Shakespeare's Global *Weirding*: *Macbeth*'s Posting of "Anthropos," Cinematization, and the Era of Extinction

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> From Middle English *werde, wierde, wirde, wyrede, wurde*, from Old English *wyrd, wurd* ("that which happens, fate, chance, fortune, destiny, Fate, the Fates, Providence, event, phenomenon, transaction, fact, deed"), from Proto-Germanic **wurdiz* ("fate, destiny"), from Proto-Indo-European **wert-* ("to turn, wind") […] *Weird* was extinct by the 16th century in English. It survived in Scots, whence Shakespeare borrowed it in naming the *Weird Sisters*, reintroducing it to English. The senses "abnormal," "strange" etc. arose via reinterpretation of *Weird Sisters* and date from after this reintroduction.
> —*Wiktionary*

One benefit of formulating thoughts for a Chinese audience on Shakespeare—as this paper had originally been[1]—is not just imagining how Chinese characters transcribe the alphabeticist wordplay and ear-play of "the Bard." Rather, it is the critical reverie it spawns of imagining if Shakespeare were Chinese, if English were a second tongue learned and translating back from a writing outside of *letteral* or alphabetic script, impacted initially by pictographic assemblages, graphic strokes, lines, punctum, and allogrammatic complexes. I am all for such a "Chinese" Shakespeare, which can never quite be translated back—not into Chinese (which was not there, of course), not into the English one assumes one knows for happening to dwell in it—more or less poetically, as Hölderlin offers, but perhaps, today, just less.[2] Such an approach, in any case, might license approaching the fate, destiny, or uncanniness of some "complex words" with a sense that, perhaps, they are not "words" at all in the assumed sense. The term *matter* recurs and ricochets through *Hamlet*, say, circulating finally outside of any semantic frame. One cannot quite bring it back to occupy a designation, as if it were immaterial or ghost-like itself. One can call this *weird* reading, and certainly reject my appeal to Chinese as a script outside of the alphabeticist-monotheist-narrative Western enclave, that belonging to the West and its version of man or "anthropos,"

for whom the term *Anthropocene* has been recently coined—as if to universalize his claim to defining "man," even if that claim to proprietorship coincides with what appears to be the latter's connotations of extinction. We do not call this supposed era the Sinocene, and the Chinese are too smart to want original ownership of the resulting debacle.

Still, one of the *words* I have in mind, and would give what I will call a Chinese reading of, is the word *weird* itself. I am particularly interested in why this para-word or non-word, rescued from extinction by Shakespeare, we are told, yet retaining the latter's stamp (who or what returns from "extinction"?), went on to virally take over the world, appearing on T-shirts today (one that I recently saw said, "Stay Weird!"). Moreover, it today becomes fused with the experience of climate chaos, the disclosure that what had been called "nature" appears pre-inhabited by technics, and the insurgencies of matter that threaten twenty-first-century tapestries of Holocene life forms, the disruption of natural weather or climate cycles, and so on. That is, this word, once all but extinct, would boomerang, through Shakespeare, to virally infect the world or globe itself, as what has become known as *global weirding*.

Now, I have already tried your patience with my Chinese references, which are speculative and opportunistic at best. So, I will not push my luck with some silly prediction, that Shakespeare in a sense *caused* global warming or predestined global weirding by inserting into his text the word "weird." I think the argument can be made, but that is a matter for another time. I will, however, risk the obvious by noting that, in the algorithm he names *Macbeth*, Shakespeare was tracking "Anthropos" already after the fact. I will do so by following a detour through digital *cinema*, through Derrida's spectrology, and by asking why the era of climate chaos calls for an (im)materialist reading of the term *weird*.

Figure 1. Scotland as cinemascape.
Justin Kurzel, *Macbeth* (2005), with Michael Fassbinder, Marion Cotillard,
Blu-Ray, Anchor Bay, 2016.

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I have been trying in my own work to focus on the way language and poetics is involved with climate change—which, today, means mass extinction events and, once tipping points are passed, accelerated ecocide. This gave rise to a project termed *Critical Climate Change*. It began by asking how the mutations of "life" implied by the latter, admittedly banal phrase implied and required a corresponding mutation in critical epistemographies—in other words, reading—which had been absent. *Involved* means many things: masks, produces, alters cognitive precepts, programs, and alters reading itself, not of so-called contemporary cli-fi, but the entire canon that suffused the cultural arc that entails the specter of extinction today. In this sense, climate change offers a transformation into weirdness, exposing what were presumed to be natural cycles as temporary, artificed, or utterly contingent. Such reading, unmapped, is nonetheless compulsory today, since the topos seems occluded and blocked within sociocognitive discourse, and yet the ultimate referent. Today, this involves rereading the textual legacies as anticipatory or participatory in these logics, and a materiality not taken account of by twentieth-century ideologies at all. This active rereading has reached Shakespeare, of course, as it had Sophocles from the beginning: Oedipus finds the cause of the drought is himself, of course, and how he *sees*....

