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"BOUNDLESS INTEMPERANCE":

MACBETH, MODERATION, AND SOCIAL NORMS IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA

by

KATHLEEN M. PADILLA

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts
in
The Department of English
to
The School of Graduate Studies
of
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

2017

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THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Submitted by Kathleen M. Padilla in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English and accepted on behalf of the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies by the thesis committee.

We, the undersigned members of the Graduate Faculty of The University of Alabama in Huntsville, certify that we have advised and/or supervised the candidate on the work described in this thesis. We further certify that we have reviewed the thesis manuscript and approve it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

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ABSTRACT

The School of Graduate Studies
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Degree Master of Arts College/Dept. Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences/English.

Name of Candidate Kathleen M. Padilla.

Title "Boundless Intemperance": *Macbeth*, Moderation, and Social Norms in the Early Modern Era.

In William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Macbeth insists, "Th'expedition of my violent love / Outran the pauser, reason" (2.3.107-108). These lines can be attributed to Macbeth's penchant for excess that overpowers his ability to reason. Reason allows men to live harmoniously within a community, and the early modern era constructed safeguards to ensure men acted within prescribed conventions to prevent the collapse of the government. In this thesis, I will address Macbeth's inability to reason due to his immoderacy and the resulting consequences to the state. Thus, this paper argues that the behavioral extremes depicted by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are detrimental to the domestic and political arenas and justify the moderate behavioral boundaries set in place by the early modern society. Such a reading illustrates the harmful effect one individual's behavior has on the state, and the modern world may be reminded of the perils of ceding reason for desire.

Abstract Approval: Committee Chair ______

Department Chair ______

Graduate Dean ______

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INTRODUCTION

"Double, double, toil and trouble" (4.1.10)

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* reflects the difficulty of constructing self-identity in the midst of societal turbulences. The early modern period encompasses several growing pains for English society. First, as the first long-reigning female English ruler, Elizabeth remained unwed and childless; as a result, Elizabeth I's reign confounded women's roles. Politically, this created concerns with monarchical succession as well as how a female, thought to be possessed with limited reason, could effectively govern without a man by her side to ensure the country was governed well. Furthermore, James I's accession to the throne confounded what it meant to be English. The unification of Scotland and England under one ruler created political tensions with Parliament, as Scottish advisors were added to James's cabinet. In addition, James I reiterated the ancient philosophy of king as a father to his subjects, thereby creating an overlap between the domestic and political spheres. Catholics and Protestant differences still pitted belief systems against each other. Although both monarchs of the era, Elizabeth I and James I, attempted leniency and tolerance through moderate religious laws, events like the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 brought religious incongruity to the forefront. Protestant leaders still argued amongst themselves about divine law, while charges of heresy continued to be brought against Catholic zealots.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare points out the binary extremes of human behavior by questioning what it is to be a man, a subject, and a king in the early modern era. In order to understand these binary poles Shakespeare points out so blatantly, Joshua Scodel offers an answer: "Classical in origin, the notion of a virtuous mean between two vicious extremes figured crucially in the writings of educated early modern English authors" (1). Consequently, *Macbeth* examines the social norms of early modern society by recognizing the 'vicious extremes' found in the text. The frequent binary pairings commence in the first scene of the play as the bearded women incant, "When the battle's lost and won" (1.1.4) and continues into the last act when Macbeth rails against the bearded women who, "lie[] like truth" (5.5.42).

These binary constructs throughout the play mimic the extreme viewpoints that characterize the era. To counteract this societal turbulence, early modern England's leaders, both political and religious, preached that a moderate way of living was necessary in every aspect of society. Alexandra Shepard describes the flood of advice books in the early modern era which highlights the importance of moderation for men: "Balance was required both externally, in terms of handling social and political interaction, and internally, in terms of directing the potentially chaotic natural impulses" (30). While Shepard emphasizes early modern men, society required balance of the extremes in every facet of life, whether male, female, noble, or peasant. However, this was not an easy task. Thus, I argue that the extremes of social behavior depicted in *Macbeth* are detrimental to the domestic and the political arenas and justify the moderate boundaries set in place by early modern society. Moderate living promotes success in life.

