad, since it is a judgement we make about a character.

4. **Joan Carreras** (Fig. 66)→ Born in Barcelona, Joan Carreras has performed in many series and theatre productions. He has won the *Butaca Awards* on multiple occasions. (Wikipedia,

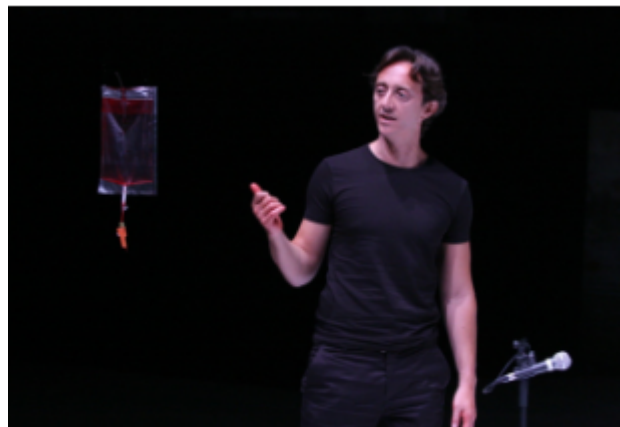


Fig. 66. Joan Carreras

n.d.) He also won the Max Award for Best Lead Actor in 2021, for his performance in “Història d’un Senglar”, a monologue about an actor who is about to perform Richard the III. He has also appeared in different Shakespeare plays such as Coriolanus, Richard the III, Macbeth and The Merchant of Venice.

Is Shakespeare’s theatre contemporary? Completely, Shakespeare is current in many aspects and on many levels, socially, politically, emotionally, philosophically, ethically, and morally.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I love evil characters. Theatre offers us the opportunity to explore the dark part of the soul, and Shakespeare is a master at this. My favourite is Iago, I have played him more than once.

Which is your favourite extract?

This extract precisely that I performed here (in “Història d’un Senglar”), is the sadness of hope, the beginning of Richard the III, “what has become of the warriors?”, you can transport it to anything, “what has become of old times which were better?”.

Is theatre a good way to show different ideas such as ambition of power and eternal love? It is a way to show in a modest and healthy method human emotions. Ethical dilemmas and morals suggested by Shakespeare are current.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I think they need to be revisited, we cannot do them as in the past. I believe that lines have to be kept, changing the point of view.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Evil characters in Shakespeare are so bad that it is a pleasure to play them, and being hateful is what matters the least.



Fig. 67. Lluís Soler

5. **Lluís Soler** (Fig. 67)→ Born in Manlleu, (*Lluís Soler Biografia, Filmografia*, n.d.) Lluís Soler is known for his appearances and performances in theatre plays, series and movies. He is most famous for his roles in theatre. In Shakespeare's plays he has appeared in *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice* (*Enciclopèdia.cat*, n.d.), *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*, among others. (Ramón, n.d.) He won the Butaca award for best-featured actor in 2021, and was nominated for another one for best actor in 2022.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? I will be negative and say that Shakespeare has suffered the change of the 21st century. There are a few theatre companies, however, they are in constant change.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? The character that had a bigger influence on me and that helped me the most, and, consequently, I have a good memory of it is Shylock from "The Merchant of Venice", which I played in 1994.

Which is your favourite extract? Shakespeare has many passages. The one which may win would be Hamlet's monologue by far. We all know how it starts, with that "To be or not to be", I think that it is the monologue of theatre unless it was it until a while ago.

Is Theatre a good way to show different ideas, such as ambition of power and eternal love? Yes. However, new generations are moving through whole different fields and your mind works in a distinct way. Obviously, you play with

power, love, and sex, with all of this, but still, I believe you see it in a nothing-alike way.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? It is complicated. The productions played in tiny theatres with a capacity of 50 people, which are the ones with the youngest audience, have nothing to do with the classics.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Sinful characters have an advantage. Honourable characters have a specific as well as a limited audience. Complex characters are more interesting than funny and simple ones.

6. **Marta Marco** (Fig. 68)→ Born in Badalona, Marta Marco is an actress, known for her characters in different Catalan series. She has performed in Catalan and Spanish theatre classics (Wikipedia, n.d.). Moreover, she acted in *Romeo and Juliet*, among others. (Munt & Manrique, n.d.) She received the Butaca Award for best-featured actress in a musical in 2003 (Enciclopèdia.cat, n.d.), also the Butaca Award for best-featured actress and the Critic's Awards for best leading actress.



Fig. 68. Marta Marco

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? We revisit Shakespeare because what he writes is big and universal, it gets to the weak spot of the human soul, love, hate, generosity, and avarice. Shakespeare's universe is endless.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I would not know what to say. I would like to have done more Shakespeare plays and got to know them deeper.

However, I am fascinated by the characters from "Richard III". I have always thought it is a dark and powerful play with extraordinary characters.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I love that we are losing the fear of making him ours and getting him close to our reality. He raises the style but puts actions and close human feelings behind.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? I could tell you that we get back to revisiting plays and let women play King Lear, since it is also true that male characters are more powerful than Ophelia, Juliet or Lady Macbeth, which are powerful too, but if you put them next to male characters they only are transmitting the plot.



Fig. 69. Oriol Broggi

7. **Oriol Broggi** (Fig. 69)→ Born in Barcelona, Oriol Broggi is an actor and director. (Sala Beckett, n.d.) In 2002, he created a theatre company called "La Perla 29". He has directed Shakespeare's productions such as King Lear and Hamlet Aribau. He won the Butaca Award for best director twice, best show and best

theatrical production. (Wikipedia, n.d.)