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In Justin Kurzel's mesmerizing cinematization of *Macbeth* (2015) featuring Michael Fassbender, the "Scottish play" is turned into a focus on this "tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" by making the work's irreversible acceleration or "one-way street" (to cite Walter Benjamin) into an overlay of the irreversibility of this path, once triggered, for which the murder of a fond Duncan serves. By *cinematization* I do not mean "making into a film," but reading *Macbeth* itself through this media and, to a degree, vice versa. Clipped and retooled as a cinematic opera, hallucinatory and sunless, roaming the barren Scottish hills, a lunar landscape stripped of life, the pivot which links Macbeth to climate change appears to be Lady Macbeth's recurrent phrase "what's done cannot be undone" (*Macbeth* V.i. 68). Tipping points passed are irreversible—as we may now take the official "Paris" accords disarray (to say nothing of the new US president) as, in fact, *acknowledging and guaranteeing*. When Birnam Wood comes up to Dunsinane ("Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill, shall come against him," quoth the weird sisters in Act IV, scene i), the impossible would occur, a thing as unnatural as plant life rising to overwhelm *anthropos*'s tectonic fortress. Kurzel innovates decisively here. The woods are not cut to mask men or troops, but as itself, burnt, drifting in a smothering apocalyptic smoke and fire—the burning off of the sole remaining forest on this surreal, treeless moonscape. The choking smoke, heat, and hellish zombie-scape remain through the close of the film.

Figure 2. What's done cannot be undone.
Justin Kurzel, *Macbeth* (2005), with Michael Fassbinder, Marion Cotillard.
Blu-Ray, Anchor Bay, 2016.

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I will focus here on three links to be developed at length, perhaps, elsewhere:

1) The first is that the key Shakespeare text of the era of climate change may not be *Macbeth*, in fact, but *Hamlet*—but it does not stop there. *Hamlet*, in the West, has always had the iconic status associated with "literature" itself, due to Hamlet's epistemological dilemma, and, of course, the Ghost.

2) The second is that Derrida's spectral use of Hamlet to read Marx, if not to read the (im)materiality of all consciousness and history, comes close to the motif of climate change, but by an exclusion, a limit that is also an error. In his "ten plagues" of the new world order—he was still addressing the end of the "cold war" and the ideology of an "end of history" by American neoconservatives—Derrida omits and occludes climate change or global warming altogether. He seems to forget the "ghost's" command on that as the order of materiality itself, as if this particular Anthropocene physics undid the mechanics of deconstruction itself (can you unlace metaphysics if petro-metaphysics had already undone, going forward, the biosphere?).

3) The third is that Derrida also omits more generally the one thing that, elsewhere, he suggests is the pure realization of spectrology or hauntology itself: that is, cinema. *Cinema* haunts deconstruction by its occlusion from Derrida's own oeuvre, since it precedes written characters, requires shadow-graphics, and is acknowledged by him in a late interview as deconstructive in advance, the essence of a literal spectrology. Yet he avers.

So far, we have three unruly links, but there is a fourth to offer. If *Hamlet* is simultaneously the text of, or about, climate change (and I will say why in a minute), it is also the text of, or about, spectrology, and it is also the text of, or about, cinema—which seems a total contradiction, since, unlike *Macbeth*, there seem to be no good cinematizations of Shakespeare's longest play; they are filmed theatre. It is the one play that cannot stop talking even as it talks, endlessly, of not being able to speak, of "words, words, words" (*Hamlet* II.iii. 192) of endless literary criticisms, and reflex-

ive performativities—plays within plays—that inscribe any reading into the receding *frame*.

