La señora Macbeth: The Price Paid for Blind Love and Silent Complicity

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Lady Macbeth with a Difference

In the pantheon of merciless, power-hungry dramatic characters, William Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth has reigned supreme, a woman so driven by raw ambition that she wills herself un-sexed so as to assume the role of a man in a man's world of bloody politics: "Come you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty" (Act 1, Scene 5). In the words of Shakespeare scholar Cristina León Alfar, Lady Macbeth's place in critical history "is one of almost peerless malevolence" (112). And this despite numerous attempts to paint a different picture of her, to recast her as a more positive figure, or at least one whose murderous actions can be explained by her psychology, her personal history and family lineage, none of which, parenthetically, are dealt with by Shakespeare. In his article "The Fiendlike Queen: Recuperating Lady Macbeth in Contemporary Adaptations of *Macbeth*," William C. Carroll traces important efforts at rehabilitating Lady Macbeth, starting in the early 1800s to as recently as 2012. Whatever the revisionist strategies employed, "demonizing Duncan, Malcolm, and even Banquo, making the Macbeths patriots, preserving the old Celtic ways," or turning to the historical record, such as it is, to mitigate her actions, Carroll concludes that the end result is often "a repentant, heroic, even innocent—and above all, a maternal—Lady Macbeth," a Lady Macbeth who can be explained, justified, perhaps even forgiven. He adds that the focus that some revisionists place on Lady Macbeth's frustrated maternal instincts "emphatically re-inscribes her into patriarchal discourse, since the activities of her womb constitute her primary identity. [. . .] This move, too, devalues or deflates the agency Shakespeare

grants her in the play; it is a horrific power, and it crumbles into nothingness, but it belongs to *her*."

That Carroll's article was published in *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* is the measure of how powerful a magnet the Bard's plays have been and continue to be in what has been called the process of adaptation, appropriation, recuperation, re-writing, and any number of similar terms.[2] Yet, unlike the contemporary adaptations that Carroll focuses on, Griselda Gambaro's *La señora Macbeth* (published 2003, first staged 2004) is not revisionist and it does not try to salvage Lady Macbeth. Quite the contrary, for in the end she is once again condemned in the eyes of her beholders, on and off stage, but this time, for reasons quite different from those in Shakespeare's text.

If not revisionist, then, what is Gambaro's *La señora Macbeth*? The playwright has said that she would never attempt an adaptation of Shakespeare: "[Y]o creo que Shakespeare no se puede adaptar. Es un autor tan inmenso que toda adaptación resulta una pretensión soberbia" (I. Soto). Gambaro's comment notwithstanding, adaptation is a term that can be useful in talking about her play, as is appropriation, both of which have undergone serious theoretical discussion in recent years. Two important studies stand out particularly: Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation* and Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*.

Hutcheon has said of adaptation that it is "repetition, but repetition without replication" (7). The very title of Gambaro's play points to this: Macbeth's role is undercut, made different by the title *la señora*, and in the process, the focalization immediately shifts from husband to wife. Indeed, Macbeth never appears physically on stage. Gambaro has said that an image came to her of a Lady Macbeth spoken through and by an absent Macbeth: "Me interesó ese cambio de perspectiva, no sólo por la señora Macbeth, sino porque también añadió un matiz bastante curioso al personaje de Macbeth que no aparece" (I. Soto). This is the most fundamental repetition without replication in Gambaro's play: The Shakespearean intertext is mostly the same as regards plot, but without the lead male character present. It is his wife who is the flesh and blood presence on stage, and while complicit in his murderous actions, she is not the compelling force behind them. In fact, what motivates her in this case is not a lust for power, but a kind of sentimental love.

Another major repetition without replication is telling the Macbeth story line with a much-reduced cast of characters: Lady Macbeth, the three witches, and the ghost of Banquo. The witches assume roles that they do not have

in Shakespeare's text and move in and out of multiple personae: witches, their lady's attendants and, like members of a Greek chorus, commentators on the action as well as on Lady M, as her name appears in Gambaro's text. (However, she is never referred to this way in the performed text.) Gambaro does more or less follow the Macbeth story line of the source text, although his part in it is either narrated by his wife or by the three attendants/witches. Furthermore, the assassination of Lady Macduff and her son is performed by the witches in a play-within-a play, with Lady M as its audience.