Because the early modern era's social constructs adapted many of the classic teachings, contemporary scholars often employ Greek and Roman philosophers to make sense of Shakespeare's texts. In addition, Shakespearean theatergoers would have been familiar with the influences of Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, Cicero, Ovid, and others. Bryan Adams Harp and Unhae Langis both examine the definition of virtue according to Aristotle. Harp defines the multiple definitions of "man" within Shakespeare's text and how these definitions change as Macbeth's interpersonal relationships and emotions begin to cloud his ability to reason on his own. Langis, on the other hand, links virtue and ambition as two opposing forces which ultimately causes the downfall of Macbeth. John Uhr frames the tragedy's universal appeal in integrity. He reasons, "Macbeth as a whole, continues to teach the challenges of aligning personal and public integrity" (280). Although each of these critics uses the classical definition of virtue, they minimize the importance of moderation in stabilizing the early modern social structure.

The introduction of the literary monster often depicts social upheaval, and *Macbeth* demonstrates how the failure of individual moderation dismantles the social structure the patriarchal hierarchy of the early modern era imposes. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen asserts, "The monster is born … as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment … [and] quite literally incorporates fear, desire, [and] anxiety" (4). Shakespeare's plays abound with many different forms of monsters, but because of the lack of physical monstrous attributes, *Macbeth* is often left out of Shakespearean anthologies that deal with the monstrous. And yet, analyzing the arguments of the classic philosophers, deeds, just as much as physical appearance, signify the monster. As an example, Cicero notes, "For what difference is there between a man transformed into a beast and one who retains

human shape but exhibits the monstrous behavior of the beast (*OO* 111). Consequently, unlike Richard III, a usurper whose physical attributes announce his monstrous tendencies, the monsters in *Macbeth* (except for the bearded women) portray no outer deformity.

Accordingly, this thesis examines how the characters in *Macbeth* oppose normative roles set down by early modern society and expose the monstrous beasts that lie within each individual. By specifically establishing the ideals of domestic and political roles that existed in the early modern era, the deviant behaviors of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth highlight the necessity for moderation in all actions. For instance, the ideal woman performs her role as wife and mother, taking care to allow her husband to moderate her behavior, for women were prone to excess due to their cold and moist humours;[1] whereas, a husband was required to provide food and shelter to his family, and to moderate his wife's actions. However, in *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth assumes the role of the dominant spouse, instigating extreme actions, and turning domestic tranquility into political turmoil. To prevent this turmoil, the domestic roles of husband and wife are set down in the literature of the day, including sermons, advice books, and widely distributed pamphlets. Similarly, the literature of the day also governed political roles such as subjects, advisors, magistrates, and rulers. Those who could not comply with the ideals were publicly punished. This is the ultimate fate of the Macbeths.

Chapter 1 of this thesis defines the key terms associated with my project. For example, the concept of moderation in both classical and early modern philosophies will be surveyed. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* establishes a solid foundation, and the

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[1] For specific details on the humors, see Ian Maclean. *The Renaissance Notion of*

writings of Cicero and Plato reinforce the necessity for reason and moderation in all actions. Temperate actions guided by reason allow humans to live in concert with each other, and communities created by reason separates man from beasts. Within these communities are support structures to help an individual maintain temperance and reason. These support structures include maintaining self-control, accepting advice and adhering to unwritten laws, and ultimately subjecting oneself to written law. These control measures ensure moderate behavior prevails.

Chapter 2 explores deviance and aberrant behaviors by employing monster theory. Although physical appearance often signals the monstrous, the early modern period begins to discern certain excessive actions as monstrous. Just as medieval monsters were identified (and identifiable) by their differences, they also indulged in excessiveness; dragons hoarded treasure, giants overindulged in food and drink, and foreigners had the propensity for excessive sexual appetites. These gross and unusual behaviors that accompanied monstrous forms rebelled against what society deemed the norm. Thus, the monster was often banished to the edges and boundaries of polite society. Since the monster resides at the borders of acceptable norms, this chapter invokes the monstrous to define excess. *Macbeth* begins by introducing the bearded women as figures of monstrous excess who infiltrate every aspect of the play. The witches reside in an open place and only show themselves when they want and to whom they want. These border creatures, as I shall argue, ultimately influence the characters towards excess.

Chapter 3 showcases *Macbeth* and the social norms of the early modern era within the domestic sphere of the home. This chapter explores the characters and the

social roles of husband, wife, and friend as support measures to ensure excessive behaviors are tempered. The domestic space in *Macbeth,* Dunsinane, transitions from a home into the seat of government and neighborly hospitality turns to murder. This devolution can be attributed to the confusion of social roles within the home. I will argue that Lady Macbeth drives Macbeth to an excess of masculinity as a man, but she also drives him toward becoming a feminized husband. The lack of moderation in the relationship between Macbeth and his wife contributes to the loss of Banquo as a friend—a necessary component of the ideal man. These unnatural actions in the domestic space of the home lead to the monstrous ends that befall the characters.