This last link can be tested in the work of Hitchcock, who cites Hamlet repeatedly as tied to cinema structurally and who, like Shakespeare, takes us to the edge of where the Anthropocene—the era of humans—gives way before its others and is turned against. I am thinking of *The Birds*, but in fact, it is before that which interests me. *North by Northwest* tropes the line from *Hamlet* in which the latter declares his vertigo, his madness/not madness ("I am but mad nor' nor'west"; II.ii. 378). Hitchcock's previous citations of *Hamlet* have to do, again, with the spectral nature of cinema in advance of itself, with the idea of "knowing too much" and specifically too much to speak. Like Hamlet, there is "too much" that cannot be said, or lead quite to the act, while being nothing but simulacra ("I know not 'seems'"; I.ii. 76-77): key characters cannot communicate and the ghost itself becomes impossible to distinguish from the projector's inscribed spools. Dialogue, as Hitchcock said to Truffaut, is just more sound.

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Figure 3. *The Ghost,* by Henry Fuseli.
http://fantasy.glasgow.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ham_fuseli.jpg

 Derrida interrupts his address of the Ghost, the specter who looks at you in advance of your knowing who or from where, yet who is displaced by what he calls the Ghost's *visor effect*. The identity of the face is not seen or displaced, but *the visor* itself, this alternation of bars and intervals, stands in its stead. Some take this to refer to the insertion of an impersonal law or the disclosure of the person behind the visor, but I think this is mistaken. The visor, or its effect, is rather what it says: the intermediation of *a series of alternating bars, lines, intervals, spaces*. It would make some difference in how we read all of the above if one concluded that the Ghost were not "the father," but something akin to media itself, perpetually self-ghosted, certainly, but something else as well. The problem is that when Hitchcock gets to plan to make an actual *Hamlet*, it

cannot possibly happen; it seemed like a hyperbolic joke; it comes after *Vertigo*, which plays off of Hamlet's "madness"; and it would cast, of all people, the aged Hollywood icon Cary Grant. In fact, however, it is displaced into an even stranger product that suggests Hitchcock's aims. I allude, of course, to the cold-war chase confabulation, *North by Northwest*, whose title directly cites Hamlet on his madness. Why or what madness—of cinema, of spectrology or, to give this context now, of "climate change" today—is being referred to here?

The problem is the *Ghost*. The latter conveys an absolute piece of information: it is inarguable that Hamlet swears to it. The entire play could be over in five minutes if Hamlet acted on the disclosure, but it is instead the longest of Shakespeare (the opposite of *Macbeth*'s one-way street). Yet, what follows is interruption, delay, acting/not acting, talking/not talking, believing/not believing, vertiginous "madness" and not madness, keeping the secret in play. It could go on endlessly, but the uncle is exasperated, makes his move, and brings the whole court down. Now remember—do not forget!—what Hamlet knows (what the Ghost tells him) is absolute, but it does not fit any public narrative and cannot be "said." There are endless references to the inability to speak, to knowing too much to speak, which explodes in Hamlet's instantaneous vertigo, where words themselves are tagged as just that ("words, words, words"), yet which Hamlet cannot stop exploring. He begins where Macbeth's seizure of time ends ("tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow"; V.v. 19), where the future collapses to a condensed recurrence of the same. Hamlet's situation is not "psychological" but structural. He becomes the non-subject of a literary incompatibility: everything before him is virtual, reversible, self-voiding. When Hamlet says "man delights not me: no, nor woman neither" (II.ii. 309), he stalks the "Anthropocene" from without, and speaks of an earth as voided of metaphors. Shakespeare turns against, and within, "Shakespeare" as the master of tropes—earning the play the status of what once was called "absolute irony," but today is allied with a speaking as if back from "matter" itself—and *matter* is a recurrent term in *Hamlet*:

> This goodly frame, the earth,
> seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent
> canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging
> firmament, this majesterial roof fretted with golden fire,
> why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent
> congregation of vapours. (*Hamlet* II.ii. 298-303)

What Hamlet "knows" from the Ghost would be happily ignored, say, by the reality of the court—not just the usurping uncle, but also his mother and just about everyone else. We should not ignore the "frame," with an equivocal "goodly" tossed in: what is goodly (did a somewhat Shakespearean president say, recently, "bigly"?) indicts the frame, a cinematic term perhaps, but also an entrapping of the *framed* with criminal narratives. Hence, the sublime hailing of the "canopy," "firmament," "roof" feigningly celebrates the natural world's expanses and creases, without humans, nonetheless in archetectonic terms, as a house for man, an artifice and edifice. As such, the "fram-

ing" works both ways—of "nature" (by worn tropes) and of consciousness impaled by them—earth vacated as a "sterile promontory" or proscenium.