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Yes, it is current. But be careful, I would not talk about the validity of concrete things like genres or wars, I would say it is current because it talks about things that make us think or do similar theatre plays.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? My favourites are Hamlet and King Lear. In the play “King Lear”, there are two characters whom I have a special affection for, Gloucester and Kent.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? In theatre, there are 3 ways of doing it: Not changing anything, updating it or not giving importance to the author's forms. This is the way I use, and I am most interested in, but all of them are nice.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? I don't think so. It is not clear who is bad and who is good. Good authors do not stigmatise characters, the good ones have bad things and the bad ones have good things.

8. **Sergi Belbel** (Fig. 70)→ Born in Terrassa, Sergi Belbel is a catalan author and director. (Associació d'escriptors en llengua catalana, n.d.) He ran the National Catalan Theatre from 2006 to 2013. (Wikipedia, n.d.) He has won 3 Max Awards and the National Theatre Award, apart from other literary awards. (Sala Beckett, n.d.) Furthermore, he has directed a new version of Hamlet as a monologue, called Hamlet. 01, for which he has been nominated for best director in the “Butaca” awards. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2022)



Fig. 70. Sergi Belbel

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? From s. XIX, Shakespeare has been performed and revised constantly. The union between his high writing and the closeness of his plots is the key to his immortal success.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I have so many that I cannot tell you all of them, although I will tell you one that nobody might have told you.

Portia, from *The Merchant of Venice*. A modern woman, who is daring at all times, she mixes beauty, intelligence and power.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? It is licit to update Shakespeare, due to him doing the same, updating antique things, which means we can do the same following his spirit.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? This is one of the greatneses of Shakespeare. Shakespeare could see the power of captivation which evil characters have. Furthermore, Shakespeare associates malice with intelligence and attraction.



Fig. 71, Víctor Sunyol

9. **Víctor Sunyol** (Fig. 71)→ Víctor Sunyol is a literature teacher, writer and editor born in Vic. (Viquipèdia, n.d.) He has written poetry, narrative and literature studies. (Grup62, n.d.) One of the most important books is *Birnam*, about an elder actor who is about to perform as King Duncan in *Macbeth*.

This publication has been awarded, as well as performed on a stage, by Lluís Soler.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Yes, absolutely current. That's why it is a classic. I agree with Harold Bloom's exaggeration, when he said human race copied Shakespeare's characters and ideas.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? There are some characters that I love. For instance, Hamlet, I am passionate about the play, it makes you wonder many things.

Which is your favourite extract? The monologue “*To be or not to be*” is a monologue I have studied a lot. However, Hamlet has other excellent monologues.

Is Theatre a good way to show different ideas such as ambition of power and eternal love? I think so. Humanity has been formed from Shakespeare. Each generation finds something about them reflected in his plays. They are life lessons.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? There are different ways of doing it, some are great, others not. Yet, all you need to play theatre is to believe in the text.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Not only does this happen with Shakespeare. Goodness has not such attractive goals. However, we would not call them evil characters, but complex characters, because they are not immoral without any basis.

10. **Xavier Albertí** (Fig. 72)→ Born in Lloret de Mar, Xavier Albertí is a catalan actor, director and composer. (Institut del Teatre, 2022) He ran the National Catalan Theatre from 2013 to 2021. He has directed many theatre productions and won many awards for his directions such as two Butaca



Fig. 72, Xavier Albertí

Awards. In 1997 he directed *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. (Viquipèdia, n.d.) He has recently been nominated for a “Butaca” Award for best direction.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? It gathers all the human vicissitudes, emotional, ideological... Everything that makes us humans is collected in the great laboratory of human experimentation that Shakespeare was.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I like many characters. I love Antony and Cleopatra because the play shows us the love between two adults. Romeo and Juliet because it is the antithesis of Antony and Cleopatra, an impulsive, wild teen love.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? It is usual to look forward to adapting Shakespeare. Despite that, I prefer to perform the original because we can still learn many things from it.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? They provide things that build the human mind. Richard III and Macbeth are scared, which means they are not evil for nothing.



Fig. 73, Xavier Boada

11. **Xavier Boada** (Fig. 73)→ Born in Manlleu, Xavier Boada is an actor and director who has also made publications. He has performed in the *Twelfth Night*. (CDAEM, n.d.) He has won many awards for his performances in the theatre company “Els Joglars” (Veus de Manlleu, n.d.), and also for other theatre productions.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary?

Indeed, Shakespeare's theatre and all of those we consider classical authors in the sense that, focusing on Shakespeare's, it depicts and confronts the viewer with the human soul, which is always current.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character?

My favourite character is Macbeth, just for that reason, because Macbeth is a good man, with good principles, who sees himself overwhelmed by his ambition.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics?

I think we must be very careful when updating the classics, mainly transferring the same text, in that case the same composition Shakespeare did. I think it is a mistake to modify the dramaturgical or the literary essence of the characters.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones?

Because we discover their humanity. There are lots of minor characters in Shakespeare that are the real drivers.

Conclusion

Is Shakespeare current?

That was the question I asked myself when I began this project, and that I wanted to answer by delving into one of the Stratford author's most famous plays, *Macbeth*.

After reading and interpreting the text, consulting different sources, searching information, talking with experts and theatre professionals, the conclusion is that Shakespeare and his works are fully current in our times.

The main topics in his tragedies and comedies are so universal that they go further than his time (s. XVI) and location (England). Therefore, it is not weird to see how a Japanese filmmaker like Akira Kurosawa adapts *King Lear* to medieval Japan; or that Kenneth Branagh transforms *Love's Labour's Lost* into a Hollywood musical; also that Àlex Rigola brings *Richard III* to an after hour.