Chapter 4 focuses on the characters as political figures: citizen, subject, king, and advisor. While Duncan exudes the qualities of an ideal monarch, Macbeth transforms from a valiant and worthy subject/citizen to a tyrant king. This shift directly relates to Macbeth's unrestrained decisions and the absence of moderation and moderators to assist in restraining his desires. In fact, Macbeth's advisors encourage his excessive behaviors and perpetuate his conversion toward deviancy and monstrosity. Only when Macbeth's monstrous actions are curbed can the country safely begin to heal.

Exploring the binary oppositions of excess and the moderation that falls between will help illuminate *Macbeth* and explain why the play continues to hold its place in the literary canon, why the play serves as part of the national core curriculum in high schools, and why this tragedy is constantly revisited and revived. For thousands of years, the necessity for man's moderation of action has been pronounced; Aristotle insists, "The fact is that the greatest crimes are caused by excess" (*P* 2.VII). As the early modern era progressed through the tensions of constructing roles within an ever-changing society, the

people of the early modern era turned to translations of the classic texts to assist in understanding man's role in the world, whether the study was for literary, religious, or political reasons. In fact, many of themes of *Macbeth* are as relevant in the twenty-first century as they were in the sixteenth century. Behavioral excesses abound in the reality shows we watch, and excesses explain the constant cry for transparency from the government. *Macbeth* emphasizes the necessity of moderation.

CHAPTER I

Moderation and the Early Modern Era:

"Boundless intemperance / In nature is a tyranny" (4.3.68)

Not only would Shakespeare's audiences have been familiar with the concept of moderation, but moderation was the way of life, both socially and politically in the early modern era. The concept of moderation helps shape what those in powerful positions thought of as the ideal society and keeps those not in power subsumed beneath the constraints of both unwritten societal norms and written law. Those who lived moderate lives flourished, while those who gave into excessive desires were often publicly constrained or condemned. Restraining excessive behaviors was a three-fold effort. A person was thought to contain reasonable judgment within himself; however, if an individual fails to moderate his own actions, the neighborhood intercedes. In this early modern form of peer pressure, forms of social coercion could consist of constant monitoring, ostracism, or, in worst case scenarios, banishment. Formal written laws only took effect for particularly heinous crimes or as a final effort to curb excessive behavior when other less formal methods failed. In his survey of political moderation, Ethan H. Shagan traces the meaning of moderation from the middle ages to the early modern era. He finds that the word "moderation" had a dual definition. In addition to the significance of self-control and temperance within an individual, the word also came to mean

restraint, control, and governance (11). In other words, just in case an individual could not regulate his excessive desires, the state would step in and construct written laws to do so. Consequently, as far as regulating behaviors, the individual and the state had much in common. Early modern youths were sent to universities to learn to regulate their own behaviors and thus becoming productive members of society. Alexandra Shepard mentions, "The universities were … treated as bastions of idealized manhood whose orderly government held national significance" (36). It was in the structured educational systems that Englishmen were introduced to the concept of English ideal society, the classic philosophers, and their writings. Shepard's term "idealized manhood" requires some explanation. In classical writings on man's role in a society, authors emphasize the ideal, or in Aristotle's term, "the good man." Philosophers recognized that the ideal did not truly exist, although, one needed to be vigilant in action and thought to pursue the cultural ideal. The early modern era accepted this same premise, for Keith Wrightson insists, "[Englishmen] portrayed society as far as it ought to be, providing a prescription for an ideal harmony in social relations… but even its most enthusiastic protagonists knew very well that it was an ideal, an aspiration" (19). Although perfection never existed, the models discussed by philosophers and authors of the early modern period accentuated moderate stereotypes as deterrents against defiance of social norms and excessive behavior.

The Classic Definition of Moderation

Aristotle insists that a man knows the right course of action, and that he must work towards becoming a useful individual, both politically and socially using experience

and education. Aristotle charges that a man will become an excellent man, and thereby be able to perform one's duties as set down by society, if he possesses the qualities of courage, generosity, modesty, honesty, and a multitude of other moderate traits. Consequently, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* establishes one of the foundational learning tools of the early modern era for determining man's role in his society.[2] A key factor within this text involves governance of oneself. Aristotle analyzes human nature and develops a list of actions, behaviors, and codes of conduct to derive the concept of the mean. As Aristotle defines it, every action, behavior, and conduct should be aimed at achieving the chief good and only one who possesses moderate qualities can achieve success. Aristotle's moderate qualities are balanced actions that lie somewhere between two undesirable traits: excess and deficiency. Although Aristotle uses the term deficiency, too much of a deficiency involves an excess of an undesirable trait. For instance, honesty produces the good, balanced mean between the excesses Aristotle labels loquacity and secrecy (*NE* 150-151). Shakespeare employs the excess of secrecy in *Macbeth* as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth conceal both their thoughts and their actions: "False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (2.1.82). Thus, in *Macbeth*, secrecy obstructs honesty as the Macbeths' hide their true forms behind masks of civility. Furthermore, critics of Aristotle often interpret Aristotle's moderate traits within individuals as equidistant between excess and deficiency; however, Aristotle vigilantly protests this. Although the trait of honesty lies equidistant between secrecy and