Hutcheon also discusses the concept of nomadism in adaptation. Using the example of the Carmen character, Hutcheon argues that she is a nomad, circulating widely, "displaying a decidedly dynamic and fluid rather than static and fixed meaning" (158). Lady Macbeth is clearly a fellow traveler in this context. Borrowing from the anthropologist Susan Stanford Friedman, Hutcheon also speaks of indigenization in relationship to adaptations, for they, too, "constitute transformations of previous works in new contexts. Local particularities become transplanted to new ground, and something new and hybrid results" (150). While *La señora Macbeth* does not clearly situate itself in any specific place or time and thus might mistakenly be thought to take place in Elizabethan England, an Argentine or even a larger Latin American audience would recognize that this is not the case. The use of Argentine vocabulary and the mixture of the widely used informal *tú* form with the *vos* from Argentina are clear clues that the dramatic action has been moved to another national context. Also, as in the case of most all of Gambaro's theatre, *La señora Macbeth* works by allusion and metaphor and in this way manages to transcend the fixed dramatic space and time of Shakespeare's play. That is to say, Gambaro's text is indigenized into 20th and early 21st century Argentina.

Whereas Hutcheon does not have much to say about theatre, Sanders dedicates a full chapter in *Adaptation and Appropriation* to Shakespeare. She stresses that the "dramatic form encourages persistent reworking and imagining. Performance is an inherently adaptive art; each staging is a collaborative interpretation, one which often reworks a playscript [sic] to acknowledge contemporary concerns or issues" (48). Or, in Hutcheon's terms, performance frequently indigenizes the adapted text. However, Sanders also uses the term "proximation," which brings the source text "closer to audiences' frame of reference in temporal, geographic, or social terms" (21).[3] While Gambaro does not "proximate" her text to Shakespeare's by moving his time frame up chronologically, as many adapters do, she uses Spanish language, allusion, and

metaphor, as noted above, to move it into a contemporary Argentine world.

Sanders makes a distinction among citation, quotation, adaptation, and appropriation that can be helpful in understanding Gambaro's complex method in *La señora Macbeth*:

> Quotation can be deferential or critical; supportive or questioning; it depends on the context in which the quotation takes place. Citation, however, presumes a more referential relationship [. . .] to the canon of 'authoritative', culturally validated texts. [. . .] But citation is different again to adaptation, which constitutes a more sustained engagement with a single text or source than the more glancing act of allusion or quotation, even citation, allows. Beyond that, appropriation carries out the same sustained engagement as adaptation but frequently adopts a posture of critique, even assault. (4)

There is some of each of these in Gambaro's text, although adaptation (in both Hutcheon and Sanders' terms) is primary.

A Voiceless Lady M

In her thoughtful study "El lugar del lenguaje en *La [s]eñora Macbeth* de Griselda Gambaro," Lydia Di Lello offers a typology of what she terms Lady M's "decires": reference by repetition, modification, and appropriation.[4] The first is much like citation in Sanders' terminology, "a passage cited or quoted, with the embedded legal sense of reference to works of authority" (161). In this case, Lady M cites her husband as the authoritative voice; she speaks her husband's words as written in Shakespeare's text, creating a kind of double authority (husband and canonical play). The second *decir,* according to Di Lello, is a summary with modifications of what Macbeth says. This could be appropriation in Sander's terminology, except that Lady M never really takes full possession of his words to use them for her own purposes; that is to say, she never contradicts, subverts or recasts them. The third *decir* is what Di Lello labels appropriation but what in Sanders' vocabulary is a quotation: repeating textually what Macbeth says in the source text; or, what Hutcheon might call a repetition, but one with replication. In all cases, and whatever the terminology, Gambaro makes her character a ventriloquist of and for her husband. While Lady Macbeth has the power of her words to influence her husband in Shakespeare's play, in Gambaro's she has no verbal agency. Thus, while Macbeth may be absent from the dramatic space, he is everywhere present in the dramatic world. Lady M. is but the mouthpiece of and for her husband, unable to speak or even to think for herself. She willingly surrenders thought

to her husband: "Yo no pienso nada, se lo dejo a Macbeth que lo hace por los dos" (20). And while sharing his desires, as noted earlier, she notes that she is not the motivating force egging on his ambition: "Me miró como si yo fuera su cómplice, pero yo no había pronunciado palabra"(35). Bruja 1 responds to her, saying,"[n]o importa estar muda, señora. Él te dirá a su hora las palabras que quiere escuchar. Tu lengua será el espejo de su lengua" (35). Lady M declares herself under the spell of a love that has made her "tan cobarde como para tener miedo de mis palabras y ponerme sólo las suyas en la boca" (35). Once again, the prophetic Bruja 1 sees well what her lady does not: "No tendrás más remedio que pronunciarlas. Harás tuyas sus intenciones" (37).

