國立政治大學英國語文學系

碩士學位論文

恐懼的假象：馬克白中的象徵、邪惡、與苦難

Painting of Fear: Symbolism, Evil, and Suffering in *Macbeth*

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Painting of Fear: Symbolism, Evil, and Suffering in *Macbeth*

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To Dr. Thomas J. Sellari and my family

獻給施堂模教授和我的家人

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：恐懼的假象：馬克白中的象徵、邪惡、與苦難

指導教授：施堂模

研究生：呂信醇

論文提要內容：

本論文以探索隱藏於馬克白恐懼背後的真相為重點，揭示一般評論家較為忽略的部分，那就是莎士比亞透過馬克白這齣戲要告訴我們的道理--邪不勝正，在劇中，馬克白及其夫人的恐懼其實是來自於害怕正義的到來，雖然整齣戲大多籠罩在血腥、背叛、及恐怖的氛圍中，但馬克白終究自食惡果，無論他怎麼抗拒光明、正義的到來，他還是要離開那自我封閉的黑暗，因為「邪不勝正」，也就是不論陰雨、黑暗多久，太陽一定會出來，本論文在劇中找到諸多證據，顯示這個莎士比亞所隱藏在劇中的道理。

關鍵詞：馬克白、恐懼、假象、表徵、邪惡、苦難

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Abstract

Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* is probably the most complicated of his four famous tragedies. This thesis explores the meaning behind Macbeth's fear. The thesis states that the meaning of Macbeth's major fear is that evil cannot conquer justice—the usurper will eventually yield to the rightful sovereign. Overshadowed by the dark symbolism and mental suffering in the play, the rightful sovereign is a theme often overlooked by critics. *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is more than a personal, individual suffering and struggling; it is also a tragedy of a kingdom with hope in the end.

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Introduction

What is evil in *Macbeth*? Critics praise the play for its depiction of evil. G. Wilson Knight calls it "Shakespeare's most profound and mature vision of evil" (140). A. C. Bradley claims that evil "shows in *Macbeth* a prodigious energy […] The whole tragedy is sublime" (331). According to Knight, *Macbeth* has "the ghost and death theme" of *Hamlet*, "the rhythm of spiritual experience" of *Julius Caesar*," the "history of an individual's crime" of *Richard III*, and many more perfected "poetic units" (140). Knight's interpretation of the nature of evil in *Macbeth* is that of the evil of human thought. This perspective of evil is private, personal, even occult: it is mostly unrelated to the society around it, despite being a saboteur to that society. If evil means something "morally bad, cruel, or very unpleasant," evil can be the most suitable definition for what happens in *Macbeth* ("Evil." Cambridge Dictionary). There are regicide, murders, usurpation, and betrayal, none of which requires any context to be identified as evil. The evil in this play seems to exist mostly independently, being contrasted by the little good represented by Duncan, Banquo, Malcolm, and the English king and force. However, without the good, what would evil have destroyed?

This thesis will explore the meaning of evil in *Macbeth* by defining its context of good. Evil can not stand alone, without some contrary good that is breakable or exploitable. Kenneth Muir defines this sacrificed good as something Macbeth possesses, "to show how the hero comes to be damned" (xliii). Muir's definition of damnation is contextualized by Macbeth's inner good, such as conscience. His definition of evil is psychological. It is possible that such contextualization applies to the entirety of the play as well. Many broad positive themes in the play provide

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contrasts to evil: regicide and usurpation are crimes against a king; murders, against human lives, betrayal, against trust. These positive themes strengthen their contrasting darkness, but it would be a degradation to treat these themes as mere supportive themes to evil. These positive themes may belong to a certain larger construction that is similar to the structure of evil that Wilson Knight proposes in his essay "*Macbeth* and The Metaphysic of Evil." Knight argues that *Macbeth* possesses the essences of Shakespeare's past tragedies: death, ghost, spiritual experience, and more (140). I assume that there may be more themes than those in his tragedies which Shakespeare recycles and enhances. There could be themes not even from his other plays. Before such an assumption can be verified, we have first to identify such a grand structure in *Macbeth,* if there is one.

To spot the possible structure of the good, we can build an interpretation that connects the positive themes in *Macbeth*. This interpretation will make use of Eliot's definition of a work of art in "Hamlet and His Problems," which calls for attention to Shakespeare's plays as whole works of art, rather than to its main character alone. Eliot's criticism reveals the focus that Muir's definition of sacrificed good lacks: attention on the entirety of the play. Eliot's method is centered around the entirety of artistic value in a play. He argues that a work of art requires no interpretation, which teaches readers historical facts related to a play. Eliot quotes J. M. Robertson's point that "*Hamlet* is a stratification, that it represents the efforts of a series of men, each making what he could out of the work of his predecessors" (82). He agrees partially with Robertson's reading of *Hamlet* based on Shakespeare's sources, a reading which concludes that *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's artistic failure, since it is unable to express, as he assumes Shakespeare intended to do, the mother's guilt upon her son because of

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the "'intractable' material of the old play" (84). Eliot argues for the idea of the "objective correlative," the only viable artistic method to express emotion by presenting "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (85-86). The emotions in *Macbeth* are expressed as if they were "automatically released by the last event in the series" (Eliot 183). I do not intend to treat the play mostly as a work of art in my thesis, but the objective correlative is useful for connecting themes in the play, even though the predecessors of *Macbeth* are mostly not drama. The objective correlative, which describes how drama expresses emotion, connects emotion with the themes a play expresses. In *Macbeth*, some of these are fear and evil: The emotion of fear defines the evil in the play. Thus, the criterion to define whether something is evil in the play is whether it evokes the emotion of fear. For this reason, the stratification in *Macbeth*, the position of Shakespeare's Scottish play in the creation originated from the historical figure Macbeth, is less obvious than the stratification in *Hamlet,* but Shakespeare's source in Holinshed's *Chronicles* may provides us a look into what Shakespeare is attempting to express.

Shakespeare takes freely from Holinshed's *Chronicles,* which tells the Scottish story of murder, revenge, and justice. In the *Chronicles*, there are strange weathers that "vndoubtedlie almightie God shewed himselfe thereby to be offended most highlie for that wicked murther of king Duffe: and suerlie vnlesse the offenders were tried foorth and punished for that deed, the realme should feele the iust indignation of the diuine iudgement, for omitting such punishment as was due for so greeuous an offense" (Holinshed 236). It will not be difficult to recognize that the foul weather in

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Macbeth has the same function of presenting God's wraith. Lightning, tempests, and months of sunless sky are frequently mentioned whenever wicked deeds like murders or usurpation happen in the *Chronicles*. There is a description of "the peculiar propertie of a giltie conscience, to be afraid of all things" (236). A lecherous king "sparing neither maid, widow, nor wife, prophane nor religious, sister nor daughter" resembles Malcolm's self-description (Holinshed 238). Shakespeare rearranges his sources freely, yet maintains a certain integrity of each parts he takes. However, such integrity can be confusing without context. The strange weather with which God punishes the Scottish for their ignorance of regicide in the *Chronicles* loses its cause in *Macbeth* because it happens prior to the regicide in the play; Macbeth is cut short of his just cause of usurpation. Macbeth, who has an incentive for revenge in the *Chronicle*, has no such reason to commit murder in Shakespeare's play. In the Chronicle, vendetta may cross several generations, which is not presented in *Macbeth*. "*Macbeth* is a desolate and dark universe where all is befogged, baffled, constricted by the evil. Probably in no play of Shakespeare are so many questions asked" (Knight, 141). I assume that most questions in the play are due to the loss of context that could not fit in the short duration of five acts and that are unrelated to the "imperial theme" in the play (1.3.129).

If we apply Eliot's objective correlative to the theme of justice in *Macbeth*, the theme in the chain of actions in the play appears to be the justice of succession. The play revolves around discussions of the evil of usurpation and the legitimacy of the crown. In my thesis, we will see how Shakespeare attempts to present the justice of succession by how he adopts and rearranges his sources. The justice of succession is what the evil attempts to sabotage. By regicide, Macbeth disrupts the royal

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succession, as well as the order this succession is supposed to maintain. My thesis will thus be in part an interpretation on the legitimacy of a sovereign in *Macbeth*. In other words, I will discuss who deserves to be the sovereign in the play. First, I will review the inner struggle of conscience in the play, exposing how this struggle alone can not sufficiently tackle the theme of justice. Second, I will apply a perspective of pageantry to inspect the chain of action in the play by proposing a perspective of this kind of early modern British civic triumph. Through this perspective, this thesis aims to relocate the wayward theme of evil in *Macbeth* by comparing the play with this British tradition. *Macbeth* conjures a horrible image of an apocalyptic realm, impregnated with unnatural affairs, equivocating figures, and bloody murders, a realm awaiting its righteous sovereign. Of such a sovereign, the minimal representation of his ancestry's effort to stop evil often leads modern productions and audiences to focus on the psychological horror and inner evil from the overshadowed theme of this tragedy: the holistic defeat of evil. This defeat allegorizes the entry of the righteous king in the far future.

This thesis also intends to prove that through the defeat of evil, the evil is purged, and thus justice is preserved: a dramatic catharsis is completed, but it is a national rather than an individual catharsis. One of the most commonly known functions of a tragedy is catharsis, a function that in this case prompts us to ask whether the tragic hero Macbeth, struggling with his conscience, is redeemed in his defeat. This question will be discussed in the literature review section, and I intend to treat Macbeth as the evil that has to be purged. Though the fate of our tragic hero is closely tied to fate of his land, the former is only a part of the latter. It would, I think,

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be myopic to find catharsis only in the fate of the tragic hero himself, rather than in the fate of Scotland and her people.

Modern criticism on *Macbeth* is correct to say that its poetry is "a statement of evil" (Kermode, 1359). Frank Kermode points out, in the introduction to *Macbeth* in the *Riverside Shakespeare*, that Macbeth does not love evil as Richard III does (1358); he has a tendency for violence and darkness, but he does not meticulously plan to profit from an evil deed. Macbeth is always struggling with the evil of his action more than with its results. However, this does not mean he falls into evil as a victim. Macbeth is far from being a victim of evil; rather, he adopts it. He has a desire for the crown, but it is not so strong that he will sacrifice everything for it, and Lady Macbeth is correct about his unwillingness to make this sacrifice; as we can see, he expresses a passive wish for the crown before he decides to commit regicide (1.3.143). Kermode claims that the play "represents a fierce engagement between the mind and its guilt, and it brings into play intellectual and imaginative resources nowhere else employed in the tragedies" (1359). This mind-guilt engagement is the base of most *Macbeth* criticism. Many critics remark on Macbeth's inner struggle of conscience. Kenneth Muir concludes that he is "a noble and gifted man who chooses treachery and crime, not believing he has any justification for his deeds, but knowing precisely what they are" (xliv). Muir's perceptive conclusion indicates that Macbeth is a hero who sins, instead of a villain struggling against sinning. This conflict between virtue and action echoes Muir's comparison between Richard III, who "chooses evil without reluctance," and Macbeth, who does so "only after an agonizing conflict, his conscience operating before, during, and after his crimes" (xlii). Macbeth's conscience makes him more pitiable than Richard III because the struggle between

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conscience and ambition announces the contradiction of human nature, by which humans often regret what they have done; he repetitively suppresses the "signs of nobleness" that Duncan praises from his "black and deep desires" (1.4.41; 1.4.51). Such suppression can also be seen in Lady Macbeth, when she prays to "stop up th' passage to remorse" (1.5.44). The suppression they both attempt several times never succeeds in eliminating nobility or remorse: it is merely a pain killer for the struggle. If we have a chance to ask Macbeth why he is willing to risk all he owns, his honor, his trust, his inner peace of mind "in their newest gloss," for his "deep and dark desires," he probably could not answer anything beyond the metaphor of "vaulting ambition" (1.7.27). "[A]nd to be king/ Stands not within the prospect of belief,/ No more than to be Cawdor" (1.3.74). To paraphrase Macbeth's soliloquy above, it is not believable for him to even be the Thane of Cawdor, let alone the king. This idea of becoming king, whether it is new to Macbeth or not, I assume, raises his conflicting conscience and ambition.