Yet, Hamlet acts as if the Ghost's word need be tested, tasted, played with, to see where it burns through appearances generally. It is all over; tipping points are passed. And since the Ghost is a matter of matter, of inscriptions, of what "is," of spectral materialities, we can ally him today with the incompatible or double knowledge of climate change. On the one hand, it tells us we are accelerating an ecocide that unleashes extinction events (including our own), and that this is now irreversible; on the other hand, we occlude that, continue as normal, or the elites present a response that, pretending engagement, guarantees that result anyway (the "Paris" accords). *Anthropos* had become Hamletian, wanting to test the play within the play, draw out, or defer, while knowing something irreversible that can end discussion instantly. Hamlet never acts until he is already "dead," and he brings down the totality of the court with him. Hamlet's dilemma is that of confronting a totalization.

This Ghost that ghosts everything in advance is like the celluloid (or now, digital) **543** imprints to be projected by film, which makes "consciousness" itself spectral, its references perpetual double-talk "signifying nothing" except the non-secret everyone knows but no one will say. Claudius knows; Horatio knows; Gertrude represses it, and any grave-digging clown can guess by going sheerly literal on everything. The Ghost reverts to the "visor effect," impersonal, void of content, the flickering of lines, alternation, spacing, a materiality in advance of image (like the flickering projector of cinema), a faceless *technic*.[3] This is why Derrida outsmarts himself by occluding cinema and climate change and trying to shape spectrology as friendly gothic, ghosting. It is not that "time is out of joint," since for Derrida, that is everywhere always; it is that something else, as he implies, has happened to time, as one might say of the "Anthropocene" in general, and passing tipping points of extinction events specifically (as of now). Derrida notes of the "visor effect":

> The perspective has to be reversed, once again: ghost or *revenant*, sensuous-non-sensuous, visible-invisible, the specter first of all sees *us*. From the other side of the eye, visor effect, it looks at us even before we see *it* or even before we see period. We feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before an apparition. Especially—and this is the event, for the specter is *of* the event—it sees us during a *visit*. It (re)pays us a visit [*Il nous rend visite*]. Visit upon visit, since it returns to see us and since *visitare*, frequentative of *visere* (to see, examine, contemplate), translates well the recurrence of returning, the frequency of a visitation. (101)

Let us strip this reversal even more, since Derrida plays the game here of personifying his "it," making it see us, projecting our being seen into this damaging "it" that "visits" even if it precedes the apparition (or double-talk). Derrida holds back. The "it" in question is just a blind yet projective "it," a sheer technic, *arche*-cinematic, to use Bernard Stiegler's term. Let us, instead, call the flickering of the visor effect— Americans call movies "flicks" sometimes—the non-site at which semio-aesthetic memory is projected, echoing the screen or the cave-wall of Plato (or cave paintings).

It is part of an "event" that includes the entire "Anthropocene era," culminating in today's ceaseless digital media streams and the farming out of memory to devices. The *visor effect* oscillates between a materiality before "matter," void of personification, and the technologies of inscription and projected memory loops. It precedes any image or any word. We might say that the "ghost," including Hamlet's, is always in a sense sheer mediatization as such, without a given content.

Hitchcock apprehends this directly, and takes over the conversation between Derrida, Shakespeare, and his "Marx." In every film, he leaves a signature of this visor effect—a series of bars or lines, like the ones in *Spellbound* that organize amnesia, the subject's becoming another "0" cipher, a subject without subjectivity. But why *North by Northwest*? If we take the quotation from *Hamlet* directly ("I am but mad nor' nor'west"), this *direction* that leads from Manhattan to the giant rock faces of Mt. Rushmore—where human faces are etched, mutely, in stone, overlooking the American continent to the south, guarding its historical fictions—is mad, laterally vertiginous, a phrase Blanchot once used to describe Derrida's writing. It runs off the "US" map, as it precedes it with the pre-Columbian fetish-doll that contains the sought-for MacGuffin "microfilm"—something annotated with the initials ROT attached to Cary Grant's Roger O. Thornhill ("something is *rotten* in the state"). But, we are told, "north by northwest" is a non-existent direction also, one that moves with the non-existents, which leads Grant to the famous nothingness of the empty dry cornfields and the attacking mechanical sun of the crop-duster scene.
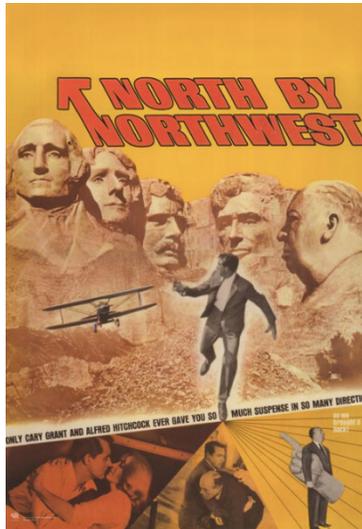
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Figure 4. Poster art for Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959), starring Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, and James Mason. https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg. com/736x/8d/99/cc/8d99ccb94dce0f9f05c188502ec2ac79.jpg