This exchange comes early in the play, in Scene 2, and sets the stage for most everything that comes on its heels. Lady M will continue to speak through her husband, not just repeating but also re-elaborating, citing, and quoting Macbeth's words as written in Shakespeare's text, but never establishing any personal identity beyond them. Di Lello concludes that while the typology of speech acts she discusses "es pertinente para clasificar los decires de Macbeth en la señora Macbeth, en rigor los tres modos no expresan sino grados en los que el lenguaje del primero [Macbeth] habita el cuerpo de la protagonista." The degree to which Lady M is voiceless is evident in the way that when pronouncing Macbeth's name, her voice is reduced to a "graznido," a cawing or croaking: "*Grita el nombre de Macbeth con un graznido insólito, animal*" (26). At other times, after having made reference to her husband, she emits the same crow-like sound: "*Sale, graznando como un animal*" (32). Reminiscent of the Argentine *grotesco* used in other Gambaro plays, where her characters are dehumanized, this cawing sound leaves Lady M completely without speech; she is reduced to making wild bird sounds.

Silence, Complicity and Guilt

Lady M's inability to follow up on her speech acts, her animal sounds, and her often childlike talk point to an internal struggle, a mental torture born of guilt that ends in her breakdown and death. However, there is an important difference here with Shakespeare's text, where there is complicity in action and word, followed by guilt. Not so in *La señora Macbeth*: Her guilt is in not intervening, in not stopping Macbeth, in not saying anything. She is complicit in her husband's dark deeds, despite her refusal to believe that Macbeth could have killed innocents in cold blood: "¡Macbeth, mi Macbeth no haría eso!" (59). One of the most powerful moments of this denial comes when she watches the witches' darkly comic recreation of the murders of

Lady Macduff and her son. Lady M interrupts at various moments to correct the script, to warn Lady Macduff of imminent danger, to insist that Macbeth would never hurt them: "¡Y Macbeth no te hará daño" (67).[5] Her first reaction after the play is over is to say that it is not true and then to criticize its quality: "¿Cómo creer veraz una representación tan torpe? [. . .] Mucha imaginación se necesita para creer en esos crímenes. ¿Dónde están los cadáveres? ¿Dónde está la sangre? Me lavaré los ojos y se borrará la visión, que es más bien cómica" (70). While she may deny what she has seen, from this moment on there will be a constant reminder for her of its veracity: the bloodstains on her hands, which Bruja 1 points out to her, thus denying Lady M not only her husband's innocence but also her own: "Mírate las manos, señora" (70).

The theme of guilt by silence and inaction runs throughout *La señora Macbeth*. Just as Bruja 1 presages, by allowing Macbeth to inhabit her voice, she assumes his intentions. She could have overcome her silence, but she chose not to. There was within her a *yo misma* who struggled to be let out and heard: "Ah, sí, ésta es mi lengua, no la lengua de Macbeth. [. . .] Una voz me llama para obligarme a salir de mí misma.[. . .] Esa yo misma sólo vive si reniega de Macbeth" (72, 74). But she rejects this voice as foreign to her and permanently shuts it up: "(*Ahuyenta con los brazos*) ¡Fu, fu! No voy a hacerlo. Que se vaya esa extranjera, que estuvo siempre ausente y a quien se le ocurre aparecer ahora. ¡Fuera, traidora a Macbeth! No te dejaré hablar" (74). By silencing this inner self, she condemns herself to being a mere appendage, "una señora *de* Macbeth" (emphasis mine). There is no timely self-discovery or *anagnorisis*, no cathartic assumption of blame. Even as she is dying, Lady M is still worried about Macbeth's fate: "Mi Macbeth . . . ¿vivirá?" (85). As Gambaro has explained, "[La] toma de conciencia de la señora Macbeth es una toma de conciencia inútil, tardía" (I. Soto). Consequently, it is hard to speak of tragedy in her case. In another repetition without replication, Lady M dies on rather than off stage. She takes the potion Bruja 1 gives her, not knowing that it is poisoned. When she realizes that it is, she demands an antidote, to which Bruja 1 one answers: "¿Antídoto al antídoto? No, señora" (84). In the end, while Lady M's story is terrible, it is not tragic. She is blinded by wifely love and not by hubris.

