

A Felinist Critique of Macbeth

by Catherine Davis

Ahem! Please to disregard the preceding attribution. Let us begin again:

A Felinist Critique of *Macbeth*, *by Calliope*

with the Occasional Assistance of *Pele*

(Translated from the Fff by Catherine Davis)

A Day Like Any Other, Any Given Century

We will get right to one of the fundamental flaws in this much over-rated work: there are no lizards, or even mice, anywhere evident in the text of *Macbeth*. This incomprehensible oversight is immediately apparent to any half-conscious reader, and works to undermine Mr. Shakespeare's credibility from the outset. Needless to say, lizards and mice abound in our world, and they certainly provide one of the primary occupations in life. In *Macbeth*, however, the character hunts one of his own kind. If the author had thought to provide even a few lizards or mice, this almost certainly would not have been necessary. It is comparatively rare among domesticated species to kill one's own. Why diminish one's ranks when there are so many others to prey upon? Of course, it does happen occasionally, but we all know very well that any hunter is going to kill at least ten of another species to every one of her own. However, we have bigger concerns with this issue, which we will reveal anon.

We will once more commit the obvious by pointing out that sleep is

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grossly underrepresented in *Macbeth*, and its lack draws attention to the author's contrivance. This is very clumsy work, indeed. Mr. Shakespeare would surely have gained greatly with a more sensitive and subtle handling of the action he labors to present. The one time a character is shown sleeping, he is killed almost immediately. What are the chances of this happening? Moreover, the reader is therefore forced to draw the conclusion that sleeping is dangerous and unhealthy. Not only is this a preposterous representation, we find it offensive in its blatant anti-felinist perspective. Again, at the peril of being overly obvious, we feel that it is necessary for us here to instruct: sleeping should comprise, at minimum, two-thirds of the action of the play.

That said, we'll now remark that there is entirely too much talking in this work. Persons should not speak unless they have something of the utmost urgency to say. This, woefully, is not the case with Mr. Shakespeare's dialogue. Like our Zen brethren, we recognize the value of listening, and watching as well. Much is learned, and a virtual infinity of false moves is avoided in this way. We believe this observation to be self-explanatory as regards the action of this particular text. We will merely summarize with the fervent plea: less talking, more sleeping.

Let us now talk of blood. There is too much of it. While we find it interesting, and certainly worthy of investigation, we do not see the need for so much of it on the page. When we want blood, we provide our own, and let us take this opportunity to remark upon the fact that our weapons are far more elegant and effective than those provided by the author of *Macbeth*, ours being so gracefully integrated into our own corporeality. Moreover, Lady Macbeth's reaction to blood when it occurs is hyperbolic in the extreme. Her inability to deal with it strains all belief. He goes around moaning "out, out damned spot," when a well-placed lick would have solved the problem immediately, with no unnecessary and heavy-handed dialogue. Once again, clumsy work.

This brings us to the whole issue of grooming, and it is here that we believe we will break open this text to a new and far superior interpretation. There is no grooming anywhere apparent. The characters peopling this particular fictional world must have been foul-smelling creatures indeed. Interestingly, this is never once remarked upon, but we would like to present it as the central issue of the plot. Naturally, creatures living in such close quarters are going to be more keenly aware of the olfactory mélange. The fact that not a single character ever grooms signals that these characters are already mired in a deep state of depravity. How long this condition has persisted is anyone's guess, but we can only assume that it has reached its nadir as the events of the play unfold. Quite clearly, the characters are all insane; dysfunctional in the extreme, and every moment growing more so, as a result of this horrifying condition. This should be obvious to anyone looking at the text nakedly, without the layers of bizarre interpretation that have incomprehensibly held sway for centuries.

These characters stink, and the Macbeths have had all they can stand.

If the whole story were to be played out, we would be exposed to a massacre, at the end of which any character left standing will indisputably dispose of herself (that character most likely being Lady Macbeth), in a rightful sense of self-loathing, and a desire to save future generations from the tragedy of the present social structure gone awry.

We would now like to offer what we deem to be a text more worthy of consideration, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. While the players in Eliot's world are clearly caricatures, they bear a far greater resemblance to the real, ordinary persons that we all know, and are therefore more suitable for a reader striving to gain some sense of truth in life. In the interest of maintaining our critical rigor,

we do concede that this work is not without its flaws, and Eliot succumbs to the unfortunate temptation to dub his characters with the most clichéd of appellations. Several feline critics have also questioned the actual practicality of the particular cats portrayed.

And alas, still no lizards or mice.