The origin of this conscience-ambition struggle is not ignored, but camouflaged by the fast pace of the play and the illusions Macbeth experiences; they are the "dust in the eyes of the audience" (Muir, xlvi). While Muir argues that Macbeth chooses evil after he struggles with his conscience, Robert Bridges disagrees with such a possibility. Muir reports that Bridges "complains that the Macbeth we have cause to admire could never have committed the murder of Duncan, and that Shakespeare deliberately throws dust in the eyes of the audience, not clearly telling them whether Macbeth decided to murder Duncan before the beginning of the play, or whether the idea was imposed upon him by the witches, or whether he was urged by his wife" (xlvi). Muir then counters Bridges' argument of Shakespeare "choosing theatrical

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effect over psychological consistency" with three points: first, Shakespeare is creating a poem, not a human being. Second, psychological consistency is a changeable idea between times. Third, Bridges thinks too little of the potential of the mixture of virtue and evil. Muir denies the possibility of this categorization of the noble and the ignoble in nature, assuming that "we cannot divide the world into potential murderers and those who are not" (xlviii). The consequence of an action may not be a sufficient or accurate tool for the complexity of the human nature and action in tragedy, especially in one which may feature multiple kinds of evil; if it is a fitting tool, I assume that we may have to admit that the Weird Sisters, with their equivocal words, replace a rightful reign of Scotland with another one at the end of the play. The assumption that the Weird Sisters do this has nothing to do with the evil in the play. It is likely that human nature, consequences, and tragedy are not entirely necessary for the discussion of the meaning of evil in *Macbeth*. Such discussion requires a value-system to evaluate the evil and the good in the play.

With the dust of ambiguity in our eyes, we have less moral context and a weaker stance to evaluate the evil. Bridges' argument points out that this poem of evil leaves a blank space on motives unexplained. However, finding motives merely in a person's words, like attempting to find "the mind's construction in the face," (1.4.12;) is almost impossible: motives are thoughts, and thoughts are "not themselves directly accessible; we have only their words, written or spoken, which we must use as indirect evidence for their thoughts"(Goodare, *Witchcraft* 1). Julian Goodare states the difficulty of using the term "belief" to describe witchcraft; the same can be said for the author's intention in a play, not to mention a fictional character's. Such a relation between intentions and actions has, according to Knight's comparison between Brutus

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and Macbeth, “secondary reality only”(139). The relation of intentions and actions, like the “time-sequence” that Knight makes light of, has less influence on the evil theme than the poetic symbolism does. Therefore, it is not accurate enough to say merely that Macbeth’s idea of murder is hidden: the idea of murder is blended with the Sisters’ prophesy, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s ambition, and transforms into a certain mode of reasoning: “a cult of murder.” The distinction between the hiding and blending of ideas is that Macbeth receives the evil from several certain sources. By cult, I do not mean that Macbeth has created a new religion, but apply the phrase to indicate a system of thinking that results in murder. Murder is more reliable than the Weird Sisters to Macbeth; he only comes to them when he lacks confidence, but he is urged to “an amazing and mysterious action of blood. This action he repeats, again and again” (Knight, 154). The heavy reliance on murder is what takes *Macbeth* beyond a political drama: certain deaths in the play, such as those of Macduff’s family and Lady Macbeth, are not expressing the result or the process of a political struggle. The regicide and the other murders are the actions that bring Macbeth temporary peace, but at the price of delayed disharmony of both the world and his mind. The disharmony of the world and Macbeth shows that the influence of the urders has a scale larger than the power-wrestling between a usurper and a sovereign, but the influence of a confrontation between disorder and order of the world. The two factions, simply put, are the evil and the good, determined by a value-system similar to the English nationalism that an early modern audience may have felt.

The disharmony lasts to the very end, strengthening Macbeth’s fixed pattern of thinking. Knight says he is “urged by fear”(154). Humans, like animals, tend to have fixed reactive patterns when cornered, hurt, or threatened. “The spontaneous response

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of a human group to its environment, a response made principally by the imagination," according to C. S. Lewis, is "savage beliefs" (1). Macbeth's beliefs, such as the prophesies, the danger from Banquo, or the necessity to murder Macduff's family, are formed not from a life in a human group, but one outside and hidden from it. "He is lonely, endures the uttermost torture of isolation. Yet still a bond unites him to men: that bond he would 'cancel and tear to pieces'—the natural bond of human fellowship and love'"(Knight, 154). The bond is called "golden opinions" when Macbeth is instigated to regicide by his wife, which "would be worn now in their newest gloss,/ Not cast aside so soon" (1.7.33-34). Ironically, less than fifty lines later in the same act, he has disposed of that bond and set out upon the "terrible feat" (1.7.81). The cancellation of that bond is a response to his imagination of both mistrust and fear, which are themselves imagination. The imagination aggravates his isolation not only from Duncan, but from anyone except Lady Macbeth and the Weird Sisters; his isolation thus inflames his imagination, causing mistrust and fear to run wild. In short, Macbeth's imagination and isolation reinforce each other. His imagination makes him both cowardly and bellicose. Lewis' savage belief exemplifies a method to examine inner thoughts, which Goodare deems hard to reveal and Knights helps us to identify: that is, the human response to their imagination of the environment according to a constant mode of reasoning.

The assumption of the mode of reasoning gives us a chance to look at the conflict between *Macbeth*'s poetic quality and its dramatic quality. Resolving this conflict helps us understand that Shakespeare's Macbeth is created consistently in terms of being evil. The poetry of *Macbeth* contains symbols such as witchcraft, blood, and feral animals; the dramatic plot is a tragedy that features "a fierce

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engagement between the mind and its guilt" (Kermode, 1359). By this mode we cannot firmly treat Macbeth as a stable character: his "single state of man" has been lost; he has become an evil collective of mind. On the other hand, it is generally agreed that *Macbeth*'s characters possess few distinctions between them. Samuel Johnson believes that "[the play] has no nice discrimination of character, the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions" (qtd. in Schoenbaum, 3). The events, I believe, are less related to the performance of the play than any historical context that Garry Wills proposes as the symbolism of the play itself. We can contextualize "the serpent under 't" (1.5.66), or spot the similarity of plot between *Macbeth* and Holinshed's *Chronicle*, but we do not understand the greatness of *Macbeth*'s events from its real-world connection; we understand it from its evil, its tearing of human bonds, and its tragedy.

The development of the cult of murder can be observed through Macbeth's actions. Macbeth's first responses to the prophesy are a sense of lack of information, and doubting the witches' source as well as their statement, which "stands not within the prospect of belief" (1.3.74). The doubt quickly turns into firm belief when he writes to his wife that he has "learn' d by the perfect' st report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge"(1.5.2). Macbeth does verify Weird Sisters' power. Muir confirms this too (26). But this bears little effect on my argument about the mode of reasoning, since I am not questioning Macbeth's decision, but observing his series of decisions, which are rational reactions to the unbelievable. "Intellect (intelligere)," C. S. Lewis writes, citing Aquinas' opinion on logic in *The Discarded Image*, "is the simple (i.e. indivisible, uncompounded) grasp of an intelligible truth, whereas reasoning (ratiocinari) is the progression towards an intelligible truth by going from

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one understood (intellecto) point to another" (157). Lewis points out that intellect is like possession; reasoning, acquisition; there will not be reasoning if there is no intellect for a person to reason with (157). The prophecies open a gap between two "understood points": they overlap an honorable general with a murderer, a subject with his king, while leaving the reasoning to Macbeth and Banquo, and the latter rejects it. Banquo refuses to reason about the Sisters' words because the partial truth may be an indication that they "tell us truth; win us with honest trifles, to betray's in deepest consequence" (1.3.124). Macbeth, on the other hand, thinks that the Sisters have "more in them than mortal knowledge" (1.5.2). So do we, when reading the script or watching the play, accept the existence of supernatural power on page or stage according to the "willing suspension of disbelief."

If we discard that suspension for a moment, we can see that the prophecy is far less than inevitable: Banquo is not happy or "much happier" than Macbeth neither when he is alive, nor before he is murdered; and Macbeth himself can be hardly said to be happy, acting in guilt, fear, and regret on stage. The debate on happiness may not be a major issue in the play, but it reveals that the function of prophecy is not to announce an unchangeable fate. The Sisters, in their second meeting with Macbeth, show him that "the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon [him]" to restate Banquo's happiness, the lack of which greatly discredits the first prophecy about Banquo in act one (4.1.123). Such a discrepancy is caused by the logic we use to inspect the play, not by the play itself: the logic that prophesies are infallible, and the logic that Macbeth must bear in his mind the idea of murder before or after meeting the Weird Sisters, is what Knight criticizes as a critic's "measure of correspondence with his

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own life-experience" (12). We should avoid such measures to focus more on the mode of reasoning within the play.

Now, I do not entirely agree with Knight that cause and effect are a "superficiality" which "we think to trace in our own lives and actions, and try to impose on person[s] of literature" (158). The cause and effect that form the plot of the play, or any work of fiction, are arranged so that they fit the atmosphere, or what Knight calls the "spatial" element (8). Both plot and poetry are required to present "Shakespeare's most profound and mature vision of evil" (Knight, 140). By vision, Knight captures the mental quality of this play: *Macbeth* is illusive and dream-like. The same can be said about other of Shakespeare's plays as well, but *Macbeth* is the most concentrated. The play's dream-like quality is mostly due to its opposing structures of good and evil. The conflict is rather fantastical, being the confrontation between two implicit supernatural forces.

The elements of *Macbeth*, such as the plot, the characters, and the scenes, are so chosen, not "as a series of mystical treatises in cryptogram, to be filed away once the cipher is read" that Eliot argues against (Knight, xx). Eliot argues that some interpretation breaks down a work of art like a cipher, instead of appreciating its artistic value. These elements of *Macbeth* potentially suit *Macbeth*'s dark and gloomy atmosphere. For example, the porter scene "was necessary 'to give a rational space for the discharge of these actions'[…] It is there to increase our feelings of horror. We are never allowed to forget throughout the scene that a murder has been committed, and that it is about to be discovered" (Muir, xxv-xxvi). Namely, the porter scene contributes to the spatial element, even though it lacks the logical necessity after the murder scene. Likewise, the Weird Sisters in the very first scene rush through all the

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elements and symbols in this play: storm, war and conflict, night and darkness, and the reversed norm in ambiguity. These symbols concisely point out every link whenever any character comments on weather, reports news, mentions blood, or refers to animals; the Weird Sisters condition our word-association to witch-symbolism. In other words, they initiate a symbolic system. They are the "instruments of darkness" Banquo warns Macbeth about; they are the keys to the gate of the disharmonious world of *Macbeth,* a gate which opens as late as the porter scene. Before it, evil lurks in the poetic symbolism; after the gate is open, the dark carnival begins. The porter reminds us of the horror of the murder, and the witches prepare us for it.