However, Gambaro has not reduced Lady M's story to romance, something that would be totally alien to her theatre. Concerning the theme of love in this play, the playwright has said that love can be kind "pero también nefasto. Por ejemplo, cuando el supuesto amor encubre la verdad, porque busca comprender al amado a toda costa y para eso se necesita recortarlo del

contexto social y político" (Costa). While Lady M's devotion to her husband is a powerful force in the play, Gambaro is more interested in using it as a way of exploring desire and seduction: the desire to lose oneself in the beloved and the concomitant seduction by the Other's power. The witches understand this, and often when Lady M makes too much of her love for Macbeth, they undercut her with the kind of black humor and cruel irony that is a hallmark of Gambaro's theatre. For example, in anticipation of Macbeth's return to the castle and the banquet that she must prepare, Lady M becomes quite agitated. The witches assure her that there is still time for the preparations:

> BRUJA 1. Tranquilizate señora.
> BRUJA 2. La agitación afea.
> BRUJA 3. Salen ojeras y venitas acá (*señala la nariz*), sobresalen los ojos como los de un escuerzo. (23)

Their lady finally leaves to take "una, dos píldoras para que mi corazón deje de latir como loco. (*Canturrea*). Y me pondré bella para Macbeth y Duncan, el rey." With her exit, Bruja 1 sighs with relief: "¡Uf! ¡Por fin se fue! Qué manera de alborotar por nada!" (25). It is at moments like these that one can speak of acts of appropriation, following Sanders' observation that with appropriation, there often is a critique of or assault on the source text. The witches' words are an example of the latter, an assault, as they underscore Gambaro's refusal to grant her text tragic solemnity by introducing a dark humor and irony absent in the source text.

Gambaro's Purpose

From the above, it is easy to see that *La señora Macbeth* is a very hybrid and unique kind of play text. In the end it is perhaps best to follow Ricardo Bartís, who has said that since Argentines are not English, they do not have a Shakespearean tradition, and so, they should elaborate readings of the Bard that approximate their own reality. Echoing Brazilian discourses about cannibalism, Bartís concludes that in "la Argentina contemporánea la única manera de hacer Shakespeare es canabalizándolo" (88). Basically, this is what Gambaro does, taking here and there from Shakespeare, keeping what she needs, sometimes altering it for her dramatic project, throwing out what she does not need, or simply ignoring what is not relevant to her purpose.

But what, exactly, is her purpose? Why has she transformed Lady Macbeth into the voiceless and weak, even cowardly, Lady M? By making her passive, seemingly without any agency, has Gambaro transformed her into a total prisoner and victim of patriarchy? The answer to this is yes and no. Those

who know Gambaro's work will remember that many of her female characters are cast as victims of physical and verbal abuse, sometimes even at the hands of other women; very few of these characters have the power to change their situation. The playwright was taken to task for this by some critics, who, as feminists, could not understand Gambaro's choices. Her answer has been that she depicts the world in its own terms, as a place where women as well as men can inflict cruelty on others. There always has been and continues to be a dark vision in Gambaro's plays, a darkness that makes them compelling, shocking but also revelatory of human nature, whatever the actor's gender.