But why does Hitchcock think of Cary Grant as his Hamlet, the one who inhabits the undecidable zone of a reflexive *mise en abyme*—and does so, just by being Cary Grant (not, that is, acting as Hamlet). It's the face, and the fact that, here, this non-existent subject he is taken for ("George Kaplan") mimes what makes him into a zero-figure in fact; we even visit where Cary Grant lived at the time, the Plaza Hotel, looking for "Kaplan." Grant is a Madison Avenue advertising executive, or the *ultimate Hollywood product* as image at the time. Everyone knew "Cary Grant," and as the film shows, women fall in love with a face that is, in fact, uninterpretable. Everything is calculated in advance and manipulated for him when we meet him coming out of the Seagram's Building, and in his taxi ride with his beleaguered secretary. One is caught in the telemarketing circuit that media, and cinema, had forecast and become, and was about to go hyperbolic in our era. The madness of this loop, vertigo'd in advance, follows Grant as a destructive meme—leading to the secret microfilm everyone was pursuing, which would change world history if smuggled out, but primarily indicating the film loop in which this reality is inscribed. This "comedy"—for it is no more a tragedy than *Hamlet*—realizes the missing subject "George Kaplan" (translation: Head (*capa*) of the Earth (*geo*)) on the edge of the world that is Mt. Rushmore, looking over the fictional land of the US, where human eyes and voices are stripped away before a mute earth imprinted with inanimate human faces (anthropocized).

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Figure 5. Cary Grant stopped receiving a phone call from "mother" by a hand in the opening scenes at Plaza Hotel.
Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest* (1959). Warner Home Video, 2000.

So, perhaps, if *Macbeth* can appear to be the Shakespeare text—there has to be one—about the irreversibility of ecocide, *Hamlet* would be the nodal text of climate change. Why? It is of the time after irreversibility has been triggered—Hamlet "knows" everything at once from his father's ghost, there is nothing more to learn, only things to put off, defer, delay—and the cognitive trance that opens. Remember ("do not forget," mark, write it down), *Hamlet* knows something absolutely that is, nonetheless, completely denied by the court and court reality: even his mother is happy; his uncle seems nice enough; and so on. This disassociation today is familiar enough: one knows that "we" are in the late phase of a mass extinction process we have triggered, but it appears *banned* by a mediacratic order; thus the title of George Marshall's book, *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change* (2014), why climate change will not allow itself to be thought, memed, recognized, or engaged linguistically.

But I am sounding like Polonius. To repeat: *this association between Hamlet and cinema itself* has absolutely nothing to do with films made of *Hamlet*, which I find disappointing compared to what has been done, for example, with *Macbeth* (Kurosawa, Welles, Polanski, et al.). We hear the Hamlet meme generalized in Hitchcock's title *The Man Who Knew Too Much*—the only title he used twice, the only remake of a first version he tried to get right or blow up: knowing too much, seeing too much, or too little, to act, and yet not being able to stop merely or endlessly acting—that is, perform "oneself" mockingly, as if "madness." Something links and unlinks this chain: Hamlet, cinematization, spectrology, climate change. What would that be? One never gets away from the ghost of the "ghost," who brings down the house or *oikos* of Hamlet: the rotten state. What allows for the "rot"—like the accelerated and short-circuited corruption and cupidities of mafiatized hyperfinance—is this accelerating *backloop*. Yet, the ghost is the materiality of something else, and as an irreducible materiality or inscription that has no correlation to the apparition or spectral incarnation of "perception," it cannot be avoided or forgotten. In one sense, it is media as such, memory-technologies and inscriptions themselves, at the point at which—decoupled from the referential screens they generate—something like the mediatized trace dissolves into the biologos and animation effects.