Witch-symbolism, the reversal of values, and the cult of murder compose my interpretative structure of the evil theme of this play: witch-symbolism sets up the dark tone and the reversal of values, in which the cult of murder buds and flourishes. This structure helps us understand the evil theme besides the mental struggle between conscience and ambition. This mental struggle is a crucial discussion in the play, but it is interfered with by the mystical supernatural elements that contribute little to the clarity of the theme of the play. Through my interpretation, I hope *Macbeth* can be understood beyond the terms of evil, darkness, and the supernatural. It has a disharmonious poetic sublimity supported by these terms. Its poetry is consistent in storm, blood, animals, a consistency that can be termed witch-symbolism; its atmosphere is constructed by a mechanism similar to that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, not only because both plays are Shakespeare's, but because of the similar poetic symbols used in both plays, according to Knight (129).

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The towering evil in *Macbeth* may seem dramatically revolutionary, but this structure of evil has both a conservative tradition and a conservative goal. The evil force that Macbeth represents is a force that has to be defeated. The grander the evil, the more glorious its defeat will be. The criticism and interpretations I have gathered above all discuss this evil theme from Macbeth's perspective, a perspective that is straightforward and typical. By typical I mean that Macbeth is a tragic hero, listed with Othello, Hamlet, King Lear, etc. Ignoring his identity as a tragic hero or even as a protagonist of his story would be an unorthodox method. Yet the orthodox method leaves much to be desired. Why does Macbeth obtain the "golden round" at the cost of his "eternal jewel," only to make "the seed of Banquo Kings" (1.5.28, 3.1.67, 3.1.69)? Knight traces the uncertainty of the play to evil, which forms "a desolate and dark universe where all is befogged, baffled" (141). The play is full of questions; Knight observes that major characters and minor characters are all asking questions that either have no answers, or produce more confusion, or both. This "fog of insecurity" is removed when Macbeth is defeated (Knight 143). However, the defeat only means the end of insecurity, not the answer to all the unanswered questions. At the very least, the defeat provides no explanation to Macbeth's self-inflicted "apocalypse of evil" (Knight158). The term "evil" can illustrate so little of the confusion and violence in the play. Even if evil can be accepted as the ultimate answer to the confusions of the play, there is still much to be asked. It will make more sense if there is a larger force of evil, battling a force of good, urging Macbeth to confusion and violence. Macbeth is not the evil, but its champion; and he is responsible for his deed in that position.

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The indecisive nature of Macbeth is often considered the conflict between his ambition and conscience. This conflict is so complicated that critics praise the depth to which it expands in the play, as I have mentioned. Such praises risk the danger Eliot warns us about in "Hamlet and His Problems": the danger of focusing on "the importance of the leading character" (81). Eliot's argument is that some critics bend Hamlet to their own imagination. I do not mean that the ambition-conscience conflict is critics' creation. I mean that the critics treat Macbeth as if he were Hamlet, thus applying Hamlet's dilemma to Macbeth. Critics comment on Macbeth's indecisive nature as they comment on Hamlet's dilemma. Macbeth's dilemma is under the context of opposing good and evil; his personal struggle reflects the conflict of this context. Such commentary that focuses on the personal struggle of Macbeth affects how we read and watch *Macbeth*, swaying our focus more onto the personal aspect of the play than onto the overall integrated power struggle on stage. The same can be said of the comparison between Shakespeare's Richard III and Macbeth, in which the latter is not devoted entirely to ambition. There is a limitation in treating Macbeth as the center of the action, as a protagonist, even if Macbeth the name is in the title of the play, and most of the memorable lines in the play are his. Macbeth, as the center of the action, has little to no access to the overall scheme of the general power struggle between the good and the evil. If we read the play through Macbeth's perspective, we can only uncover his ambition and his fear of defeat. His perspective limits our field of view of the entire play; his defeat is not the entirety of the play. His evil is not the full picture of the evil in the play.

The pursuit of the source of witchcraft similarly suffers the problem of giving Macbeth too much focus. Garry Wills, by referring to the explosive topic of the

Gunpowder plot in the Jacobean era (13), suggests a political aspect of the play involving the infamous witch trials. According to Wills, the references to the witchcraft tradition and those to King James VI's works in the play provide strong evidence for Macbeth being a male witch, threatening the Christian political structure with dark power and supernatural assistance (56). The first problem of such a perspective is that the supernaturals turn against their own champion Macbeth for unknown reasons. The Weird Sisters, for all the effort they put into Macbeth through the entire play, trick him with equivocation into his own demise, as the prophecy goes. We are once again left with the ultimate answer of evil, because evil is confusing and irrational. The only possible explanation may be that evil is an object of destruction that deserves to be destroyed.

A methodology that does not focus on Macbeth is required to expand our understanding of the play. If evil is a force that has to be defeated in the play, who, or what, will defeat it? The answer may be found through Samuel Johnson's comment on the play: "[…] every reader rejoices at [Macbeth's] fall" (133). Such rejoicing indicates the universality of the benefit in Macbeth's defeat: The scale of influence of this event is universal; every reader can relate to it. What defeats Macbeth is a universal beneficial force, or its representative. Let us assume that this representative is the righteous royal sovereign. The fall of Macbeth, the defeat of evil, is an event worthy of celebration not only because society is purified of evil; it also celebrates order returning to Scotland on stage; it celebrates a universal ruler who restores peace and justice; it celebrates or declares a new and just ruler who replaces the evil one. The defeat of Macbeth has the traits of "ritual dramas of royal manifestation and civic acclamation" (Kipling, "Wonderfull*"* 155). Gordon Kipling concisely concludes the

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purposes of these ritual dramas, or "civic triumphs": "[…] London concentrated upon civic triumph, devising increasingly elaborate pageants to honor their sovereigns, welcome foreign princes, and celebrate military victories" ("Triumphal" 37). Kipling breaks down a few traditional features of a civic triumph: "ritual function, liturgical imagery, symbolic vocabulary, and dramatic form" (Wonderfull, 154). The ritual function is the purpose stated above: mostly dramatization of a king's or queen's entry into his or her city; the liturgical imagery consists of religious images with which pageant designers glorify the royal entry (Wonderfull, 155). "[…] the city placed an angelic castle [...] so that the encounter between the royal visitor and the pageant might create a mimetic image of the entry of the Anointed One into the celestial Jerusalem" (155). One of the most popular ideas of civic triumph pageants is representing a city as Heaven (157). This representation of Heaven, on the surface, seems the least related to the representation of hell in *Macbeth*. Yet the comparison of the two reveals a method to inspect a decentralized version of *Macbeth*.

The form of civic triumph may provide two different perspectives on Macbeth's destruction. First, the defeat of evil prepares the righteous entry of the sovereign, an entry that is hinted at constantly throughout the play: that of Banquo's offspring. Shakespeare, instead of representing a heaven that the king shall reign over, presents a hell on earth which the royal ancestor must expel. By centering on the unborn king, we can now temporarily cease to empathize with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the "butcher and his fiend-like queen" (5.9.35). The form of civic triumph thus avoids the problems of comparing Macbeth with some of Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, because it enables a comparison with a London civic tradition. It is also a perspective that focuses on the completeness of the play: a possible way of resolving the conflict

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between the poetic and dramatic quality of the play. The problem has been that critics' default status for Macbeth is nobility. Now, we see Macbeth not as a noble tragic hero that hesitates to sin, but as a villain that voluntarily roots out his conscience.

The second perspective that civic triumph enables is that *Macbeth* is an evil civic triumph. A normative ritual drama welcomes the righteous ruler with celestial images, honoring fertility, wealth, prosperity, etc. The evil one is the opposite: A "nation miserable, [with] an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd," full of misery and violence, doomed to termination (4.3.104). The angels with God's messages become the Weird Sisters, whose equivocation spells the end of a villain. The evil symbolism, witchcraft, the black magic of sterility, necromancy comprise a system of hellish imagery that a ritual drama of evil requires. This evil civic triumph is a ritual drama within another one: a meta-ritual drama. Technically, the evil ritual drama is not the second perspective, but the meta-perspective of the play. It provides a method to explore the symbolism of the play in contrast with the holy symbolism applied in the typical civic triumph. In such contrast should we understand that Shakespeare unprecedentedly revives a popular civic tradition with elements of the supernatural. Either perspective brings the rightful and righteous ruler into a more important role in the play than the perspective that focuses on Macbeth's inner struggle.

The ritual function in *Macbeth*, similar to that of the pageantry of a civic triumph, is catharsis. "The process of releasing strong emotions through a particular activity or experience, such as writing or theatre, in a way that helps you to understand those emotions" ("Catharsis"). Current criticism, which I have discussed in the introduction, has covered the catharsis of Macbeth's inner struggle, but I assume that such private catharsis that focuses on one character is only a part of the

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catharsis of the Scottish play in general. The catharsis in the play is broadened with the emphasis on the rightful and righteous ruler in the play.

The towering evil in Macbeth is contrasted by a structure of good. The evil and good are both microcosmic and holistic. They scale from Macbeth's isolated ambition and conscience, the fall and rise of a kingdom, to a battle of light and darkness. The interpretation of pageantry in the play shows that evil is a threat to the rightful sovereign, whose rightfulness is determined by a structure of collective emotion which has a similar method to express an emotion that pageantry offers: the emotion that expects a rightful sovereign to bring back order to the world on stage.

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Chapter One: Symbolism and the Structure of Evil

In this chapter, I will explore the structure of evil in the symbolism in *Macbeth*. *Hamlet* opens with two soldiers witnessing the recently dead king; in *Henry V* a chorus asks us to imagine "a kingdom for a stage" (Prologue 3). It is common for a play to start with such request. In a similar fashion, the first scene of *Macbeth* raises an image of evil. The Weird Sisters, in the prologue, presents to us their promise to return, war, storm, and chaos. Apparently they represent a factor that a royal character can not represent, because a good king cannot be chaotic or evil. In the first scene, the whole play is previewed: there is horrible weather, a sign that harbingers the fading of light. A violent night is coming, and its herald is these Weird Sisters. What is notable about this prologue is that it is vague and fragmented. The second scene, where Macbeth's bloody battle and the death of the traitor are reported, provides such information. The vague prologue introduces us to the evil atmosphere; it tells us to expect violence and chaos. The sisters themselves are not significant, or significantly evil. What they do is nothing serious compared to what Macbeth does, yet these old hags instigate his action. What the sisters stir up is more than murder: an atmosphere of evil and violence.

The very first scene provides not only the separate image of each symbol, but a whole image that defines the atmosphere in the play. The first image is the storm. It is a day that is both "foul and fair" that Macbeth notices, a day which has "the Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders" that the sergeant reports, and one that has the storm in which the Sisters make the sailor "tempest-toss'd" (1.3.38; 1.3.25). The storm is everywhere in this play. It is a symbol of chaos. Chaos disrupts order: It is different from the general idea of fate or justice. The former renders the hero

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powerless, while the latter punishes evil. Chaos may seem mysteriously neutral if it is considered separately. It seems evil mostly because it is abused by an evil intention. The second trait of the storm is that it appears mostly along with the Sisters or an apparition. Whenever the sisters enter, the stage directions always include thunder. The storm is also inseparable from night or darkness. The thunder, and the storm it represents, are as intangible as the Sisters. They are visible and audible, but are not an active agent involved in the plot or the action of the play. The storm is a natural phenomenon applied in the play as a symbol. It means nothing in itself, but in the context of the play, it is a symbol of chaos. The second symbol is the battlefield, which represents violence; this is a straightforward symbolization. The third is Macbeth, who represents human action or agency. Macbeth is, of course, a complicated case. All in all, the prologue presents these three symbols: storm, battlefield, and Macbeth.