Humans change, but four centuries later, we still feel identified in many of his characters. All in all, it is obvious that some things have changed, and his works need some tiny changes to make it as current as possible. The aspects that make him modern are the versatility, since he made different kind of plays; the adaptability, he made it easy to adapt his situations in different scenarios, as well as the fact that he wrote for everyone and not only for wealthy people, which forced him to write in a soft language, easy to understand for everybody, from the highest classes from society to the most uncultured ones. This language made his works completely democratic, since it can be enjoyed by everybody independently of their social status. Apart from that, he wrote about the human condition and our feelings, which can difficultly be changed across the centuries.

The plots and topics of Shakespeare are common and universal: love, death, envy, ambition, fidelity, principles, honour, treachery, untruth... Everybody can feel close to these feelings and emotions. That is why his plays have an intense humanity component and what they transmit shock and move us. Shakespeare distinguishes himself by being a deep knowledgeable of the human condition, and he proves it with his plays, which 400 years after being written, are still being adapted, translated, read and performed. Thereby, they are utterly contemporary.

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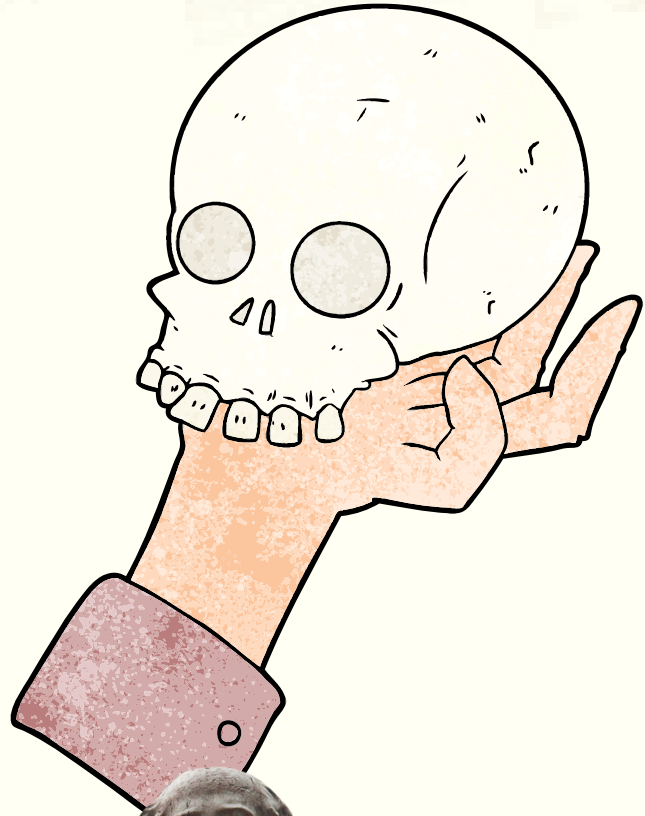
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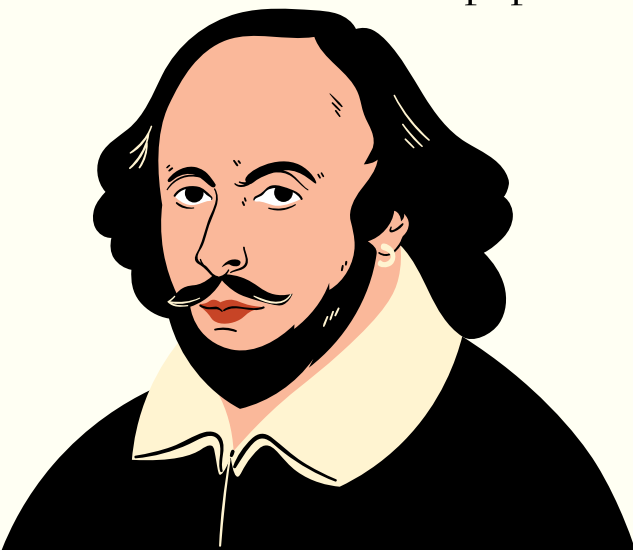
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Appendix



Interviews with professionals¹

1. **David Plana²** (Fig. 63)→ Born in Manlleu, David Plana is a television writer, dramaturge, theatre director and script doctor. David is also the writer and director of some theatre plays. He won the national Catalan theatre awards (Premis Butaca) in 1998 and in 2002. (Plana, n.d.)



Fig. 63, David Plana

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Of course, it is still current, as a piece of evidence we have every Shakespeare production or other plays based on Shakespeare which are performed every year. Moreover, we can see Shakespeare's influence in many current series, for example, The Sopranos, House of Cards and Gomorrah. That is because Shakespeare talks about topics such as the fight for power, ambition, and highest and lowest passions among others. He is probably the most current classic author.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? My favourite character is Hamlet, also, my favourite play is Hamlet. I think he is a modern character and I identify a lot with him. Hamlet is a play that stays between an easy world, his father's world (I have been killed, so you now have to take revenge, easy) and it is at the same time in a world similar to ours, full of doubts, (I have to take revenge, but I don't know if I want to kill, is not that easy) in his most famous monologue he tells us "conscience does make cowards of us all" and this is contemporary, we are "Hamlet characters". Putin, for instance, is not a character

¹ You can check the audio interviews in the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QcyDvNsXARZMI8scA90_nsdFfMVCU88?usp=share_link

² David answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message.