II

By this weird logic, cinematics—the inscriptive *backloop* out of which visibilities and world and consciousness effects are projected forgetfully—is unable to speak itself, muted, returning to fetishized screens everywhere else, nonetheless, to revisit the scene of the crime. It is *weird*—the site at which it is the living that occupy the visor effect position, the ghost the abjected incarnation of that status. It makes climate chaos *weird*, in which the molecular mutations of the real both preceding and co-producing ourselves are not to be cognized ("don't even think about it"). It is like

global weirding itself, as it is called today, where what was taken as natural, grounded, cyclical, seasonal, given, the very definitions of dwelling or earth, is upended? Did Shakespeare make the Globe, well, *weird*, and disseminate the terms for global weirding itself, as the totalization of a logic secreted by the exhumation of an extincted word, which would be a non-word, without semantic pretense, or "word" itself apprehended as weird (unnatural, unhuman, precessionary)? Do the weird sisters erupt as the staging of that? It is here that I return to *Macbeth*, without which we would not have "global weirding" as a phrase, and which was turned into Kurzel's cinematic incantation of the Anthropocene logic, and specifically, featuring Macbeth *as* "Anthropos." But if *Macbeth* (the play) relaunched the weird word *weird* from a state of extinction within the English language, a word that exceeds the extinction of words and confirms it, we are left with the weird sisters to decrypt, put into Macbeth's position in being flummoxed, harassed, and accelerated as if in the attempt to read *it*.

Figure 6. Anthropos as Macbeth.
Justin Kurzel, *Macbeth* (2005), with Michael Fassbinder, Marion Cotillard.
Blu-Ray, Anchor Bay, 2016.

Kurzel's *Macbeth* does more than tip its hand—for the few readers alert to it, from scanning reviews—by bringing Birnam Wood in the form of fire, heat, smoke, and the evisceration of "nature," or the demure mimetic practice of hiding behind cut branches. Children recur, flood the screen, are slashed, burned, and cut off as future generations—italicized even to scripting in a dead son for Macbeth. Ghosts proliferate, of course, but the logic is decidedly today's: "what's done cannot be undone." This irreversibility, the most difficult apprehension, apparently—an extinction logic feeding off its own power crimes in an escalating backloop—emerges in Von Trier's *Melancholia* (2012) or Ridley Scott and Cormac McCarthy's *The Counselor* (2013) as well, evincing cin-anthropocene logics. Kurzel converts Macbeth into "Anthropos"— the Western algorithmic "human" for whom a power-death drive is self-accelerant to the point of evisceration. It is staged, as always for Shakespeare, about the revolving usurpation of an imaginary sovereignty, a fictional position to be abdicated (*Lear*),

usurped (*Caesar*), appropriated by fratricide (*Hamlet*), or dis-occupied (*Othello*), about which periodicity is generated. The projected "sovereign" position is without legitimacy, and can only be tentatively occupied as if by a bewilderingly bland cipher (Duncan). But as Jonty Tiplady has suggested, to read Macbeth as an Anthropocene text may be at once too obvious yet merit some detailing in passing. This pre-con-juring of the weird sisters, the one "untimely ripped" (V.viii. 16) or non-birthed, the zone where "fair is foul, and foul [...] fair" (I.i. 11)—like a permanent polar vortex of *rot* and reference—and where one grows "a-weary of the sun" (V.v. 48) in a totalized iteration of deferred chronotopes ("tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow") wends the play's cognitive null point to an apprehension of sheer technics, inorganic logics detached from any natural or terrestrial norms, as perceived. *Macbeth* proceeds as an algorithm, not a moral or ethical example or spectacle, not a psychology, just the default mechanics of "Anthropos"—if we accept this reading. It mistimes any knock-ing at the gates and proceeds unimpeded to its *mis*destination.

548   This returns us to the word *weird*, or the weirding of words and worlds—or, at the very least, of "globes." First, this word itself, if it is one, seems to connote in various lists of synonyms the unearthly, the eerie, and, above all today, the uncanny. Yet I would argue that, in fact, it is precisely what disbands the "uncanny" as a canonized figure. Global weirding marks where the weather had become unnatural, seasonality ruptured from its assumed routines, mass extinction events unfolded, dethroning tropes of nature or life—in fact, the usurping nature of the word *weird*, not gone global, is dethroning trope as such. Hence, among its archaic and Nordic etymologi-cal traces—here borrowed from and returned to the Scots—return us to terms like *worth* (branched into value itself), but also *wend*, or *turn* (trope):

> Old English *wyrd* (n.) "fate, destiny," literally "that which comes," from Proto-Germanic **wurthis* (cf. Old Saxon *wurd*, Old High German *wurt* "fate," Old Norse *urðr* "fate, one of the three Norns"), from PIE **wert-* "to turn, wind," (cf. German *werden*, Old English *weorðan* "to become"), from root **wer-* (3) "to turn, bend" (see *versus*). For sense devel-opment from "turning" to "becoming," cf. phrase *turn into* "become." (*Dictionary.com*)