Combining the three symbols, we have a rough and ambiguous outline of the play: on a chaotic night, violence occurs, surrounding Macbeth. Most scenes preview or review the regicide scene. In the last line in 1.2, Macbeth is said to have won what the traitor MacDonald has lost. Ironically, this includes the title of traitor. Without the first mystical witch scene, we would have seen Macbeth only as a valiant fighter, even a defender of the crown. That is not to say Macbeth is treacherous, having planned the regicide all alone from the start, or before he meets the sisters. He is the right man in the wrong time and place. The play is centered around the regicide; examples are numerous. Most obviously, Macbeth kills King Duncan, an event which not only is presented in detail, but is also the cause of Macbeth's dethrone. Second, the play describes how Macbeth the usurper attempts to maintain his throne, which he gains

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from regicide. It is normal for a play to center around its climax scene, but we should notice what builds up to that climax. What exactly leads us to link Macbeth with the title of a traitor before he actually commits the murder is the evil atmosphere that is often ignored. When we say that “on a chaotic night, a subject murders his king,” the chaos or the night is never the focus: they can not murder anything, no matter the object. But time and place are necessary for a plot. They are the occasion for murder. In this play the occasion is the storm and the night. On a chaotic night, Macbeth (re)discovers what evil he is capable of. He would not have realized it anywhere else or at any other time.

The violence, without the night or the storm, is not as evil as murder, represented by the cruelty on the battlefield. In battle, such violence is praised, because it is mutual and fair: battle is to risk a life to take another. To take this risk is bravery. Bravery is the first thing we know about Macbeth, a trait he shares with Banquo. After the report from the battlefield in 1.2, Lady Macbeth reminds Macbeth of this trait:

> Was the hope drunk
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
> And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
> At what it did so freely? From this time
> Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
> To be the same in thine own act and valour
> As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
> Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
> And live a coward in thine own esteem,
> Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
> Like the poor cat i' the adage? (1.7.35-44)

Here Lady Macbeth points out the necessity of courage for ambition to be realized. Macbeth’s courage is his familiarity with evil. He is familiar with taking lives, and Lady Macbeth convinces him to commit murder. Daring results in violence, and

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violence, in blood. Blood is, like a storm, an abused symbol in this play. It is referred to as life (“the fountain of your blood is stopp’d”), and as guilt (“Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?”) (2.3.96; 2.2.59). The losing of life and gaining of guilt are the consequences of violence, both of which are condemned by conscience, even under the storm, the chaotic night. Despite the possible influence of the supernatural that the sisters represent, Macbeth is always rational. He knows what he has done and he regrets his actions. The supernatural does not blur Macbeth’s conscience, but sharpens and clarifies it. When Knight says Macbeth is urged on by the fearful atmosphere, this is not to say that Macbeth is mesmerized or controlled, but that he struggles in such an atmosphere and consciously chooses evil.

Macbeth’s agency deepens his guilt, and the “sense of waste” in tragedy that Bradley argues for (36). The sense of waste is the feeling that a tragic hero gives up the good he could have achieved. “As James pointed out, tragic heroes must be ‘finely aware’ and this ‘makes absolutely the intensity of their adventures, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them’”(Muir, lii). He is capable of maintaining his judgment despite the evil atmosphere, such as reflecting on his mind with conscience, weighing the shame of cowardice against the guilt of regicide. To “meet Macbeth” is to meet the possibility of decision. It is a lonely agency. No character besides Lady Macbeth has severely influenced his action; when Macbeth is considering his next move, there are only obstacles and the step “On which [he] must fall down, or else o'erleap,/ For in [his] way it lies (1.4.48-50). He is cruel in action, but also precisely aware of his possession and situation:

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He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon. (1.7.31-35)

He understands both the king's gratitude and the value of his current social status. Furthermore, murder may cause nothing but chaos, which he himself refuses to look at or think on until he has done it. His agency is to cut off his social connections like Knight says he did. Gradually his loneliness maddens him and makes him neurotic about his personal safety. All in all, Macbeth represents the quality of daring, loneliness, and distraughtness. A daring nobleman, despite the chaos around him, is determined to murder his good king, then in isolation and despair struggles against his destruction; in the first two acts, Macbeth lusts for and struggles against the regicide.

The combination of storm, war, and a tortured daring soul provides a poetic consistency that sustains and amplifies the witch-symbolism. Besides the very first scene, it is worth noticing the three symbols in the sisters' plan to torture a sailor because of their conflict with his wife:

I'll drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;
He shall live a man forbid;
Weary sev'nnights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine;
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'dt. (1.3.18-25)

Here the three symbols, war (conflict), a tortured man, and storm are gathered. This revelation of the Sisters' revenge has almost no relation whatsoever with the main plot of the play; the revenge itself is barely a subplot due to its shortness and lack of

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involvement with other characters. Yet it fits the evil atmosphere that fills the first two scenes, and hints at the similar fate that Macbeth may have to suffer. Their revenge on the sailor also trivializes the sisters' business with Macbeth: meeting Macbeth is one of the Sisters' many tasks. Gary Wills concludes that the Sisters are collecting human remains on the battlefield, so they cannot wait for Macbeth. Exactly what the sisters are doing may be arguable, but the point is that the Sisters treat him as an expendable asset when Hecate says that

> all you have done
> Hath been but for a wayward son,
> Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,
> Loves for his own ends, not for you. (3.5.10-13)

Hecate, and the sisters are on a level that Macbeth cannot influence. They have a role similar to that of the floating dagger or the ghost of Banquo. They have the quality and purpose of a stage background or decoration: they belong to the "bubbles" of earth or the water, as Banquo describes them (1.3.79). Their appearance only has meaning to the regicide plot if it is considered a sign, a signal, or a reminder. They remind Macbeth of the possibility of his committing evil, and, in the second meeting in Act 4, his fragility as a mere human. Their function as a sign is obvious in their prophecy: if I predict heads every time I flip a coin, I will acquire roughly a fifty-percent accuracy. Their prophecy may not be the exact future event; it is simply a prediction to remind us of the possibility of Macbeth becoming the king. This is not saying the sisters are mere tricksters, but that Macbeth is affected by the prophecy as well. He is aware of the symbols, the sisters, the prophecy, and the evil atmosphere they have created.

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The evil atmosphere is not a cause of any incident in the play; its importance lies in its consistency. Every word related to the three symbols or the sisters has a tendency toward evil. Such a tendency is not limited to any specific characters. Therefore, the minor characters, as Samuel Johnson argued, can be sometimes indistinguishable: they all help develop the evil tendency toward no other plot development than Macbeth or his defeat. The minor characters have barely any other function. The Weird Sisters come for Macbeth, and leave for no reason; the porter describes a descent to hell, exits, and is never seen again. To consider their position in the plot is not as useful as considering their contribution to the atmosphere. What I mean is that this evil tendency provides for Macbeth's lack of incentive in the regicide. We should not attempt to find the incentive in desire or safety alone. Instead, we should treat evil as a drive, and understand the thinking pattern under it; we should understand the horror of *Macbeth*.

It is plain to see that *Macbeth* is more tragic than historical, and it is a tragedy of horror. The evil of Macbeth starts with things "fantastical," with "horrible imaginings" which are more than a regicide in the play, but also an altering of the written record of Holinshed's *Chronicle* (1.3.139; 138). Macbeth suffers blackening to contrast with Duncan's virtue, and thus is condemned further by the murder. Shakespeare's Macbeth, compared with the one in the *Chronicle*, lacks the ten years of good reign and the help from Banquo (Kermode 173). The evil in this murder is different from hatred: Macbeth did not murder Duncan for envy, age, or revenge, nor for any gain except the crown. Macbeth would have murdered anyone in his way to the "imperial theme," to obtain the crown (1.3.129). Once again, we should not seek too much on motives solely in common logic, or calculation of profit or safety: drama

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is not always about rationality. In Macbeth, we are naming an unnameable horror. Neither should we look for motives alone in the supernatural, or in mental manipulation, since that will reduce the agency that a tragedy requires. This is not because these questions cannot be answered or discussed, but that these answers have little to do with the evil itself. The evil in *Macbeth* is almost entirely independent of logic or magic. We can understand the evil by its signs, its symbols: we are repeatedly shown horrible, chaotic, violent signs. According to Knight, Macbeth not only cuts off his connection with others, but also acts differently from minor characters when in confusion, anger, sadness, and fear. He is indifferent to Banquo's advice on dealing with the "instrument of darkness" when they are both confused by the prophecy; he and Lady Macbeth share the anger and sadness of Duncan's death after he slaughters the guards, and she faints while others are shocked or immobilized. Two statements can be made from Macbeth's emotions and reactions: first, the emotions and reactions are not a pretense; their reactions are more than acting and deceiving. There is authenticity in his emotions. Second, the disconnection strengthens the isolation, which becomes the basis for Macbeth's horror.

When Macbeth is with others in public, his well-praised noble self is always present and maintained until the dinner scene; it is usually considered a disguise because his intention of murder is revealed as soon as Macbeth appears. In this sense, Robert Bridges is right to say that "the Macbeth we have cause to admire could never have committed the murder" (qtd. in Muir xlxi). But Macbeth's nobility is not a virtue that we can assume only before he meets the sisters, but one that we can perceive after the evil atmosphere and his reputation from reports from the battlefield and his kinsman are presented. His mourning for Duncan is more than an act when he says

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Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had liv'd a blessed time, for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead,
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of. (2.3.89-94)

He mourns authentically for the death of Lady Macbeth:

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5.17-28)

Both speeches show Macbeth's lamentation for the loss of meaning in life. It would be only a guess to say this indicates Shakespeare's personal pessimism about life. What such mourning shows is that Macbeth is consistent. He mourns the same way either publicly or privately, and he has no reason to pretend sorrow in private: there is no need for him to hide the sorrow for his wife in front of a physician. His sorrow is never an act, and this is why we pity him: he is both full of "the milk of human kindness" as well as evil (1.5.17). Duncan sees his valor and trustworthiness, and Lady Macbeth understands both his kindness and desire. Neither is false in terms of what they see separately. If we take the two opposite aspects of Macbeth, the good

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and the evil, as a projection to the world on stage, we can reasonably suspect that there are also two opposite aspects of the play, struggling against each other.

Isolation is an important theme in *Macbeth*, because it not only means social disconnection, but also causes a lack of balance in thoughts; it boosts wild imagination. Without any alliance besides Lady Macbeth, Macbeth has only shown concern for whether to murder or not. A murder is, of course, not a question that can be openly discussed. His conversation with others only provides him information to make this decision. If his thought is discovered, he will be treated as a traitor to his king. He is both thrilled and horrified by the imagination of murder; the imagination can grant him the "eternal jewel," at the cost of his "single state of man" (3.1.140). From the day he meets the sisters, he is suffering from this imagination at which none dares to think. His mind "Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is/ But what is not" (1.3.141-142). The wild imagination of murder dominates Macbeth's mind. At first, it is only a thought that greatly confuses and horrifies him. It aggravates because of its secrecy which Lady Macbeth further boosts with her advice and provocation. She relates cowardice to kindness, and manliness to cruelty, distracting Macbeth and herself from the problem of secrecy in the name of courage. He cannot reach out for a solution for this imagination that maddens him. I do not mean to say that Macbeth is mad, but that he chooses what he believes to be best for himself in his private judgment.