Ukraine, he does it. On the other hand, we have doubts, saying Ukraine has many Nazis and if we give weapons to them, we have to give them to everybody too, so we are full of doubts and inactivity, which is the biggest topic in Hamlet.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I am more or less in favour of revising the classics, although I sometimes think there is laziness about it, I mean if you go to a producer and tell him you want to do a Shakespeare he will agree, especially if the actors are Julio Manrique, Mercedes Sampietro and Emma Vilarasau. Therefore, it has become an easy formula, which shows a lack of creativity and risk. If you love Hamlet and want to do it, just do it, but if you want to update it so that you end up doing another theatre play, create another one and change the name. The problem is that some theatre directors do not have the talent for writing or creating, and they transform this into a theatre play of their creation. If you are suspicious, one may think it is a way to get out of paying authors' rights. With that, I do not want to accuse anyone, but it shows a lack of creativity and initiative.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? This does not only happen with Shakespeare. Every evil character should be attractive because they are the driving force of the action. I like to say that happiness does not give any plot. When you are writing a series, people always criticize and say "too many things happen to the characters". Yet, if nothing happens, it is boring, consequently, it does not have any interest. Evil characters are the principal driving force for these bad things to happen. The more difficult they are the better, they are more believable. Shakespeare is a master in this, he has created marvellous characters.

- 2. Ernest Villegas**³ (Fig. 64)→ Born in Manlleu, Ernest Villegas is an actor. He has appeared in films and series. However, he is famous for his roles in

³ Ernest answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message.

theatre plays such as “La Plaça del Diamant”, a Catalan classic, apart from acting in Shakespeare’s plays, such as Richard III, A Midnight’s Summer Dream, Othello and Twelfth Night. (Llibreria Papereria Pergamí, 2013) He was a nominee for the National Catalan Awards (Premis Butaca), in 2020. (Marco & Macías, n.d.)



Fig. 64. Ernest Villegas

Is Shakespeare’s theatre contemporary? I think so. When we revise Shakespeare’s plays we know that he was an author who talked about every human condition with the maximum amplitude, love, hate, envy, desire... and it’s so well explained, with such astonishingly rich vocabulary which sounds absolutely updated and revisable. It is obvious that classics last in time. Lifestyles change, yet the human condition does not.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I love many of Shakespeare’s characters. Not only do I like protagonists, but also antagonists. If I have to pick one, I would say Hamlet because I like the magnanimity of the character. I also admire King Lear. Hamlet. Along with King Lear are somehow the two great characters of Shakespeare, and as an actor, you want to face them someday. I believe I’m late to play Hamlet, I don’t have his age, although now Guillem Balart has played it, he is a marvellous actor who has done an incredible job and has the age to do it. Therefore, I still have time to play King Lear and I hope to be able to play his role someday. I also like Iago from “Othello”, Mercutio from “Romeo and Juliet”, and finally Benedict from “Much Ado About Nothing”.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I believe it is splendid to amend classics, re-read and reinterpret them, and recognize new

voices which are willing to connect with these classics. Many of the reinterpretations made are inadequate, but many times this job is just "try-fail, try-fail". Someday, a companion asked why we insist on playing theatre, and then another fellow answered, because we have probably done it correctly sometimes, and I think that happens, so it is important to revise, update and change the vocabulary of the classics.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? From my point of view, Shakespeare's evil characters are powerful because they generate conflict. Conflicts are crucial in every theatre play. For instance, I remember I did "Othello", together with Carlota Subirós in "Teatre Lliure". Iago, Othello's servant, was who actually shows jealousy's path, which makes Othello lose his senses, this power desire forces Iago to manipulate Othello, his relationship with Desdemona and manipulate everything. This goes together with what we were talking about, Shakespeare's concepts, which we can still defend. We live in a kind world, but also in a cruel one and Iago's case is an obvious example, jealousy is not good, power ambition is not good, and trying to be superior to others is not good. I believe that evil characters are interesting due to being dark, difficult to understand them as well as the reason for their actions, consequently they are attractive.



Fig. 65. Guillem Balart

3. Guillem Balart⁴ (Fig. 65)→ Born in Lleida, (Doladé, n.d.) Guillem Balart is a young actor, known for his role in Hamlet Aribau in 2021 (Cervera, 2021), "Carrer Robadors" (Colás, 2021) and "La malaltia". He was a nominee for the "Butaca" awards in 2022 as best breakout actor.

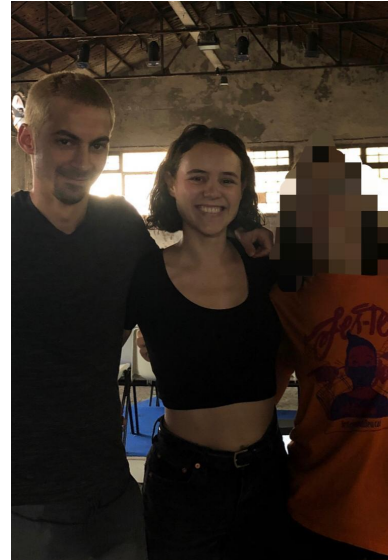
Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Definitely yes. Shakespeare talks about the most human emotions:

⁴ Guillem answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message. However, I had the opportunity to meet him and talk face-to-face about Shakespeare and my project. (Fig. 74)

desire, passion, death, and qualities, which can be found in the 17th century and will remain with us forever.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I have just played Hamlet, so I would say he is my favourite character. Despite that, I dare to say that also Iago from "Othello", is one of the evillest characters.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? Adapting classics is useful for new generations or new theatre-goers, being able to hear these lines as well as words. However, they need to have some kind of contact with current society, so adjusting the classics into our society is lovely and necessary. I believe that Shakespeare is occidental literature's father along with Cervantes, after them come Dante and Classic Greek



authors. The poetic power of these lines could be difficult to envisage; there are so many images. The verse is a textual form that helps a lot in interpretation.