The "uncanny" has, as a term, long since functioned as a sort of medial place-holder, and manageable way, a bit like Derrida's spectrology, of keeping the ecologic-eco-nomic system in place while suffusing it with dangerous alterities. It has become an inert critical staple. It will have been, after Freud (and, to a lesser degree, Heidegger), canonized as a tropological economy, a *maintenance* of the house, home, or *oikos* (ecologics), a *fort/da* sleight of hand intended to displace or haunt the home, risk exposing it, but mostly to take up residence and be managed; in a way, Derrida's spec-trology maintains this economy, that of literary gothicism and *Hamlet*, by occluding climate change and cinematics. The "uncanny" is not the disclosure that "nature" is not and is pre-inhabited by *unnatural* agencies, like Great Birnam Wood on the move, hiding reverse anthromorphic soldiers or troops. If for Derrida's Hamlet, "time is out of joint," for Kurzel's *Macbeth* it is "untimely ripped": that is, an irrevers-ible tear or predestinary self-rape that voids, among else, the weird wor(l)d *weird*. The

expansion of this term, now a common meme, now applied to the globe and "nature" itself *tout court*, is a stain that displaces any metaphor of the "uncanny" that attempts to placate both sides and preserve the home: it, *weird*, becomes the smiley emoji of ecocide that *Macbeth* enacts as the symbolic of regicide, which is necessarily or also *anthropocide*. (It is opined, as by Harold Bloom, that Shakespeare invented modern personae, or "man.")

In the expanding literature of the weird, traversing Poe—who perpetually follows the logics of the maelstrom—through Octavia Butler, the ex-anthropic reads, or voids of interiority, the narrator or narrative agents. In Jeff Vandermeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy*, this manifests itself in humans absorbed and reproduced as linguistic copies by an *aggressing* nature that is inhabited by alien script at the point of the ecocidal era today. This inversion of fair (aesthetic consciousness) and foul (nature) is mimed in critical lore that turns and returns to de-anthropocize anthropology by conjuring the weird sisters of Amerindian cosmology to recalibrate from—or to escape—a totalization that is "weary of the sun" in late Anthropocene global tele-feudalism. But what is a weirdness that is not "uncanny," or cannot quite be called "unearthly," if it is *earth*? Was Shakespeare penning *screenplays* all along, for which *the Globe* was a mock-up? Where and if the King is "a thing," the weird is not at the periphery, nibbling at the cognitive state like a future memory. The weird is not weird at all, but a norm, like the repeal of the Holocene to a norm of catalysmic volatilities, "drowned worlds" (J.G. Ballard) or snowball earths across geological moments. Sarah Wood teases this zone out of the weird sisters as a zone of discourse, parrying how the Norns, or weirding as destiny, inversely appear for Shakespeare as not supernaturals but the gurgling of a material default of "earth." Kurzel presents these dames without witches' spells and accompanied by, again, a girl child, their noses ridged like Star Trek Klingons', affiliating with pop culture's tele-memes:

> there is no proper topos for the kind of exchange (if it is an exchange) that Macbeth and Banquo have with the three witches [....] Macbeth wants a provenance for their news: "Say from whence / You owe this strange intelligence," but the only provenance is "the earth," an earth that bubbles the witches into appeareance, and "the air" into which they melt "as breath" (I.iii. 75-76, 41-42, 79, 81-82). Earth in this scene, whether the word refers to the soil or the planet, is no more grounding than the ether [....] "The earth hath bubbles as the water has, / And these are of them," Banquo observes, when the witches have gone (I.iii. 79-80). To him the witches are out of place; they "look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth / And yet are on't" (I.iii. 41-42). Their relation to earth makes no sense. (Wood 3)

Perhaps we hear the word "witches" today in too pop-Christian a mode; that is, as too hoary to ken this dissolving of Norns into bubbles, liquified matter, or vocable ether on but not really of an "earth" (nor ear, for that *matter*—a term that haunts *Hamlet*). Kurzel drops the brewing of crude elements altogether. But then, the witches name themselves otherwise, calling themselves *posters* when introduced:

> The weird sisters, hand in hand,
> Posters of the sea and land,

Thus do go about, about... (*Macbeth* I.iii. 32-34)

This circulating stutter ("about, about") italicizes a broken preposition. To be "post-ers" also assimilates the implication of coming after (all, virtually), despite appearing precessionary or para-prophetic, while invoking the tele-transport or media corridors of a postal service in *terran* circulation ("of sea and land"). Is this *atopos* entirely divorced from Hamlet's own dissociations, his own becoming weird, in which the "earth" is posted as a "frame," cited above, after which he goes all neg-anthropocene, which cannot *not mock itself* in dissociating from itself, with weird words?