Macbeth, in isolation, under the influence of the evil atmosphere, forms a certain mode of reasoning that treats cowardice as the deadliest sin, and imagination as reality. So are we, the audience, the reader, invited by the horror of the play into the reversed world of imaginary chaos and evil. *Macbeth* is a tragedy of Macbeth's

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acceptance of evil. By sacrificing a part of logic and morality for evil, Macbeth attempts to restore his former mental status, his perfect self, and fails. There is a desire for the peace of mind in him:

> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
> Against the use of nature? (1.3.134-137)

He is aware that his thought is unnatural; he describes his perfect self in a much latter dialogue with Banquo's murderer:

> 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 cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
> To saucy doubts and fears. (3.4.20-24)

In his description, his perfect self is one in which he feels complete. After Macbeth attains the crown, he plans Banquo's murder not only for its practical safety, but also for his peace of mind that results. In short, in order to retrieve what is natural to him, Macbeth deals with the unnatural. His quest for peace of mind is more pitiable than the regicide. Though his intention will not change the essence of his deed, there is a passion in what he does: Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's prayers are proud and vigorous. Macbeth's passion is different from Iago's, which contains disdain for Othello's race and age; Macbeth's passion has no just cause as Hamlet's revenge. Macbeth chooses evil over loyalty and morality, but he does not hate these virtues. If Macbeth is considered a villain, he is a memorable villain that can be recognized by his unparalleled passion.

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His passion is his pursuit for his perfect self. If things unnatural cause his imperfection, it is through them that Macbeth attempts to amend that imperfection. To be the king is not only a desire, but a method of restoring himself. Such a pursuit is relatable: To return to a former comfortable status is an understandable drive common in drama as well as in life. What makes this drive uncommon in *Macbeth* is its anti-social quality, the disconnection that stops Macbeth from inspecting himself from a public perspective. His tragedy visualizes not only the danger of dealing with evil, but also the danger of social isolation, both of which are the danger of usurping: to obtain the status of the king either by murder, rebellion, or method other than rightful succession. In *Hamlet,* a murder in response to usurpation is justified by revenge; *Macbeth* proves that a just cause is not necessary for the audience to pity a murderer. What is necessary is consistency: in the chaos of darkness, under the disguise of his king's avenger, is Macbeth "the serpent" under the flower, or Duncan's "worthy gentlemen"? By consistency, I mean whether Macbeth always appears evil.

We can examine this question through the witch-symbolism. Macbeth is shocked when he learns the prophecy, and the murderous thought shakes him. Whatever his previous status is, it has reached a level of evil deeper than he has ever experienced. At first, he is in contact with an atmosphere that is more evil than him. Without further contact with the Weird Sisters before the regicide, it is clear that "things bad begun make strong themselves by ill" (3.2.55). The evil atmosphere may have aggravated or inspired his evil self, but there is no denying that Macbeth is capable of growing evil himself, or with the help of Lady Macbeth. If we consider the atmosphere an outside influence, there is a drive inside Macbeth that echoes it. This drive is a desire that provokes a series of actions which "the eyes fears, when it is

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done, to see" (1.4. 50-53). But a desire is not visible or audible. A storm, thunder, or a voice on battlefield, on the other hand, can be imitated with tools or by actors; darkness requires only a curtain to be produced. They are ambiguous signs of fear. These visible or audible elements actualize the evil of Macbeth's desire, but "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face" (1.4.11-12).

The horror of *Macbeth*, besides the dark atmosphere, lies in his moral offense. In order to destroy a social bond, the bond has to exist first. Likewise, a traitor has to be a subject first; there will be no darkness if there is no light.. This base for offense strengthens the contrast between loyalty and betrayal: our knowledge of Macbeth's loyalty is mostly indirect, testified to by Duncan and others' comments on him. His loyalty, if there is any, has been demonstrated less than his evil. Yet, some of his emotions reflect his loyalty: his regret and remorse. They are the inner horror that is spawned from the conscience that he always possesses. When he plots atrocities, he considers conscience a hindrance; when in regret, he shies away from his deed. If Macbeth's evil is awakened by the prophecy, his conscience is awakened as well. The inner tug of war between his ambition and conscience is a struggle that confuses him, but he manages to externalize it and fight back.

In Macbeth's experience in dealing with the horror of the struggle, first he refuses to see, then he acts before he thinks. He becomes more and more familiar, not only with the evil itself, but with his conscience that refuses the evil as well. They are also the "strange garments" that "cleave not to their mould/ But with the aid of use" that Banquo quickly conceives of (1.3.146-147). The first and most obvious evidence that he refuses to see what he will do is after Duncan announces his successor: "Let […] / The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,/ Which the eye fears, when it is done,

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to see (1.4.51-53). It is clear that what will be done is horrible to Macbeth. But this is only a delay of the horror: in his conversation with Lady Macbeth, Macbeth regains his conscience and recalls the unnecessity of regicide:

> We will proceed no further in this business:
> He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
> Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon. (1.7.31-35)

We should not treat Macbeth as maddened or irrational. He recognizes every reason against this murder. Convinced, or distracted from risk, by Lady Macbeth, he is filled with determination again. Yet, he shows a mysterious fear for deceased Banquo in front of his guests in the dinner scene:

> Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
> Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
> Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
> Which thou dost glare with! (3.4.92-95)

Lady Macbeth concludes that this is "the very painting of [his] fear" and compares it with the air-drawn dagger, saying they are "impostors to true fear" (3.4.60; 3.4.63). Macbeth has been struggling with this imagined fear, the same fear as the "horrible imaginings" (1.3.138); it disables him from time to time. If he can not overcome this imagined fear, he will never regain his perfect self.

At last, Macbeth overcomes the imagined fear. He will be moved, at last, neither by prophecy nor by conscience; he can now decide what to do once the choices appear, even

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Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. (5.8.30-33)

In his last duel with Macduff, Macbeth has overcome what has been haunting him: the imagined fear and passion for the evil atmosphere and illusion, and his fear of being an inferior man, his fear of being “the poor cat i' the adage.” He now treats this moving wood differently from the floating dagger or ghost Banquo; even though an unbelievable vision occurs before him, he chooses to fight for what he has chosen. There are courage and persistence to be admired in his battle cry. He dies, even though a despised traitor and a tyrant, a warrior indeed. His evil is judged by his opponents, but his journey for the perfect self ends where he utters his last sentence, refusing to be a slave to foes, illusions, or horror. Overcoming his fear, Macbeth demonstrates bravery and determination on his evil path. He suffers great pain and confusion. In his most uncertain times, with a push from his wife and the supernatural, he fails humanity to the extent that there is beauty to be admired in this failure. Such beauty in evil, in the grand scheme of the conflicting good and evil in the play, is the equally-matched force for the structure of the good that will be discussed in the next chapter.

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Chapter Two: The Rightful Sovereign and Pageantry

In this chapter, the structure of collective emotion toward the rightful sovereign will be discussed, through which the good and the evil are determined in the play. This emotion is why the play does not incite modern audiences to horror, who do not imagine the fall of social order by the death of a sovereign.

The mere title of L. C. Knights' famous essay, "How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth," brings out a question which is not interesting itself, but one that has an intriguing context. The essay starts with the critic's opinion on the excessive focus of contemporary criticism on dramatic characters and plot in Shakespeare's plays. He argues for a center of attraction on the language and poetry in Shakespeare's plays; he argues for a poetical reading. "A Shakespeare play is a dramatic poem. It uses action, gesture, formal grouping and symbols, and it relies upon the general conventions governing Elizabethan plays" (18). These dramatic components of Knights' dramatic poem alternatively compose a theme of early modern London urban conventions: civic triumph, royal entry, and pageantry, all of which should center around a rightful sovereign, who Shakespeare's Macbeth is not. In fact, the assumption, that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are without an heir is crucial to the theme of a royal entry in the play.

Macbeth has a theme similar to that of a London civic triumph: the play declares a royal entry. "With few exceptions, these civic dramas were almost always performed only upon the occasion of the king's inaugural entry into the city. They conceive of the king's entry into the city as a dramatic metaphor for his entry into his reign" (Kipling, "Wonderfull" 154). A civic triumph, or a civic drama, is a procession in which a sovereign, marching into a city, is graciously received by his urban subjects

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and pageant actors. Kipling argues for a few aspects to inspect a civic triumph: "ritual function, liturgical imagery, symbolic vocabulary, and dramatic form" ("Wonderfull" 154). A few elements are seemingly missing in *Macbeth*: first, a just and royal sovereign welcomed by his subjects. The acclamation of a rightful king is the normative ritual function. Duncan is such a ruler, but he is old, betrayed, pitied. The image of a royal entry is one that crowns a new sovereign worthy of celebration. The regicide of Duncan precisely announces both an unrightful coronation and the absence of the rightful one. It is possible that Shakespeare avoids the word "crown" or "crowned" when Macduff reports Macbeth's coronation: "He is already named, and gone to Scone/ To be invested" (2.4.31). The word is used frequently elsewhere. A coronation ritual is only mentioned at the end of the play: "So, thanks to all at once and to each one,/ Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone" (5.9.40-41). There is no denying that Malcolm is a newly-crowned rightful king, but at first Macbeth is not concerned about Malcolm, at least not as much as about Banquo; secondly, Malcolm is, in his own words, not without the sins of lust and greed, which he repents of, being "the truest issue of thy [throne, by] his own interdiction stands accursed, [and] does blaspheme his breed" (4.3.106-108). Macduff feels despair over Malcolm's confession of lust and greed. A rightful king may not be required to be sinless and pure, but there is another more suitable candidate for this role, the offspring of Banquo. Thirdly, his coronation is not hinted at as obviously and repetitively as that of an unborn king: the offspring of Banquo. Banquo "shalt get kings, though [he] be none" (1.3.67). Macbeth recognizes that his "eternal jewel" will be "Given to the common enemy of man,/ To make them kings—the seed of Banquo kings" (3.1.68-70). "For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon [Macbeth],/ And points at them for

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his" (4.1.123-124). These quotes and many more are often solely considered as an acclamation to the company's patron, King James VI, since the play was possibly performed at his Court in 1606 (Muir, xiii). These quotes have never been considered references to a royal entry, probably because Shakespeare's Banquo is hardly involved in the plot of Macbeth's regicide. "His Banquo," Miola claims, "unlike Holinshed's, remains virtuous, refusing to sully his hands with conspiracy and regicide" (153). He suspects Macbeth "play'dst most foully for't," yet he neither investigates Duncan's death, nor becomes vigilant toward his own (3.1.3). Muir points out that even though Banquo vows to fight "treasonous malice," he has done nothing to implement his vow" (2.3.129-130; lvi). Muir argues that there is perhaps not much Banquo can do except obey Macbeth, because "James condemns rebellion even against manifest tyrants" (lvi). Dramatically, Shakespeare's Banquo, let alone his offspring, can hardly be a protagonist. Yet, if *Macbeth* is a royal entry, Banquo's absent offspring is the most likely candidate of the rightful sovereign which a ritual drama greets.