Fig. 74, Guillem Balart, Daniela Brown and me.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Because Shakespeare could provide humanity to people whom we consider bad. Nevertheless, we could contemplate what is being good or bad, since it is a judgement we make about a character. These bloodthirsty and vengeful characters are captivating to us because they have a human condition. Every person in the world has had the desire of killing someone, an ambition, or had thoughts that we would classify into the canon of an evil character. They are succulent since they are infinite.

4. **Joan Carreras**⁵ (Fig. 66)→ Born in Barcelona, Joan Carreras has performed in many series and theatre productions. He has won the Butaca Awards on multiple occasions. (Wikipedia, n.d.) He also won the Max Award for Best Lead Actor in 2021, for his performance in



Fig. 66. Joan Carreras

“Història d’un Senglar”, a monologue about an actor who is about to perform Richard the III. He has also appeared in different Shakespeare plays such as Coriolanus, Richard the III, Macbeth and The Merchant of Venice.



Fig. 75, Joan Carreras and me after the interview.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary?

Completely, Shakespeare is current in many aspects and on many levels, socially, politically, emotionally, philosophically, ethically, and morally. This is what great geniuses have, years get by, and you find out

that either we have not changed in 500 years or Shakespeare knew how to talk about emotions. A bit of both, we still are stupid or brilliant, and he had this facility to capture all these human things.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I love evil characters. In real life we are good, we pay taxes, we say good morning, and we try to be good in general. On the other hand, theatre allows us to explore the dark part of the soul and Shakespeare is a master at this. He has splendid characters, such as Richard

⁵ I had the opportunity to interview him face to face after watching his performance of “Història d’un Senglar” in L’Atlàntida in Vic (Fig. 75)

the III, Iago from "Othello", Falstaff, Shylock from "The Merchant of Venice, who is not as bad, but it does not matter, they are characters who are full. My favourite is Iago, I have played him more than once, he is evil because he is evil, if he had a psychologist or a psychiatrist would find his reasons, but you discover how he describes in perfection these human bad intentions.

Which is your favourite extract?

This extract precisely that I performed here (in "Història d'un Senglar"), is the sadness of hope, the beginning of Richard the III, "what has become of the warriors?", you can transport it to anything, "what has become of old times which were better?". You can experiment with Shakespeare, you take any book written by him, you ask a general question, open the book and point somewhere at random, there will be a sentence that answers your question. It is difficult to find only an extract that inspires you.

Is theatre a good way to show different ideas such as ambition of power and eternal love? It is a way to show in a modest and healthy method human emotions. For instance, love in "Romeo and Juliet" is unconditional. Nevertheless, when you are Romeo and Juliet's age you fall in love that way, you can even think you can kill yourself or kill another person for this love. You can explain that to a teenager, but they will not believe you. Yet, if you show them "Romeo and Juliet" they can think so. All political plots, too. Something as terrible as "who is ready to vote?", "Democracy is for everybody?" is talked about in "Coriolanus". Ethical dilemmas and morals suggested by Shakespeare are current.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I think they need to be revisited, we cannot do them as in the past. I believe that lines have to be kept, changing the point of view. In addition, we have to understand it and make people not see it as old. When Shakespeare recited his lines in front of the audience, people went to the theatre to do something, they ate and fought there,

that's why Shakespeare's plays are long and repetitive, have comic characters, in order to make people not lose and distract. Shows lasted more than 4 hours, which means we cannot do the same as him.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Evil characters in Shakespeare are so bad that it is a pleasure to play them, and being hateful is what matters the least. Interpreting depraved characters is fantastic. People will do the exercise of distinguishing between the actor and the character.



Fig. 67. Lluís Soler

5. Lluís Soler⁶ (Fig. 67)→ Born in Manlleu (*Lluís Soler Biografia, Filmografia*, n.d.), Lluís Soler is known for his appearances and performances in theatre plays, series and movies. He is most famous for his roles in theatre. In Shakespeare's plays he has appeared in *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice* (*Enciclopèdia.cat*, n.d.), *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*, among others. (Ramón, n.d.) He won the Butaca award for best-featured actor in 2021, and was nominated for another one for best actor in 2022.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? I will be negative and say that Shakespeare has suffered the change of the 21st century. From 2005 or 2010 something has changed. Due to the arrival of technologies, for theatre companies, he is not the same that he used to be. Until the end of the 20th century, in Catalonia, there were companies like "Teatre Lliure", "Dagoll Dagom", "T de Teatre", "Els Joglars". Nowadays, for how the work is and everything, it is difficult to create a theatre company. There are a few, however, they are in constant change. Maybe you and I are in a company today, but will not be there

⁶ I also could interview Lluís face-to-face sine we arranged a meeting at his house. Moreover, we have met in multiple occasions where we could talk about the project.

tomorrow. This has an effect on Shakespeare, owing to the fact that his plays need many actors.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? A few years ago, I translated King Lear with the help of a professional. That makes you be for 8 or 9 years, 3 or 4 hours every day with the play, therefore, you make those characters of your own due to spending a lot of hours with them. Nonetheless, the character that had a bigger influence on me and that helped me the most, and, consequently, I have a good memory of it is Shylock from "The Merchant of Venice", I played it in 1994.

Which is your favourite extract? Shakespeare has many passages. The one which may win would be Hamlet's monologue by far. We all know how it starts, with that "To be or not to be", I think that it is the monologue of theatre unless it was it until a while ago.