But Lady M does not quite fit into this vision. She is not the archetypal phallic female; she is not cruel or evil but rather pusillanimous and naïve. Why? Again, the answer lies in Gambaro's realism about human nature and human events, especially Argentine events. Although Gambaro has said that *La señora Macbeth* "no transcurr[e] en el aquí y en el ahora" (Frías), there are many allusions, nods to a concrete time and place: Argentina's Dirty War of the 1970s and early 1980s and its aftermath. Since the end of the *Proceso*, and with the example of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, Gambaro has written various plays in which she has given women a newfound agency. Her *Antígona furiosa* (1984) is among the most notable of these texts, in which her latter-day eponymous protagonist becomes the voice of resistance and truth. And while at first glance *La señora Macbeth* might appear to be a step backwards for Gambaro in her treatment of female characters, it is not. Rather, Lady M's characterization has more to do with where she fits on a time continuum. Her present is Macbeth's, a time of ruthless political bloodletting, but it also is a time when killing brings remorse, as it does to Macbeth and, through him, to Lady M. As Bruja 1 tells her: "Macbeth es, a pesar de sus errores, un alma tierna. Vendrán épocas de crímenes felices, donde el poder ignorará las muertes que ocasiona. Las decidirá sin imaginarlas y sin perder el sueño" (72). While this prophecy can easily refer to much 20th and 21st-century brutality, for an Argentine audience it hits home directly. Cristina Banegas, the lead actress in the 2004 premiere of *La señora Macbeth*, references agents of terror during the Dirty War, noting that there are "torturadores, muy psicópatas, que no sienten culpa y siguen negando. Otros se quiebran, porque pierden el sueño, como Macbeth" (Frías).

In her article on *La señora Macbeth*, Grisby Ogás Puga argues that the play deals both with trauma during the *Proceso*—the struggle to regain personal identity through social identity during a continued silence—and denial after the return to democracy in 1983:

> Gambaro expresa el problema identitario en nuestro país desde la individualidad psíquica del personaje que es reflejo, a su vez, del imaginario social. La dramaturga nos habla de la memoria colectiva desde la memoria individual. No obstante el silenciamiento, los años de anonimato y encubrimiento, se filtra, aparece en el personaje de la señora Macbeth esa yo misma que hace presente al ser auténtico entre los intersticios de la conciencia. Porque la herida que dejó el trauma, convertida en vacío, intenta ocuparse con la memoria que se erige entre la historia y la memoria. (6)

However, because Lady M's *yo misma*, to whom Ogás Puga refers, does not make herself heard, Lady M is and is not situated in that future predicted by Bruja 1. Through Macbeth's words and actions, she feels guilt, cannot sleep, and is tortured by images of his victims, especially Macduff's son. But she also inhabits the present of the future referred to by Bruja 1 because of her silence, because she did not stand up against violence as so many did not during the Dirty War. Again, Bruja 1 sees this clearly: "Te tocó vivir en la brecha del tiempo situada entre el pasado y el futuro. En esa brecha te equivocaste, ¡y de qué manera, señora! Traición y desperdicio" (84). But in the future on another time line, one that is not hers, there will be those who do take a stand, who do speak up, who do resist tyranny and violence. According to Bruja 1:

> Si hoy es el mañana, te diré, sin veneno, que vendrán mujeres tan reinas como vos pero sin la razón turbada. [. . .] Delante del palacio se amontonarán para gritar ¡Macbeth!, ¡Macbeth! En el mañana esas sabrán que es un grito de furia. ¡Macbeth! ¡Macbeth!, contra el tirano la furia, mi señora. (84, 85)

This veiled allusion to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is typical of Gambaro's method and allows her to make connections with an Argentine context even when there are no specific deictics pointing to it. As she has acknowledged, "[a]l final de la obra lo que las brujas auguran es la llegada de otras mujeres que van a pensar y actuar por sí mismas y van a combatir al tirano. Es, un poco, la imagen nuestra de las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo" (I. Soto). Had she inhabited that timeline, perhaps Lady M would have had a different fate and identity. Unfortunately for her, however, and for those who suffered and died under tyranny (Macbeth's and that of the military during the *Proceso*), she first had to die to make way for the other women who would pick up the banner of protest and make their voices heard. When seen this way, it is not the case that Gambaro has taken a step a backward *vis à vis* women in *La señora Macbeth*, but that she is once again being a realist,

not idealizing all women but seeing them for what is good and bad, weak and strong about them.[6] Her Lady M pays a high price for a wifely love that leaves her voiceless and, consequently, complicit in crimes that she may not have committed herself but for which she is tortured by guilt.