The seed of Banquo that may become the rightful sovereign is also one of Macbeth's chief concerns. Macbeth's anxiety for this unborn king does not solely come from the prophecy: he fears Banquo's

> […] royalty of nature
> Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;
> And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
> He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
> To act in safety. There is none but he
> Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
> My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,
> Mark Antony's was by Caesar. (3.1.48-56)

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Fate-defying Macbeth, “valour’s minion,” “Bellona’s bridegroom,” has only one weakness at the moment, his archenemy Banquo (1.2.19; 55). Unlike Antony, Macbeth does not require a soothsayer’s warning to realize that the supernatural power that protects him is no match for that which protects Banquo:

> ANTONY. Say to me,
> Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar’s or mine?
> SOOTHSAYER. Caesar’s.
> Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side:
> Thy demon, that’s thy spirit which keeps thee, is
> Noble, courageous high, unmatchable,
> Where Caesar’s is not; but, near him, thy angel
> Becomes a fear, as being o’erpower’d: therefore
> Make space enough between you. (*Antony And Cleopatra* 2.3.16-24)

The Macbeth-Antony comparison yields two observation: first, Macbeth has a personal fear of Banquo. Second, the comparison indicates a hierarchy of the supernatural power, or, at least, a counter-agent to witchcraft. Knight observes that fear in the play is “ubiquitous. All may be unified as symbols of this emotion” (146). This universal fear that disables “everyone else urges him to an amazing and mysterious action of blood” (Knight 154). Macbeth fears the idea of regicide and murder, thus struggling with his conscience. But the fear that prompts him to violence after Duncan’s death is the fear for Banquo’s royalty. This private fear adds new perspective to the interpretation of “that great bond [which] keeps [Macbeth] pale” (3.2.48-49). Knight interprets this bond as a bond “of human fellowship and love” (Knight 154). This bond forms Macbeth’s struggling conscience, which is his tragic flaw that “forces him to murder many others” (Knight 128). However, from the context of Macbeth’s private fear of Banquo, the meaning of this bond is more straightforward: It is the royal bond of Banquo that will send his seed unto the throne,

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a royal bond that Macbeth fears to come true, as the prophecy of the Weird Sisters goes. Macbeth's belief of the prophecy brings us to the second observation, the theme of the supernatural in the play. The direct supernatural I mean here is limited to witchcraft and miracles, excluding imagery, which will require more discussion in themes of worship and rituals in the future. The most simple distinction between witchcraft and imagery is witnesses. This distinction means the two cauldron scenes, necromancy, and the healing of the English king are directly supernatural, while the floating dagger and the ghost of Banquo at the dinner scene are only images. The Macbeth-Antony comparison reveals one restriction of the Weird Sisters: they are countered by a certain force of, or related to, Banquo, and Macbeth acknowledges this counterforce. The Weird Sisters either refuse to equivocate about the prophecy of Banquo, or they are incapable of it. When Macbeth pressures them about this prophecy, even their "masters" have to show him a procession of kings. Garry Wills notes that "Macbeth has used conjuring power to *force* knowledge out of devils" (48). The Weird Sisters even have to comfort Macbeth on seeing the vision of Kings. Wills uses this evidence to counter the interpretation of the necromancy scene being Macbeth's psychology; he quotes the similar trope in *Doctor Faustus*, in which the demon Mephistopheles is reluctant to answer certain questions, and comforts Faustus with a show of his demonic power. Mephistopheles is likely countered by that same certain force, which also counters the Weird Sisters. The identity of this counterforce becomes clear if we connect the seed of Banquo with the celestial imagery in a pageant of a royal entry that welcomes a rightful king.

Many scenes in *Macbeth* are susceptible to the interpretation of pageantry. Wills reports complaints from critics on the Hecate scene, during which the play ends up

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"wandering into a musical world of witch songs. […] The claustrophobic world of Scottish lore becomes mere pageantry, though a pageantry of hell" (43). Knight even praises the fire imagery in the play, describing the vision of kings as "the ghastly pageant of kings unborn" (148). It is no coincidence that the play reminds its audience of pageantry. The usual function of a London pageant is to set up a fixed welcoming stage for the incoming sovereign in procession. "The earliest civic triumph […] made extensive use of the liturgical imagery of Advent" (Kipling, Wonderfull, 155). Kipling describes in detail the two "modest New Jerusalem pageants" for Richard in 1377 and Queen Anne in 1382 (155):

> On each of these occasions, the city placed an angelic castle with four turrets in Cheapside. so that the encounter between the royal visitor and the pageant might create a mimetic image of the entry of the Anointed One into the celestial Jerusalem, Beautiful maidens dressed in white scattered gold leaves and gold coins upon the royal visitors. Other angelic maidens offered them golden cups of red and white wine, which flowed from the sides of the structure. A mechanical angel atop the castle bowed and offered them a crown (155)

Liturgical imagery, such as that of Advent, was almost always crucial in civic triumphs, by which Pageant designers sanctify a royal entry, associating a sovereign with celestial images. If there is a sovereign in *Macbeth* that is welcomed in the fashion of a royal entry, this sovereign is protected by the source of the liturgical imagery, an imagery which the sovereign is presented chosen by heaven, and therefore is rightful to rule. Such a sovereign is not presented directly in the play, but the supernatural power that protects this unborn sovereign is Macbeth's and the Weird Sisters' weakness: the divine right of kings, which can be found in the King's speech

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before Parliament. The speech states that the sovereign is the center of the earth, illustrated by similes of family relationships and the human body.

The theme of the divine right justifies the existence of pageantry in the play, which critics often turn away from, or treat lightly. The purpose of pageantry is mostly to welcome a rightful sovereign, and *Macbeth* is a play with both excessive amount of such hints, and violations of the divine right. Shakespeare absorbs not only King James' idea of witchcraft, but also that of the divine right, an idea most prominent in the king's speech before Parliament:

> ...The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth: for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. There be three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of monarchy: one taken out of the word of God, and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are also compared to fathers of families: for a king is truly *parens patriae*, the politic father of his people. And lastly, kings are compared to the head of this microcosm of the body of man… (Stuart, 293-294)

First, according to King James, a king is God-chosen. Second, a king is a metaphorical father to the country. Third, a king is the metaphorical head of a human body. I have already discussed the divine power that suppresses Macbeth's guardian angel. Shakespeare extends the metaphor of father to that of a country as a family, home, and lives. When Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle, he comments that

> This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses. (1.6.1-3)

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Duncan's comment may seem to be only dramatic irony. Knight points out that "all images of love and procreation, supernaturally sanctioned, for the associations of 'temple-haunting' colour the whole of the speeches of Banquo and Duncan" (Muir 33). Here, Knight assumes that these natural images are applied to amplify the evil of violence and murder. The castle may refer to the image of a celestial castle in a pageant similar to that in the royal entry for Richard and Queen Anne. More importantly, the welcoming castle incurs the following Banquo's bird metaphor:

> This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
> By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
> Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,
> The air is delicate. (1.6.3-10)

The bird metaphor does not cease here. When Lady Macduff ask what her son will do without a "father," he wittily responds that he will survive, as a bird, with what he can get. The son claims that the traps are not for a poor bird like him. Their discussion then further shifts to the importance of a "father" before they are murdered. If there is a moral in this scene, it will probably be that the birds, a symbol of life and family, without a father, a king, is vulnerable to evil. The third comparison, the king as the head of a body, is even more explicit. Almost all the usurpers in play are decapitated, and the death of kings are all related to or associated with injuries to the head. Macbeth decapitates Macdonwald, and "fix'd his head upon our battlements" (1.2.23). "The spring, the head, the fountain of [Donabain's] blood" is stopped (2.3.96). Banquo is killed with "twenty trenched gashes on his head; [the] least a death to

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nature" (3.4.26-27). The first apparition is an armed head. Macduff literally beheads Macbeth, carrying the "usurper's cursed head" on stage (5.9.21). The symbol of heads and decapitation is potent in the play, in text as well as on stage. According to King James' idea of the divine right, Macbeth is the most unsuited to rule: he murders a rightful king, Duncan, and an ancestor, a father, of a rightful king, Banquo, the latter with the most unnatural death, wounds to the head. It is likely that Shakespeare applies the simile of a king being the head of a nation's body to these murders: a nation losing its sovereign is like a body without a head. Even if we do not recognize or become aware of the simile of a king being the head of a nation's body, these are still cruel murders. Among these violations of the divine right, one of them is stressed in King James' speech: a king's inheritance. King James specifies that questioning his ancient rights is to judge him "unworthy of that which [his] predecessors had and left [him]" (Stuart, 294).

Macbeth's violation of nature is threefold: in trading with the instruments of darkness, he violates the bond of God; in murders, the bond of inheritance, and the bond of humankind. Shakespeare does not specify the identity of the Weird Sisters, using generic and assembled witchcraft and demonic images, which is a regular trait of his fantastical dramatic elements. They are intended as the counterpart of angels in a pageant. The first prophecy scene, as a pageant, is an image of a message from heaven inverted: perhaps a riddle from hell. In a typical pageant, "angels and saints sometimes descended from heaven to greet the king and sponsor his journey to the celestial city" (Kipling, Wonderfull, 157). An angel's greeting is a celestial admission of a righteous king. On the other hand, Macbeth expresses bafflement when he meets the Weird Sisters: "Upon this blasted heath you stop our way/ With such prophetic

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greeting" (1.3.77-78). This greeting, as well as Weird Sisters' rituals in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, leads to critics' interpretations of the Weird Sisters' identity as witches or Norn Goddesses. Whatever Shakespeare intends them to be in this greeting, their function is to lead Macbeth astray, making him wayward, driving him away "from humanity. He is lonely, endures the uttermost torture of isolation. Yet still a bond unites him to men: that bond he would 'cancel and tear to pieces—the natural bond of human fellowship and love" (Knight, 154). Knight discusses the influence of evil and murder on Macbeth, as I have mentioned above. This bond of human fellowship and love is only a part of the bond that Macbeth would destroy. From a perspective of pageantry, the first prophecy scene is, besides Macbeth's misunderstanding of its equivocation, a greeting to the ancestor of the unborn king. It is a bond between God and the ancestor of a rightful sovereign that Macbeth would attempt to destroy with usurpation and murder. The sovereign that the Weird Sisters "greet with present grace and great prediction [of] noble having and of royal hope" may equivocally be Macbeth, but the rightful king is likely the unborn ruler absent at the moment (1.3.55-56). It is plain to see that Macbeth is not a rightful king because of his ambition. In this light, the Weird Sisters' actions are consistent with a possible goal: they incite Macbeth as their champion, enjoying his fall as a spectacle. It is, after the regicide, too late for Macbeth to realize that, due to this intended misunderstanding, he has his "eternal jewel [given] to the common enemy of man," violating his own bond of God as well (3.1.67-68).