Is Theatre a good way to show different ideas such as ambition of power and eternal love? Yes. However, new generations are moving through whole different fields and your mind works in a distinct way. Shakespeare wrote plays which last 3 or 4 hours, since people went to the theatre to spend the afternoon, eat and talk, you can't write a 4 hours play these days. I would like to see how many people would watch it. I would love to see this "Romeo and Juliet" that they are playing at "Poliorama". It is devoted to young people as there is a huge text cut and the music is modern. These ideas are there, but you use them in a way that I am not sure of its connection to Shakespeare. There is a film that is marvellous, you cannot stop laughing or crying, that is "Shakespeare in Love", yet, again, I do not know if you relate to it. Obviously, you play with power, love, and sex, with this, but still, I believe you see it in a nothing-like way.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? It is complicated. If we took a look at Barcelona's programming, where 500 or 600 plays are performed every year, we should search for classics, there are fewer every time, apart from the fact that these would be adaptations. Moreover, we should see how many people pay for watching them. The average age of this audience is of 65 or 70 years, which is high, they are people older than 60. The productions played in tiny theatres with a capacity of 50 people, which are the ones with the youngest audience, and have nothing to do with the classics.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Sinful characters have an advantage. We prefer evilness, and they are transgressors. Honourable characters have a specific as well as a limited audience. We could pass as an ethical character Hamlet, however, with the immoral ones, we have Richard III, Shylock, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth. Complex characters are more interesting than funny and simple ones.

6. **Marta Marco**⁷ (Fig. 68)→ Born in Badalona, Marta Marco is an actress, known for her characters in different Catalan series. She has performed in Catalan and Spanish theatre classics (Wikipedia, n.d.). Moreover, she acted in *Romeo and Juliet*, among others. (Munt & Manrique, n.d.) She received the Butaca Award for best-featured actress in a musical in 2003 (Enciclopèdia.cat, n.d.), also the Butaca Award for best-featured actress and the Critic's Awards for best leading actress.



Fig. 68. Marta Marco

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? We revisit Shakespeare because what he writes is big and universal, it gets to the weak spot of the human soul, love,

⁷ Marta answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message.

hate, generosity, and avarice. In some plays, he does it with heroes and in others with anti-heroes. Shakespeare's universe is endless.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I would not know what to say. I would like to have done more Shakespeare plays and got to know them deeper. However, I know the ones I have done which are "Romeo and Juliet", "Timon of Athens", some scenes from "Much Ado About Nothing" and "A Midnight's Summer Dream". I am fascinated by the characters from "Richard the III" I have always thought it is a dark and powerful play with extraordinary characters.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? I love that we are losing the fear of making him ours and getting him close to our reality. In the end, we can understand the words and what is happening to the characters from different perspectives, from the past, from the present and even from the future, because the feelings he talks about were recognizable before, now and probably forever. Human life ends up being cyclic, wars come back, as well as epidemics, love, indifference, and power, and the years get by, although it seems as if we do not evolve. In his poetry, he says really simple things with high language, metaphors and hyperboles, his words create images. He raises the style but puts actions and close human feelings behind. It is wonderful to update and adapt Shakespeare, take advantage of this outstanding base you have with new perspectives.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Indeed, we are always delighted with Shakespeare's evil characters, except Mercutio, he is a kind soul who shines more than Romeo. Anyway, there are brilliant characters. I could tell you that we get back to revisiting plays and let women play King Lear, since it is also true that male characters are more powerful than Ophelia, Juliet or Lady Macbeth, which are powerful too, but if you put them next to male characters they only are transmitting the plot. For instance, Cordelia is a

stunning character but what you would like to explain is what happens to King Lear, the same is for Desdemona, who is a lovely character yet if you compare her with Othello or Iago, she ends up serving two souls.



Fig. 69. Oriol Broggi

7. **Oriol Broggi**⁸ (Fig. 69)→ Born in Barcelona, Oriol Broggi is an actor and director. (Sala Beckett, n.d.) In 2002, he created a theatre company called “La Perla 29”. He has directed Shakespeare’s productions such as King Lear and Hamlet Aribau. He won the Butaca Award for best director twice, best show and best

theatrical production. (Wikipedia, n.d.)

Is Shakespeare’s theatre contemporary? Yes, it is current. Caution, I would not talk about the validity of concrete things like genres or wars, I would say it is current because it talks about things that make us think or do similar theatre plays. For me, classics are those artistic things that someone invented and many years later we are capable of assuming them from our point of view. Moreover, Shakespeare’s poetry is current. It ties every human passion brilliantly and surprisingly makes us think and understand our passions better, avarice, love... This enables us to make these situations ours and to adapt them to us.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? My favourites are Hamlet and King Lear. In the play “King Lear”, there are two characters whom I have a special affection for, Gloucester and Kent.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? In theatre, there are 3 ways of doing it:

⁸ I could interview Oriol by arranging a phone call.

- Not changing anything, it is an archaeological way, we could imagine it as an orchestra which plays with medieval musical instruments.
- Updating it, instead of taking place in Paris, it takes place in New York, they wear suits and instead of going to a party in a castle, they go to a discotheque. In addition, we change some words.
- Without giving importance to the author's forms, we change them for forms between the author and the director. The actor speaks in verse, but their movements are modern. The clothing is in-between. This is the way I use and I am most interested in, but all of them are nice.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? I don't think so. It is not clear who is bad and who is good. Good authors do not stigmatize characters, the good ones have bad things and the bad ones have good things. Furthermore, spectators do not know if they have to be in favour or against this character. In theatre, evil characters are necessary, theatre evinces things from reality that worry us, so the fact of finding more evil intentions that we have used but frowned on, makes us watch it from another perspective. To sum up, this is the good thing about evil characters.

