MACBETH Be large in mirth, anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [*To First Murderer*] There's blood upon thy face.
FIRST MURDERER 'Tis Banquo's then.
MACBETH 'Tis better thee without, than he within.
Is he dispatched?
FIRST MURDERER My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
MACBETH Thou art the best o'th'cut-throats,
Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance;
If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.
FIRST MURDERER Most royal sir, Fleance is scaped.
MACBETH Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in

13 SH FIRST MURDERER] F (*Mur.*) *and throughout scene*

9 An implicit SD to the lords and Lady Macbeth, who exchange some response (bows, or a toast?).

9 encounter go to meet (*OED* Encounter *v* 6, with citations only from Shakespeare), hence 'reciprocate' (?). Just as Lady Macbeth's 'heart speaks' (8), the nobles return 'hearts' thanks'.

10 Equal numbers of people sit on each side of the table; I'll sit half-way down one side (?). As contemporary paintings and accounts testify, the place of honour in the Elizabethan and Jacobean court varied: if the table was aligned with a room's width (as imagined here?) the honoured place was at the centre (the 'midst') of the side facing into the room; if the table was aligned with a room's length, the modern 'head of the table' became the honoured place. For a detailed account of royal protocol and King James's and Prince Henry's respective seatings at a banquet offered by the Merchant Taylors' company, July 1607, see *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. N. E. McClure, 1930, p. 35.

11 large unrestrained.

11–12 drink . . . round share a toast or health with each person at the table (?); all share in a group toast (?); pass the cup from person to person (?). The first meaning is more likely if Macbeth continues his use (4–5) of the royal plural.

12 There's blood The audience may recall the bloody Captain of 1.2, especially if Macbeth 'is wearing the royal insignia first worn by Duncan' (D. J. Palmer in *Focus*, p. 55).

14 thee without . . . he within outside you than inside him. The line's callousness signals Macbeth's anxiety.

15 dispatched killed.

19 nonpareil one without equal.

20–1 F's lineation is puzzling, but one tentative explanation, 'justifying [the printed line] . . . or . . . indicating very long pauses' (Brooke, App. A, p. 223), is unconvincing, and Pope's and Collier's choices (adopted here) are not too prescriptive.

20 scaped escaped (an aphetic form).

21 fit It is proverbial 'To have an ague fit of fear' (Dent A82.1).

21 perfect Compare the two previous uses of the word, 3.1.107 and 3.1.129; see pp. 52–3 above.

22–3 See 'As hard as marble' (Dent M638.1); 'As fixed (firm) as a rock' (Dent R151); 'As free as the air' (Dent A88).

22 founded based, firmly grounded. The earliest citation for *OED* Founded *ppl a*.

23 broad and general diffused and omnipresent.

23 casing encasing (aphetic form), encompassing. This line is *OED*'s earliest recorded use under Casing *ppl a* (Schäfer).

24 Alliteration of near-synonyms sounds like witch-language (e.g. 1.3.22); see p. 52 above, n. 2.

24 cabined cramped, confined (from 'cabin' = hut or cell).

24 cribbed shut up, hampered. This line is the earliest citation for *OED* Crib *v* 2a. A 'crib' is also an animal's stall, or a suspended, open-sided holder for animal fodder. The metaphorically appropriate 'crib' (= a child's lattice-sided bed) is not recorded before 1649, though *MED* Crib *sb* records the meaning 'manger' (e.g. as a bed for the infant Jesus) from very early.

24 bound in kept fast, chained.

To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?
FIRST MURDERER Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenchèd gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.
MACBETH Thanks for that.
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th'present. Get thee gone; tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves again.

Exit [First] Murderer

LADY MACBETH My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer; the feast is sold
That is not often vouched while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home:
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony,
Meeting were bare without it.

Enter the Ghost of Banquo and sits in Macbeth's place

32 hear ourselves] F (heare our selues); hear, ourselves *Steevens* 32 SD *Exit First Murderer*] F (*Exit Murderer.*) 34 a-making,] *Cam.*; a making: F 35 given with] F3; giuen, with F

25 safe i.e. dead. The euphemism reflects Macbeth's reaction, not Banquo's condition; see p. 49 above.

27–8 With . . . nature Compare Duncan's wounds (2.3.106–7).

27 trenchèd grooved, furrowed. This use antedates the earliest citation for a figurative use of the word at *OED* Trench *v* 2b.

28 The . . . nature First Murderer claims that any one of the 'gashes' would have been mortal, but the generalised expression recalls the apocalyptic language surrounding the discovery of Duncan's body in 2.3. As 3.2.16 partly anticipates, Nature is being killed.

29 worm Figuratively, a larva or grub (which will grow into a venomous snake).

32 hear ourselves i.e. speak together. *OED* Hear *v* does not include a reflexive form. Theobald emended to 'hear't our selves', and other grammatically 'correct' changes have been proposed. Compare 'known' for 'known each other' (*Ant.* 2.6.83) and 'see' for 'see each other' in Imogen's farewell to Posthumus, 'When shall we see again?' (*Cym.* 1.1.124).

32–7 My royal . . . without it Lady Macbeth forces Macbeth into his rôle as host. Earlier (1.7.30), she showed her concern for social form, however superficial or hypocritical.

32 royal lord The phrase emphasises Macbeth's new status and perhaps reminds him of his new duties.

33 give the cheer give a kindly welcome (*OED* Cheer *sb*[1] 5); give a toast to the company (?).

33–5 feast . . . welcome i.e. a hospitable dinner for guests is rather a commercial transaction ('is sold' (33)) if the host does not frequently affirm (= 'give the cheer' (33) and 'is . . . often vouched' (34)), while it happens, that the feast is freely, generously (= 'with welcome' (35)) given. Proverbially, 'Welcome is the best cheer' (Dent W258).

35 To feed were best at home i.e. one dines best in one's own dwelling.

36 From thence Away from home.

36 ceremony social rituals (of seating, serving, toasting, etc.).

37 SD Editors have moved the Ghost's entrance closer to the moment it is first recognised in the dialogue (before 48), but F's location is theatrically feasible, making 40–4 simply but effectively ironic and allowing the Ghost time to enter and to sit in a place that fills the table but is not in Macbeth's line of sight. Forman (II, 338) saw the actor playing Macbeth 'standing up to drincke a Carouse to' Banquo, 'And as he thus did . . . the ghoste of Banco came and sate down in his cheier behind him.' For the ways of enacting the Ghost's entrance, see Stanley Wells in Biggs, pp. 65–7.

37 SD *Ghost of Banquo* The same actor who played Banquo living, made up with stage-blood (see 51), usually animal's blood, and, possibly, flour. In other plays, a miller in his 'mealy miller's coate' is mistaken for a ghost (William Sampson, *The*