Shakespeare uses demonic and witchcraft imagery to create inverted, desecrating pageants in *Macbeth*. The play is the defeat of a desecration in which an evil "working in terms of […] the abysmal deeps of a sprit-world untuned to human

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reality, withdraws the veil from the black streams which mill that consciousness of fear symbolized in actions of blood" (Knight 158). Violence signifies fear in *Macbeth*. This dark yet poetic imagery in *Macbeth* that Knight portrays is the reversal of the heavenly imagery in a civic triumph. However, this dark imagery, being the extreme opposite of holy imagery, is somehow as spectacular as the imagery of the pageant of a celestial castle. The equivocating Weird Sisters contrast with messianic angels. Instead of a messianic entry, Duncan's wounds are "a breach in nature [for] ruin's wasteful entrance" (2.3.111-112). The play is indeed Knight's "apocalypse of evil" (158). The evil force, represented by the Weird Sisters and Hecate, raises chaos and violence, both of which destroy their accomplice, Macbeth.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's calls to some higher beings are often ignored, or dismissed lightly by modern critics, because witchcraft is either considered a catering to King James' taste, or something mystical, too powerful to be understood. It is difficult to evaluate the degree of influence of these higher beings because no structure of or counterpart to them is acknowledged. I argue that witchcraft is part of the evil structure of this play, and the higher beings of witchcraft are a counterpart to the force of orderliness. Bradley makes a relevant general observation on the criticisms of the imaginative effect of the witch-scene:

> On the one hand the Witches, whose contribution to the 'atmosphere' of Macbeth can hardly be exaggerated, are credited with far too great an influence upon the action; sometimes they are described as goddesses, or even as fates, whom Macbeth is powerless to resist. And this is perversion. On the other hand, we are told that, great as is their influence on the action, it is so because they are merely symbolic representations of the unconscious or half-conscious guilt in Macbeth himself. And this is inadequate. (340-341)

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Bradley concludes that Shakespeare uses his sources of the idea of witchcraft as they are. However, he assumes that Shakespeare's sources, such as fairies or nymphs, mean nothing unless Shakespeare uses them, and Shakespeare uses merely the name Weird Sisters, not the idea of his source, such as nymphs or Fates. "His Witches owe all their power to the spirits; they are 'instruments of darkness'; the spirits are their 'masters' (4. 1. 63). "Fancy the fates having masters! Even if the passages where Hecate appears are Shakespeare's, that will not help the Witches; for they are subject to Hecate, who is herself a goddess or superior devil, not a fate" (Bradley 343). On the idea of witchcraft that Shakespeare uses, Katharine Mary Briggs praises Shakespeare's "perfect assimilation of his raw material" (77). Bradley points out a crucial idea of Shakespeare's Weird Sisters: they are subject to spirits, some more powerful beings. These spirits are the three apparitions in the conjuring scene. The apparitions, much like the Weird Sisters, do not or cannot equivocate the prophecy of the unborn sovereign when they are asked about this subject. In fact, the spirits show Macbeth a pageant of the vision of kings of Banquo's offspring. The power of witchcraft in the play seems easier to evaluate once there is a counterpart to it: righteous supernatural forces. Shakespeare's witchcraft in *Macbeth* is not only a catering to the king's taste; it is a supernatural enemy of the royal ancestry, an ancestry that Macbeth attempts to sabotage.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth respond to the evil force with their desecrating prayers and rituals. These prayers and rituals differentiate Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The latter never directly traffics with supernatural forces. Lady Macbeth is merely a worshipper who evokes supernatural imagery. She prays to the spirits in her soliloquy:

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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! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!' (1.5.40-54)

Her speech evokes the image of disintegrated body parts blood and breasts, offering them to the spirits' control. Lastly, she prays that the darkness is hidden from heaven and cannot be stopped. Macbeth has a similar prayer for secrecy:

Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. (1.4.50-53)

Likewise, the body parts, the eye and the hand fall apart, disputing with each other. To consider the eye and the hand merely as symbols of conscience and action will be an imagination too limited. This prayer for secrecy implies that Macbeth's evil is the opposite of pageantry, of which publicity is an important element; we may deduct from this that Macbeth is not a play about evil pageantry. It is more likely that the play prepares for the entry of a rightful sovereign, against whom Macbeth struggles. The unnaturalness of Macbeth's body parts echo his desecrating to heaven, the divine right, and humankind. The desecration of God, king, and human are always closely

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interconnected in the play. The image of light is only mentioned on one occasion: the dimming light, as in “husbandry in heaven; their candles are all out” (2.1.4-5). The lights of candles and stars are symbols of heaven. Banquo means that heaven is being economical to save candles, or stars, in the night. The only other scene that mentions candles is Macbeth’s famous mourning for Lady Macbeth, a scene in which the image of candles are already lit, and Macbeth cries: “out, out, brief candle” (5.5.23)! This cry for putting out the candle separates him from Lady Macbeth, who “has light by her continually; ’tis her command” (5.1.21-22). The doctor that attends Lady Macbeth announces his inability to cure her, but states that there are precedents of sleepwalkers dying “holily in their beds” (5.1.57). The doctor’s statement may imply some hope for Lady Macbeth. In this “light,” she probably does not commit suicide, but dies in bed peacefully. The disease that Lady Macbeth has and its cure are revealed by Malcolm:

> ’Tis call''d the evil:
> A most miraculous work in this good king,
> Which often, since my here-remain in England,
> I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
> Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
> All swoll’n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
> The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
> Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
> Put on with holy prayers: and ’tis spoken,
> To the succeeding royalty he leaves
> The healing benediction. (4.3.146-156)

The rightful sovereign and the divine power are combined in the miraculous healing power of the English king. It is unknown whether Macbeth has this disease of evil as Lady Macbeth does, but this heavenly power, which has an effect like that of light and stars, is what he is praying to avoid.

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Besides the desecration of praying to darkness, Macbeth's murders are a disgrace to the divine right and humankind, marked by excessive bloodshed. Being one of the frequently used symbols and images in *Macbeth,* blood signifies not only violence, but also what violence disrupts—the royal bloodline. Blood signifies the violent passion that Lady Macbeth invokes to make thick, to

> Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake [her] fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> The effect and it! (1.5.44-47)

She prays for her body to function unnaturally; to stop the bloodflow and the beating of her heart. There are "gouts of blood" that spring from the floating dagger, which is most-likely the blood of the murder-victim in Macbeth's imagination, or a sign of a bloodline (2.1.46). The blood of guilt is an image in Macbeth's mind that can not be washed away by "all great Neptune's ocean" (2.2.59). Knight points out that "the essentially murderous and destructive nature of the action is emphasized by recurrent blood-imagery" (161). Destruction is only part of what blood represents in the play. This destructive nature prompts us to ask, "what does Macbeth destroy?" The other blood-images, of life and of bloodline, appears too little in the play, and are destroyed so fast that such images are less prominent without proper context. Duncan has "silver skin laced with his golden blood" (2.3.110). Donalbain fears that "the near in blood, [the] nearer bloody" (2.3.138-139). "The spring, the head, the fountain of [Donabain's] blood" is by no means a sign of violence, but the origin of a bloodline (2.3.96). The imagery of the bloodline provides us a more specific bond than the general "natural bond of human fellowship and love" that Knight refers to: the natural

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bond of succession, of a sovereign and an heir (154). In this sense, “that great bond [which] keeps [him] pale” that Macbeth wishes to cancel and tear is probably not only his own bond of nature, but also the bond of royal succession of Duncan and Banquo (3.2.48-49). These bonds are the ones Macbeth attempts to cut with a real dagger as well as an imagined one. Both attempts fail, and both Duncan’s and Banquo’s heirs survive. Therefore, the blood symbolism is manifold: Macbeth’s guilt of violence will remain and cannot be washed away, but Banquo’s bloodline will keep flowing until “th’ crack of doom” (4.1.117). Through the use of the blood imagery, the meaning of the symbol of blood is confounded: blood in *Macbeth* signifies not only guilt and violence, but also a bloodline.

No scene like the procession of kings centralizes the theme of bloodline and heirs. The Weird Sisters, at Macbeth’s request, show him a vision of kings that looks like Banquo’s offspring. The scene resembles two elements that most critics treat incorrectly in *Macbeth*: pageantry and witchcraft. The vividness of the pageantry in this scene can hardly be captured with its text when we have only Macbeth’s description of it:

> Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!
> Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
> Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
> A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
> Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
> What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
> Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
> And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
> Which shows me many more; and some I see
> That two-fold balls and treble scepters carry:
> Horrible sight! Now, I see, 'tis true;
> For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
> And points at them for his. (4.1.112-124)

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In comparison, Alois. M. Nagler details how grand a royal procession is supposed to proceed in *Henry VIII*:

> The coronation procession in Act IV, for example, is announced by "a lively flourish of Trumpets. "First came two Judges, then the Lord Chancellor with the purse and mace. Next enter choristers singing, the Lord Mayor of London "bearing the mace," a Knight of the Garter wearing "a gilt copper crown," the Marquess Dorset "bearing a sceptre of gold, on his head a demi-coronal of gold," "with him the Earl of Surrey bearing the rod of silver with the dove crowned with an earl's coronet." Then proceed the Duke of Suffolk, his coronet on his head, bearing a long, white wand, as high steward; "A canopy borne by four of the Cinqueports; under it, the Queen in her robe"; "on each side her, the Bishops of London and Winchester"; "the old Duchess of Norfolk, in a coronal of gold, wrought with flowers, bearing the Queen's train"; finally, "Certain Ladies or Countesses, with plain circlets of gold with out flowers." As the procession crosses the stage, from one stage door to the other, two noblemen exchange their observations. (85)

The procession in *Macbeth*, if reproduced correctly, is supposed to be as grand as the one in *Henry VIII*. "The Elizabethan audience was fascinated by processions and pantomime pageants, and the players catered to this taste" (Nagler, 85). Why would *Macbeth* be an exception to its audience's taste? Shakespeare uses witchcraft in this play, which is also common and popular in other Jacobean plays. In this procession, he combines necromancy and pageantry. Besides the form of pageantry, the procession also contains a royal theme: the expectation of a rightful sovereign. Then again, a pageant is usually held for the celebration of a sovereign, so it is not surprising that a pageant in the play would celebrate such a theme. The prophecy of Banquo, Macbeth's fear for him, and the ghost in the banquet scene are all in this same category. The ghost of Banquo in the banquet scene especially shows Macbeth's recognition of a rightful sovereign, and his refusal of this figure. Macbeth announces that the attendees sit in their own social classes, according to which the ghost of Banquo sits in Macbeth's seat pantomimically. The scene is usually interpreted as a

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visualization of Macbeth's guilt. I would like to argue that the reason Macbeth revisits the Weird Sisters is that, after the banquet, he fears Banquo's prophecy may come true. He forces the Sisters to confirm the prophecy, through their masters, by the pageant of ghostly kings. The causality between the banquet scene and the necromancy scene underlines the theme of the bloodline.

The unborn sovereign expands our recognition of the good in the play, which in typical discussions is often limited to Macbeth's conscience. "Nevertheless the presentation of the good which counterbalances the evil is done most effectively through Macbeth and his wife, who are unwilling witnesses to the good they renounce" (Muir xlvi). Here, Muir argues that Macbeth is aware of the evil in his actions and thoughts. It is a valid assumption that the good they renounce is their own possession: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth could have achieved repentance. The assumption is supported by Duncan's, Banquo's, and Lady Macbeth's opinions toward Macbeth's nature. Macbeth's nature is his possible inner-good. If he struggles with his own conscience, it is a personal struggle. His own nature corresponds with his own evil, such as ambition or desire. Such evil is not on the same plane as the fate of an entire kingdom. Such a fate depends more on the action of a sovereign or a prince, and less on the action of a usurper. The fate of Scotland does not depend entirely on Macbeth's decision. His tragedy is certainly that of a struggle between his guilt and his desire, but it is also a struggle to obtain what is meant for the rightful sovereign by succession. His tragedy is a disregard for the royal inheritance.

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Conclusion

This thesis has examined the meaning of evil in *Macbeth* outside the tragic hero's guiltiness. The evil of the play is more than the idea of usurpation and murder spiraling inside Macbeth. While his inner struggle of conscience is both tragic and magnificent, it is not the only way to understand the Scottish Play. Macbeth's acts against royalty, nature, and religion are equally crucial when we consider the meaning of evil in this play. We pity Macbeth for his inner struggle, but his damage to Scotland is equally pitiable. We may miss the influence of Macbeth's damage if we see the evil in the play only as something inside Macbeth.

The evil in *Macbeth* has destroyed more than Macbeth himself. To understand the play as a whole, I suggest that the evil designates a target to destroy. The target, I assume, is nature and order, which are not uncommon in Holinshed's *Chronicles,* Shakespeare's main source of the Scottish Play. The inquiry into this issue helps us understand that there is a context of good that shapes the evil in the play. This good expands our understanding of the evil from that of the tragic hero's guilt and ambition to a force defying sovereign and light. This evil force exists not only in the plot, but also in the rhetoric and symbols in the play. These aspects of evil remain vague if we understand them only through the plot or characters in the play.