8. **Sergi Belbel**⁹ (Fig. 70)→ Born in Terrassa, Sergi Belbel is a Catalan author and director. (Associació d'escriptors en llengua catalana, n.d.) He ran the National Catalan Theatre from 2006 to 2013. (Wikipedia, n.d.) He has won 3 Max Awards and the National Theatre Award, apart from other literary awards. (Sala Beckett, n.d.) Furthermore, he has directed a new version of Hamlet as a monologue, called Hamlet. 01, for which he has



Fig. 70. Sergi Belbel

⁹ Sergi answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message.

been nominated for best director in the "Butaca" awards. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2022)

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? From s. XIX, Shakespeare has been performed and revised constantly, is fully current because romantics (authors from the s. XVIII and s. XIX) canonized him, turned him into a classic, and classic authors are always current. Shakespeare went in-depth with crucial and emotional matters he achieved a tough thing, which only a few authors could, that is a mix of the highest literature, beautiful and complex words with emotional and captivating storylines for the spectator. This union between his high writing and the closeness of his plots is the key to his immortal success.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I have so many that I cannot tell you everyone, although I will tell you one that nobody might tell you. Portia, from "The Merchant of Venice", is a prodigy of intelligence, wisdom, and game. Moreover, she has a phenomenal 5th act, where she takes a tiny revenge on his own lover for having paid more attention to his friend than to her, a very good hidden plot. Everybody thinks Shylock, the Jew is the main character, but no, the real lead is her. A modern woman, who is daring at all times, who mixes beauty, intelligence and power.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? Of course. His plays are so important, he is a classic, and he lost the copyright many centuries ago. We have the right and the duty to show how these powerful and interesting characters and plots are still current. I don't mind if this update respects the last spirit of the original play, for instance, if the actors are wearing jeans or are rapping. An update like West Side Story, such as the film from 1960 made by Robert Wise, with music by Bernstein and lyrics by Sondheim or the new version made by Spielberg. It is an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet and in my opinion, is a fantastic film, both versions are based on a Shakespeare play. It is licit to update

Shakespeare, due to him doing the same, there was not any plot invented by him, they were adaptations of stories, tales, novels, myths and parts of Roman and Greek history. He did the same, updating antique things, which means we can do the same following his spirit.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? This is one of the greatneses of Shakespeare. In "The Silence of the Lambs", the character of Hannibal Lecter is Shakespearian, a captivating perverse character. Shakespeare could see the power of captivation which evil characters have. This is the grace of Shakespeare that Hitchcock also uses in his movies. To perform, are better the bad characters than the good ones. If I was called to play in "Othello" I would ask to do Iago, the evil character. Othello has the problem of jealousy, although it is a bit boring. On the contrary, Iago creates the strategy and is intelligent. Furthermore, Shakespeare associates malice with intelligence and attraction. Since the spectator knows who is maligned, the game is triple because we can see how good characters fall into the trap of evil ones. Shakespeare's wicked characters are good because they are intelligent, captivating and beautiful, thus Edmund, from "King Lear", is one of my favourite Shakespeare's evil characters.



Fig. 71, Víctor Sunyol

9. Víctor Sunyol¹⁰ (Fig. 71)→ Víctor Sunyol is a literature teacher, writer and editor born in Vic. (Viquipèdia, n.d.) He has written poetry, narrative and literature studies. (Grup62, n.d.) One of the most important books is *Birnam*, about an elder actor who is about to perform as King Duncan in *Macbeth*. This publication has been awarded, as well as performed on a stage, by Lluís Soler.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? Yes, absolutely current. That's why it is a classic, a classic is a work written centuries ago, but even so, current people feel identified with it. I agree with Harold Bloom's exaggeration when he said the human race copied Shakespeare's characters and ideas.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? There are some characters that I love. For instance, Hamlet, I am passionate about the play, it makes me wonder about many things. The character is deep. Macbeth is another character I like, a really complicated character. He is evil, Kott says in his book "Shakespeare Our Contemporary" that he murders because he fears not being capable of doing it. Prospero from "The Tempest" as well as "King Lear", are appealing characters too. Some supporting characters are also fascinating. I believe they are small yet fierce. Shakespeare creates these kinds of characters which are not that important, yet, they are not flat, they have humanity and background. I enjoy Horatio, Hamlet's best friend, he is good and loyal. Last but not least, there is Shylock, from "The Merchant of Venice", who is extraordinary.

Which is your favourite extract? The monologue "To be or not to be" is a monologue I have studied a lot. However, Hamlet has other excellent

¹⁰ Víctor answered all my questions through a phone call we had arranged.

monologues. Mark Antony's monologue after Julius Caesar's death is rhetoric politics, many politicians' speeches are based on it. The dialogue between Hamlet and the gravedigger and between Hamlet and Polonius shows acuity as well as refinement. Other dialogues in "As You Like It" are of great verbal and conceptual ingenuity.

Is Theatre a good way to show different ideas such as ambition of power and eternal love? I think so. Humanity has been formed from Shakespeare. Each generation finds something about them reflected in his plays. They are life lessons.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? There are different ways of doing it, some are great, others not. You can reduce the text in order to show this play to someone who thinks it is too long, and they will not watch it. Disrupting the play, as well as the script with a reason, can be done. There is a Hamlet, directed by Korsunovas which wrecks the lines, and varies the order and the ending, so as to explain his view of Hamlet. Another thing is when the changes are just to make it more modern, a classic is already modern. In the film "Hamlet 2000", the script is exactly the same, however, the situations change. The castle is a multinational, the king is the director of the business. He believes in the text, that is what you need to play theatre. I once saw a Macbeth where the cast was dressed in black, there was not any atrezzo nor decoration, only the cast reciting the lines.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? Not only does this happen with Shakespeare. Kind characters are flat, it is difficult for an author to give them deepness. Goodness does not have attractive goals. A good person is good because he has faith in humanity. An evil one has many motives to be bad, ambition, revenge... However, we would not call them evil characters, but complex characters, because they are not immoral without any basis.