Lady M asks the witches to come up with a magic spell that will cleanse her of guilt— "¡Quiero un conjuro que me vuelva inocente!" (54)—, but this is not to be. Gambaro's text is spellbinding, a complex mixture of adaptation, appropriation, citation, and quotation that, to borrow again from Bartís, cannibalizes Shakespeare, and in so doing, indigenizes the text to Argentina. But Gambaro also "talks back" at the source text; she rearranges the pieces of Shakespeare's play so that Lady M takes center stage, showing how things could have been different if history had not been made by men nor written by, for, and about men.[7] She places Macbeth out of sight and enters into Lady M's tortured mind and soul. Still, and despite his physical absence, Macbeth is everywhere present, a sinister shadow in the background who embodies the dark forces of patriarchy. As Gabriela Jerez Garcés has noted, the play "aborda el fenómeno de la culpabilidad desde el necesario cuestionamiento de los roles sociales que cumple la mujer" (17), roles that almost exclusively have been defined and enforced by patriarchy. That women can be prisoners of these roles and that many have willingly or blindly embraced or assimilated patriarchy is something that Gambaro does not let us forget in *La señora Macbeth*. Therein lies the play's significance and power.[8]

A Necessary *Coda*

This analysis of *La señora Macbeth* is based solely on the written play text. Certainly, stagings of it will vary among themselves and some will diverge to some degree from the text. In the 2004 premiere, the director, Pompeyo Audivert, basically ignored most of Gambaro's stage directions, despite her having asked him to stay close to the text, "que trabajasen con el texto cerrado [. . .] [que] no deberían hacerse modificaciones en la puesta" (Koss). Although these erasures did not change the essentials of the play, Audivert's directorial choices did produce quite different effects than those that the text proposes. A major one was the stage setting, which according to Gambaro, should consist of "[un] enorme objeto en madera basta, que es una especie de escultura barroca. Figura un trono y la misma construcción lleva adosada un juego de hamacas, un tobogán" (15). This large object, as she calls it, has two important connections with the play's dramatic action. First, Lady M is never able to sit on the throne without the help of the witches, which points

to her powerlessness. The second is Lady M's childlike behavior. While the idea of play and dancing is present in Shakespeare's text, here it becomes more exaggerated as Lady M plays on the swing and all four of them—Lady M and the witches—go up and down the slide on various occasions. This idea of play and infantilism was not totally lost in Audivert's production, as it kept the game of *el gallito ciego* (similar to Blind Man's Bluff) mentioned in Gambaro's text. According to Koss "esto no [fue] arbitrario ya que [. . .] el ver/no ver/no querer ver de la protagonista es, de hecho, la clave para la construcción de la ambigüedad del personaje."[9]

Instead of the stage setting asked for by the playwright, Audivert used light and dark to shape the dramatic space when *La señora Macbeth* premiered in the enormous Sala Solidaridad at the Centro Cultural Cooperación in Buenos Aires. Sharon Magnarelli has described the almost bare stage as being dimly lit except for "a ray of light that cut diagonally across the stage, into and out of which the characters moved" ("Out of Place" 31). She suggests that this created a contrast between good and evil, as well as between the private spaces of women (enacted in the light) and the public spaces of male power that take place somewhere else, off stage. On the other hand, in her analysis of the play, Jerez Garcés has interpreted this ray of light and the contrasting darkness as representing Lady M's tormented mind, which goes from shadows to final and total darkness, with brief interludes of light. She sees this as going hand in hand with the character's progressively disintegrating speech acts. Unlike Magnarelli, who emphasizes issues of gender and power, Jerez Garcés concentrates on the psychological dimensions of the character.

Another important change that was made for the performance in the Sala Solidaridad was that the actors only used the *tú* form of the second-person singular, finding that the change from it to the *voceo* was too cumbersome and, according to them, diminished the poetry of the text. Interestingly, this goes contrary to what Gambaro says she intended; she mixed the two forms in order to give poetic rhythm to her prose: "Usé el 'vos' y a veces usé el 'tú', según las frases, porque disonaba menos usar ambas formas que una sola. 'Matame' no es lo mismo que 'mátame'. 'Matame' es mucho más flojo y 'mátame' no da respiro, trae la muerte" (I. Soto). Perhaps more significant for the present discussion of *La señora Macbeth*, this change from text to performance weakens our interpretation that the *voceo* would signal an Argentine context, as it was lost in Audivert's staging. However, it perhaps would not be absent in another rendition that followed Gambaro's text more closely, and therefore the Argentine allusion would not be lost.[10]