The play portrays opposing forces of good and evil larger than the personal defeat of a tragic hero. This thesis displays the possibility of examining these opposing forces from a perspective wider than those from which typical tragedies are viewed, but one that combines tragedy with early English tradition. Modern audiences are perhaps easily limited by the perspective of a personal tragedy, one that focuses on the catharsis of a singular character's mental journey. Even though *Macbeth* is a

tragedy, it is clearly more than a tragedy if read or watched with various themes in mind. From the perspective of pageantry, we can see that various declarations and celebrations of the rightful sovereign are reiterated in the play. The scenes that used to be considered catering to the king's taste, or flattering scenes irrelevant to the major themes in the play, are shown in this thesis to be part of a larger theme of the celebration of a rightful succession. In this sense, the plot of *Macbeth* can be relatively simple: Evil is defeated, and thus order is restored with promise of a brighter future for Scotland. The end of the play certainly means the end of Macbeth's terror, but it is not the termination of the battle of the opposing forces.

Some evidence that the evil in *Macbeth* is more than an inner guilt is discussed in the first chapter, Witch Symbolism, where I attempt to construct a structure of evil that establishes the relationship between the symbolism, witchcraft, and evil in the play, a structure which shows a hierarchy of evil that regulates the order of evil. I also argue for the importance of the Weird Sisters in the structure of evil: they are the herald of evil and its atmosphere with their prophetic greetings and blaspheming enchantments. They are a conduit between some greater supernatural evil and Macbeth; the Weird Sisters as a conduit is a crucial point which indicates that some evil being of a higher plane should be in the play, even though such a being may not directly influence the events of the play: such a supernatural force "haunts" the play. The supernatural induces horror and its expulsion different from those of Macbeth, or of any characters. The supernatural and its symbols, as well as Macbeth's inner struggle of conscience and ambition, are parts of the conflicting forces in the world of the play.

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The evil in the world reflects the storming struggle of Macbeth. Tortured by his conscience and ambition, Macbeth, isolated from society, suffers from persecutory delusion that prompts him to murder for his own safety. Furthermore, he is disturbed by a future without an heir because of the prophecy that has ignited his ambition. After Macbeth murders Duncan, he continues to murder for the peace of mind to be rid of the idea of such a future, desiring not only physical but also mental safety. His murderous actions cause chaos and mayhem in Scotland, resulting in a vicious cycle of misery in both himself and the world on the stage. Even though Macbeth causes a disaster, there is evil other than him that has already existed before him, which is the supernatural evil and its tools of darkness, the Weird Sisters. The evil and its horror in *Macbeth* is not complete if we do not also take these supernatural elements into consideration as part of the structure of evil. In the completeness of the horror, Macbeth reveals not only the horror of a mind torn with conflicting ambition and duty, or conscience and desire, but also the horror of disruption to nature and the order of the world.

I agree with Knight that the structure of evil produces an atmosphere of evil. I conclude that there are three symbols in the play: storms, battlefields, and Macbeth. The purpose of applying symbolism in the play is to understand how the mayhem of the conflict is represented in the play. I speculate that the mayhem in the play may indicate some background of how the Scottish Play was born: It was a doubtful time when one was fearful that “we are traitors/ And do not know ourselves” (4.2.18-19). Being a traitor to the sovereign at the time, King James, or perhaps a traitor to the king’s religion, could lead to serious accusations. Such accusations were never unrelated to witchcraft, which, by the political and religious authorities, was

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considered a craft dealing with devil: a craft of treason and apostasy. Therefore, evil is both detrimental to the order of secular government and religious organization. *Macbeth* is thus likely the play that preserves most precisely the authoritative opinion on witchcraft of the English Church and ruler in the early seventeen century.

Such resentment toward evil is perhaps too distant from modern audiences, or any other that is not familiar with theocracy. The evil of witchcraft, recalled by concurrent historical event during the play's time such as the Gunpowder Plot and its following witch hunt, has lost its bite in the current of time. Witches now are as horrific as carved pumpkins on Halloween: people do not fear witches as they used to in the Jacobean era; witchcraft has ceased to be a public concern or political threat since the fading of witch hunts. Witchcraft has lost its "magic" of fear. This loss significantly affects *Macbeth* in a way that makes the play, if presented without change, less fearful. Since fear is the prime emotion the play triggers for its dramatic effect, such a loss diminishes or significantly alters the impact of the play.

In order to provoke fear without an idol of evil, it is no wonder that the main focus of almost all modern productions is the inner torture of the tragic hero. Macbeth is a valiant general and a vicious usurper, a brave warrior and a cruel murderer, a dealer with the devil and a sinner with regret. He is indeed a complex character to enact, being in remorse and agony for murdering his beloved king in one scene, and in rage for regicide in the next one. It is no doubt that Macbeth himself could be presented as responsible for all the evil in the play, but his callings and prayers for cruelty and covertness indicate his association with the structure of evil, in which Macbeth is a pawn, not a king; he is isolated from human society, not the entire world

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in general. Macbeth's link with the supernatural defines his role as a vanguard in the conflict between evil and the good.

In a similar way, the link with the supernatural shapes the agony and ecstasy of Lady Macbeth. Her passionate prayers to invite evil into herself is what makes and ruins her. Her love for her husband and her desire to be a queen compensate for the initial lack of motivation in Macbeth, who still cherishes his position in society and hesitates to risk what he has for the crown. Unlike Macbeth, Lady Macbeth seems redeemable at the end, possibly dying in her sleep with grace. One of the possible explanations for this alternative fate is that she has not had direct contact with the Weird Sisters: she is excluded from the structure of evil, though she is a worshiper of it. Before her death, she constantly keeps a "light" near her, a symbol of good that marks the end of darkness and dawn of the good. Her light is the first illumination alone against darkness, hinting at the end of the reign of darkness and the beginning of that of a rightful sovereign.

The play constantly hints at the expectation of a rightful sovereign. While most modern critics consider this expectation mere flattery to King James, it is a crucial part of the force against the structure of evil in the play. The rightful sovereign is more than a secular ruler like Duncan or Malcolm, who declares a coronation as a king after Macbeth. The sovereign is a lieutenant of the force of nature and order, who gains authority and rights through succession of a king's bloodline. The duty of a rightful sovereign is also to protect the sovereign's subjects against villains and traitors, a function which is demonstrated by negative examples in the play: the absence of a rightful sovereign leads to a world of horror where none is safe. The world of Macbeth is one of such a lack, in which a rightful sovereign has yet to arrive,

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according to the prophecy of Weird Sisters. The expectation of this rightful sovereign is expressed thrice through the Weird Sisters, twice in prophecy and once in a necromancy.

The most likely candidate for rightful sovereign is Banquo's offspring. Two points can support this argument. First are the aforesaid prophecy and necromancy. The Weird Sisters are, without doubt, supernaturally evil. They are honest in front of Banquo, the ancestor of the rightful sovereign. The Weird Sisters do not or cannot equivocate the prophecy about Banquo, even when Macbeth inquiries about it in the necromancy scene. In my assumption, this proves that the supernatural evil in the play is overpowered by another supernatural force protecting Banquo. It also proves that there are two conflicting supernatural forces in the play. Second, Banquo, the ancestor of his offspring, is deemed by Macbeth to be an archenemy of more concern than anyone else. Macbeth's specific hostility has a predecessor in Shakespeare's next play, *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which Antony, like Macbeth, is overpowered by Octavius Caesar, because the supernatural force protecting Antony is no match for that protecting Octavius. In a similar way, Macbeth, a usurper, can not truly defeat and replace a rightful sovereign.

The sovereignty of the royal bloodline is the center of the power hierarchy in the play. The power hierarchy is not only social but also supernatural: it expresses the idea that a subject, like Macbeth, should not dare to seize the role of the king, which is not rightfully his; likewise, man should not be arrogant to challenge his revealed destiny. This idea of sovereignty expands the theme of the divine right of kings from maintaining social classes to stabilizing religious order. From the perspective of maintaining social order, we may conclude that the moral of *Macbeth* is to be not

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proud or ambitious. In this sense, *Macbeth* could be a play of traditional values, similar to that of a morality play. This moral of humility corresponds with the political notion of ruler of the Jacobean era, such as that in the king's speech to Parliament, in which King James argues against any challenge to his political power granted him through his heritage.

In *Macbeth*, the sovereignty is declared in such a way that interests the Elizabethan audience in a familiar tradition: the performance of a pageant. The pageantry in the necromancy scene, in which the Weird Sisters show Macbeth a procession of ghostly kings of Banquo's offspring, shares a grandeur similar to that of the pageantry in other of Shakespeare's plays. Critics and interpreters like G. Wilson Knight and Garry Wills comment diversely on the pageantry in the Scottish play. Some critics consider it, Wills reports, out of place for a tragedy; Knight praises its imagery (Wills, 43). I argue that Shakespeare utilizes pageantry in *Macbeth* to iterate the legitimacy of the Divine right of kings and, conjointly, the legitimacy of King James' reign. In this thesis, I compare Elizabethan pageantry with the necromancy scene in the play, concluding that it is possible for the play to feature pageantry in its early performances. Furthermore, the pageantry in the play supports the possibility that *Macbeth* centers around the idea of the structure of the good defeating the structure of evil. It also validates the assumption that the evil force in the play has a target: To destroy the sovereignty and the royal bloodline that empowers it.

The assumption of the target of evil enriches the meaning of Macbeth's murderous attempts. By locating Macbeth's murders in the structure of evil, we may conclude that Macbeth's evil is more than an inner immorality or tragic flaw like greed or ambition: his evil is also the laceration of a natural bond, the bond between a

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father and a son, between an ancestor and his descendants, and between a king and his subjects. By regicide, Macbeth tears up the bond between both a father and a son, and between a king and his subjects, and in the murder of Banquo, the bond between an ancestor and his descendants. These murders grant Macbeth a crucial political advantage, securing him the position of king and eradicating his closest political opponent, but, solely as political murders, they do not spark as much fear as acts of social and natural destruction. The primary horror of the Scottish Play is, I assume, the horror of evil destroying humanity led by a rightful sovereign.

The assumption of the destructive horror involves the questionable definition of the good which protects humanity in the play. In favor of the rightful sovereign, Shakespeare cuts from his main source, Holinshed's *Chronicle*, ten years of good reign by Macbeth, as well as Banquo's accomplice in the regicide. The moral of humility is polarized; unconditional support for the monarchy is mandatory for the subjects, a moral in accordance with the political ideas of King James. *Macbeth* requires more context within historical sources and criticisms if we aim to locate its position in a moral spectrum. By this relocation, we may have a clearer outline of what the collective emotion that this thesis fails to produce. Whether or not Shakespeare wholeheartedly supported monarchy, he surely comprehended the concurrent social atmosphere during a time of an obsession with witch-hunts, and the political stance of the authorities no doubt affected this atmosphere when he was writing *Macbeth*.

The theme of a rightful succession is more obvious through the combined examination of both textual and non-textual evidence. Shakespeare has taken material from a variety of sources, literary and non-literary. The pageantry in the play is an

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example of both. The pageantry scene that is supposed to be an eye-catcher for its audience loses its full charm in a written text. A challenge for every modern production of the play is thus to recreate successfully the pageantry scene with its corresponding meanings: rightful succession, order, and nature.

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