10. Xavier Albertí¹¹ (Fig. 72)→ Born in Lloret de Mar, Xavier Albertí is a Catalan actor, director and composer. (Institut del Teatre, 2022) He ran the National Catalan Theatre from 2013 to 2021. He has directed many theatre productions and won many awards for his directions, such as two Butaca Awards. In 1997, he directed Macbeth and Hamlet. (Viquipèdia, n.d.) He has recently been nominated for a “Butaca” Award for best direction.



Fig. 72, Xavier Albertí

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary? It gathers all the human vicissitude, emotional, ideological... Everything that makes us humans is collected in the great laboratory of human experimentation that Shakespeare was. Shakespeare awards these humans from the Renaissance conscience, and their sexual and loving motivations, which are important and fair.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character? I like many characters. I love Antony and Cleopatra because the play shows us the love between two adults, it asks the question about which is the most important thing between love, sex, power or money. One of my favourite characters is Falstaff because it is the image of good life and pleasure which is necessary for us. Finally, Romeo and Juliet because it is the antithesis of Antony and Cleopatra, an impulsive, wild teen love.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics? It is usual to look forward to adapting Shakespeare. Despite that, I prefer to perform the original because we can still learn many things from it.

¹¹ Xavier answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones? They provide things that build the human mind. Richard III and Macbeth are scared, which means they are not evil for nothing.



Fig. 73, Xavier Boada

11. Xevi Boada¹² (Fig. 73)→ Born in Manlleu, Xavier Boada is an actor and director who has also made publications. He performed in the Twelfth Night. (CDAEM, n.d.) He has won many awards for his performances in the theatre company “Els Joglars” (Veus de Manlleu, n.d.), and also for other theatre productions.

Is Shakespeare's theatre contemporary?

Indeed, Shakespeare's theatre and all of those we consider classical authors in the sense that, focusing on Shakespeare's, it depicts and confronts the viewer with the human soul, which is always current. He is maybe the first author who shows real characters, meaning they are not archetypical, constructed from a single piece, who do not play a moralising or simply an entertaining role, but characters that show you the dark and fair side at the same time... I mean, human characters. The humanity of the characters (for better or worse) is where the validity of Shakespeare's work is. Lately, I have watched *Hamlet* twice, and the questions the posh teenager asks himself can be valid at any time. And from where he does them, his pain, his intention... you can find out humanity. And humanity is real, and it is the same nowadays as it was 500 years ago... We are, actually, in front of nature's mirror. And in that sense, it is valid.

¹² Xevi answered all my questions through a WhatsApp voice message. However, we have met in multiple occasions where we could talk about the project.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character?

My favourite character is Macbeth, just for that reason, because Macbeth is a good man, with good principles, who sees himself overwhelmed by his ambition. I mean, ambition settles in himself and all the darkness in his soul appears. But we cannot say that Macbeth is a mean character strictly speaking, as he is someone possessed by a huge ambition force (fooled by the witches, obviously) that he can't stop. It is a human fault taken to the extreme. I feel compassion for him, even though he is a bloodthirsty assassin since he has these two faces, the same as Lear. It is the character I like the most.

What do you think about updating or revising the classics?

I think we must be very careful when updating the classics, mainly transferring the same text, in that case, the same composition Shakespeare did. If you use jeans or shorts... does not matter, but I think it is a mistake to modify the dramaturgical or the literary essence of the characters. But above all, their driving force and the lines that make them move. The case of Hamlet is very clear, it is a text that you can't modify: what he says is valid because he is human, and it is of extraordinary depth. Not only Hamlet but also Polonius, and Claudius... are recognizable. What Shakespeare does is to put a mirror in front of nature, in front of the person, and that is why we can see reflected in his characters. Our miseries are reflected, and I think it is the great virtue of Shakespeare as a classical author.

Why do you think the most powerful characters are the evil ones?

Because we discover their humanity. Even with *Othello's* Iago we realize there is a person who is suffering. And if he suffers, despite his wrongdoing, we are in front of human behaviour. And that is why he is so powerful. Lady Macbeth, for instance, is an apparently minor character... There are lots of minor characters in Shakespeare that are the real drivers: *Othello's* Iago, Lady Macbeth... Evidently Cordelia in *King Lear*... Lear is the main character, but the one that drives the

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play is Cordelia. Although Cordelia is not a mean character, Iago and Lady Macbeth, and Macbeth, Richard the III... are essentially human characters with the evil inside. And that is why they are so attractive because they are human.

Every person that has taken part in this project, whom I mention below, has given authorization for their declarations, names and images to appear in this piece of work: David Plana, Ernest Villegas, Guillem Balart, Joan Carreras, Marta Marco, Oriol Broggi, Sergi Belbel, Víctor Sunyol, Xavier Albertí, Xavier Boada Lluís Soler, Antoni Anglada, Montse Anglada, Jordi Arqués, Rosa, Baulenas, Anna Bussanya, Ivette Callís, Marc Casanova, Júlia Cervera, Abel Cobos, Marcel Cobos, Dolors Collell, Neus Colomer, Pep Colomer, Àngela Coma, Montse Damian, Mercè Estrada, Pep Font, Xevi Font, Irene Gutiérrez, Emili Jané, Núria Jané, Pep Jané, Miquel López, Laia Monforte, Josep Maria Pradell, Abel Reyes, Mima Riera, Montse Rodríguez, Joan Roura, Maria Soler, Marian Toril and Susagna Tubau.

The rest, is silence
-William Shakespeare-