> What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!
> how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how
> express and admirable! in action how like an angel!
> in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the
> world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,
> what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not
> me: no, nor woman neither. (*Hamlet* II.ii. 301-09)

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If "man" does not delight me, nor woman neither, from what position does one specu-late? What queer, weird, but not "uncanny" Archimedian point, so to speak, intrudes, for which "earth" itself is but "frame," "canopy," "firmament," meme or trope? One cannot say words themselves, or language, since the word *weird* itself does not function as a "word" or figure. One concludes that what we call Shakespeare, or "lit-erature," generates narrative calamities about this non-site, which is also that which dangles sovereignty before Macbeth. To call Shakespeare an Anthropocene writing is jejune and exposes the reaction formation that the latter term implies already. To say Shakespeare induced global weirding is too literal, but perhaps it has more relevance to thinking, today, than any historicizing reading, since the era of ecocide ruptures such histories.
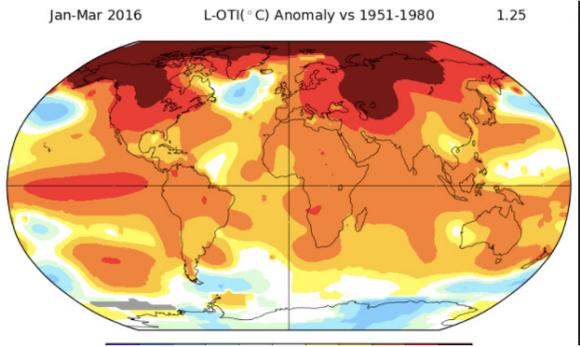

Figure 7. Tom Yulsman, "Global Warming Spiked in January, Setting New Record." *Discover Magazine*, February 15, 2016, blogs.discovermagazine.com/imageo/2016/02/15/global-warming-exploded-in-january/#.WVorR9OGPsk

In *global weirding*, "nature" or the "natural" has become, not "unearthly," but all too earthly. The occluded term at the peripheries names an unseeable and untrackable backloop that feeds off its acceleration in advance to the cognitive reactions or defenses that reconstitute the public memes and hermeneutic rituals of a post-fact society running on circular postings, as if spellbound in a cinematic circuit, unable to project futures other than tomorrows that resemble its imaginary. From a certain point of view, Shakespeare did not provide the vocabulary of modernity and personae, except as a revocation. *Weird*, exhumed from extinction as a word, circulated as a staining mesh and anagrammatic monster, bearing extinction as the weird sisters bear the gift of Macbeth's ascent and revoked future at once, would, demurely and like an eviscerating emoji, virtually haunt the Globe. One might say that that which is irreversible has become irreversible, is fated, destined, and what amounts to being inscribed in the arc of "Anthropos" (if he exists or existed *as such*). Depending on the moment of cognizance, one cannot remove from the apparatus Macbeth's bumbling and self-referential drive to decrypt or *read* the aprophetic words themselves as agency and factor in assuming the *modus operandi* of an algorithmic backloop.

Notes

1. This paper was first sketched for presentation at the "Shakespeare in Shanghai and China Conference: Translation, Transculturation, and Global Perspectives," 12 and 13 March 2016, School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University. I thank Jonathan Hart for the invitation and opportunity to engage the problematic of a globalized "Shakespeare" today.

2. This might also be called a cinematicization of script itself—or a modification of Bernard Stiegler's *arche*-cinematization. In this, *words* would be subject to a movement of traces and marks which never fully compose or imperil their status, a situation alluded to in what Hitchcock's *The Birds*' tropes and implicitly mocks in the phrase "General Semantics" (an allusion made by 'Tippi' Hedren's Melanie.)

3. Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) uniquely opens with a citation of Shakespeare, and more precisely (if unnamed) *Julius Caesar*. The all-but-mock-spooky theremin score depicts "psychoanalysis" as not only a church to control ghosts, and thus a double and historical competitor to cinema (Hitchcock), to be assassinated or usurped. It also depends on something like the visor effect, a series of parallel lines, to trigger the decrypting attempts, the post-war amnesia, the cinematic *spell*.

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