Still, the importance of this context was signaled in Audivert's production by the one male character who appears on stage—Banquo. In the text, Gambaro puts words in his mouth that allude to the *Proceso*. For example, when faced with Banquo's ghost, Lady M, in typical fashion, denies what is before her eyes and insists that Macbeth had meant him no ill. But if he has come to defile her husband, then she relegates him to the cemetery, where she says he belongs, to which Banquo responds: "Resido en una zanja, la cabeza hendida por veinte puñaladas." She retorts that maybe he should not be in a cemetery, but certainly below ground. Banquo answers that "[u]n cadáver no se entierra a sí mismo" (48). So Banquo is dead but not buried; dead, but in the absence of a buried corpse, maybe alive, to be counted among the living dead, like so many of the disappeared during the Dirty War. Audivert overdetermined this allusion by doing two important things: 1) While Gambaro does not indicate anything about Banquo's dress, in the performance he wore 1970s clothing; 2) Until his appearance in Scene 4, the actor playing Banquo sat unnoticed in the audience. As Magnarelli says: "Victim of Macbeth [. . .] Banquo sat among us, he was one of us, in what provided a chilling commentary on our own position in the world" ("Out of Place" 34). He was corporeal rather than phantasmagoric, a flesh and blood ghost who, according to Ogás Puga, "no pertenece ya al más allá, sino que está presente—aunque silenciado—en nuestra historia social. El tema del 'cuerpo' del desparecido en el imaginario social argentino es algo no reconocido como 'muerto' ya que no es posible su comprobación empírica en tanto cadáver" (4).

One more interesting detail in Koss's discussion of the play's premiere is how important the use of hands was, especially when the actress playing Lady M tried to wash away the blood stains on her hands: "Las manos ensangrentadas inglesas se argentinizaron con símbolos peronistas, como la V, generando a la vez su propio vocabulario que dio pie a una multiplicidad interpretativa enorme." This is a detail that probably only Argentines of a certain age would capture, but once captured, there would be an instant association of Lady M with the most famous Peronista of all—Evita—and with it, an implied critique of past and present Argentine politics.[11] Despite not being contained in any of Gambaro's stage directions, these examples of acting and directorial choices underscore how important Hutcheon's notion of indigenization is, as well as how multilayered and multivalent it can be in drama and in its fellow traveler, performance.

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Notes

[1] I first met our distinguished *homenajeada* in 1978, at a conference on Latin American theatre hosted by Florida International University. That is also when I first met the Argentine playwright Griselda Gambaro. Both of these incredible women have had a profound impact on me as a person, as a scholar, and as a fellow woman. I did not speak about Griselda at that conference, but Sandy did. So the two of them are forever intertwined in my memory. Thus, I offer a double homage here, one to "La señora Gambaro and to her señora Macbeth," and the other to "la señora, la doctora, la profesora, la jubilada y la amiga del alma, Sandra M. Cypess."

[2] *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* strives "to publish articles that analyze appropriation as a process of collaboration with Shakespeare." It is published online by the University of Georgia at www.borrowers.uga.edu. A review of a recent index shows no articles about Latin American appropriations.

[3] Sanders borrows from Gèrard Genette's coinage of the term in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. According to Sanders, proximation is "an updating or the cultural relocation of a text to bring it into greater proximity to the cultural and temporal context of readers or audiences" (163).

[4] Di Lello actually refers to Macbeth's *decires*, for as she discovered when comparing the source text against Gambaro's, "el discurso de la señora Macbeth no se parece al de Lady Macbeth. Es el decir masculino de Macbeth el que está detrás de los dichos de la ahora protagonista central. [...] La señora Macbeth es una mujer hablada. Su interioridad es sólo un vacío. Vacío que es ocupado por su marido."

[5] The themes of children and maternity, as in some of the *Macbeth* versions discussed by Carroll, are also present in *La señora Macbeth*. Already in Scene 1, Lady M introduces them when she talks about the banquet she will organize for Macbeth and Duncan. She wants to invite poor children and prisoners to their table, "multitudes de niños. ¡Y presos! [. . .] Quiero ver cuando el aroma de la paloma asada, del venado, del ciervo, les llegue a las narices. Y me miren, deseándome. (*Se toca los pechos*). Deseando mi bondad" (18, 20). There is a kind of frustrated and eroticized maternity here; the milk of her breasts is conflated with the mouth-watering banquet delicacies that will seduce children and grown men. The idea of men-children is picked up later, when she refers to Macbeth as her naughty child (36). She not only wants to suckle, but is also moved to care for a tiny bird with a broken foot: "Le entablillé la pata, lo coloqué sobre mis senos. Todo el día estuve así. (*Se lleva la mano al pecho como sosteniendo algo*) " (16). But these maternal tendencies are not to be trusted, as Lady M insists that they should be recognized and applauded. Gambaro has said that Lady M wants to show "que es buena. Quiere elogios, lisonjas. También es una característica del poder desear, buscar la aprobación del otro, del súbdito" (M. Soto). So rather than salvaging Lady M, her purported maternal instincts condemn her for being self-serving and self-centered.

[6] In a 2010 interview, Gambaro stated the following regarding *La señora Macbeth*: "Me propuse desechar la mirada clásica de la mujer-bruja, la mujer-mala, pero tampoco quería idealizarla. Me pareció interesante el conflicto de esta mujer que, por amor, según lo llama ella, no reconoce su condición de ser humano autónomo. Su capacidad de desprenderse de las ataduras del poder. Quizá ahí está la actualidad del texto: éste es un momento en que es imprescindible abrir los ojos a ciertas complicidades. [...] La señora Macbeth elige morir antes que ser ella misma, antes que escuchar su voz. Y ése es, en general, el gran peligro" (Costa).

[7] I borrow here the term used by Debra A. Castillo in her book *Talking Back. Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism*.

[8] *La señora Macbeth* was recognized as a major theatre event in 2004 by audiences and critics alike, having won many awards and recognitions, among them various awards for best play text, best director, and best actress in a lead role. In addition, it won awards for costume, lighting, and musical composition. That same year Gambaro was awarded two prestigious awards: the Diploma al Mérito and Premio Konex de Platino, both of them for excellence in the theatre.

[9] Lady M also mentions that her husband has called her puerile, for both her antics and what he considers her crazy idea about inviting impoverished children and criminals to the banquet in Duncan's honor: "Macbeth me hizo observer que ofendería al rey con ese deseo pueril de sentarlos a la mesa. [. . .] Pueril, dijo Macbeth con dulzura" (38). As the voice of patriarchy, Macbeth not only silences his wife, but he infantilizes her through "gentle" ridicule. He treats her like a child and she behaves like a child; indeed, at one point she says that she will become her own child, in one of the most crazed of the play's speeches. When the witches insist that Macbeth's greatness will not be hers, and that ultimately Banquo's sons will reign, Lady M has a fit and says: "Yo le daré hijos a Macbeth porque los hijos de Macbeth serán reyes y no los de Banquo. ¡No! ¡Sin hijos! ¡Que se mueran mis hijos si los tengo! ¡Yo seré la hija de Macbeth! ¡Tampoco! ¡Me engendraré a mí misma! ¡Yo seré reina con poder de rey!" (29).

[10] Magnarelli notes that the play did move to another venue—the Teatro Cervantes—not long after its premiere in the Sala Solidaridad. While still under Audivert's direction, "there were apparently major changes in the production" ("Out of Place" 35). Magnarelli did not see the new production, and for purposes of this study, no detailed descriptions were found about the staging in the Teatro Cervantes.

[11] While most interpretations of *La señora Macbeth*, including this one, have underscored its allusions to political events in Argentina during and after the Dirty War, Gambaro has been a bit cagey, at times acknowledging this interpretation and at others insisting that the play goes well beyond national boundaries. Indeed, she has even said that in 2002, when she wrote the text, she had President George W. Bush (and the Iraq War) in mind when she gave the witches what are some of the most important lines in the play: "Vendrán épocas de crímenes felices, donde el poder ignorará las muertes que ocasiona. Las decidirá sin imaginarlas y sin perder el sueño" (Costa). As always, there is some danger in reaching hasty conclusions, for Gambaro has again written a complex, multivalent play. As Magnarelli argues, there is more here than meets the "political" eye ("Refiguring"). There always is when interpreting Gambaro's work. Nonetheless, we stand by our observations, while recognizing that they can be enriched by other readings of *La señora Macbeth*.

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