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[2] The ancient Greeks and Romans wrote for a very specific audience—men and citizens (who happened to be men). I have kept with these notions insofar as the early modern era kept with this original thinking. As Amanda Flather insists, "People might revise or reject normative notions, but the two are not wholly separable. Ideology shaped individual perception and experience of space in early modern society, even if the links between them were far from straightforward" (346).

loquacity, each individual person will not fall exactly center because “neither the best nature nor the best disposition either is or is thought to be the same for all” (*NE* 206). Thus, reactions to social pressures vary according to each individual and his role in society. In addition, per Aristotle, man’s every action in society should always “seek some good” (*NE* 95). Aristotle reasons that education and (proper) experience should keep someone on the correct path—ever aiming for the chief good. Thus, as noted above, early modern English society places a heavy emphasis on the education system. However, Aristotle does not deliver a remedy in the *Ethics* for those who go off course.

Marcus Tullius Cicero’s writings reiterate Aristotle’s view on moderation but further considers how laws are put in place to punish those who deviate from societal norms. Although Aristotle mentions the law of nature in *Ethics*, Cicero expands on the concept of the law of nature which presents guidelines for correct conduct. Cicero begins by discussing the law given to all men - the law of nature. He maintains that “For those who have been endowed by nature with reason have also been endowed with right reason” (*The Republic* 108). In this way, Cicero maintains that man understands right from wrong, and he possesses the inner capacity to make correct decisions. These correct decisions become framed into laws of the state. As Cicero insists, “Law means drawing a distinction between just and unjust, formulated in accordance with that most ancient and important of all things—nature; by her, human laws are guided in punishing the wicked and defending and protecting the good” (*The Republic* 126). Punishment, to Cicero, imposes a necessary deterrent against one’s inner desires. In other words, although man knows right and appropriate behavior from birth, Cicero argues, corruption and vice leads him to excess. More importantly, man’s giving in to excess manifests into beastliness.

While Cicero and Aristotle demonstrate the necessity of moderation for man to become a productive member of society, Michel Foucault uses their teachings to trace how desire, with an emphasis on sexual pleasure, leads to the construction of societal norms. Specifically, the classic philosophers place food, drink, and sex as the animalistic pleasures (*akolasia*), and Foucault, explores these pleasures by tracing how societies respond to individuals who give in excessively to desire. He finds, with little deviation between authors, there were three separate entities governing excessive desire: written law, unwritten societal norms, and self-control. As an example, *Macbeth* presents characters that neglect all three of these guiding entities. Because of lack of self-control, the Macbeths yield reason for desire. As the tragedy unfolds, the audience observes the Macbeths' failure to adhere to societal norms, and finally the play itself justifies how written law must intervene. Foucault maintains that written laws were less influential in maintaining correct behavior than the unwritten societal norms. More men were concerned with the societal reaction of the ability (or inability) to govern oneself. As implied in Foucault's analysis, one can establish a hierarchy of control over desire. First, one controls oneself. When that fails, societal norms dictate correct actions. When both of these fail, written laws and punishment result. Consequently, by controlling one's desires, one could live in concert with others by respecting and keeping the laws, both written and unwritten, that governed society.

Moderation, Excess, and the Community

Community separates the human from the beast. Although Aristotle identifies humans as both social and political animals, living within a community with established

governing principles created by man's ability to reason elevates mankind over the lesser animals. In his *Politics*, Aristotle maintains, "But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state" (*P* 1.2). Conforming to the social norms of the state safeguards both the individual and the entire body politic. Wrightson confirms that the early modern era had a "moral community" built into social groups. Neighbors and religious figures within the community kept its members from pursuing behaviors that were detrimental to the group. The community tended to turn its back on those individuals who were "quarrelsome and litigious, who abused their neighbors, spread malicious gossip, caused general nuisance, were drunk and idle, mistreated their wives and children, took in and harboured suspicious strangers, or caused unnecessary expense to the parish" (54). Good men did not allow excesses to override good behavior either in themselves or in their neighbors. Good behavior was moderation. Of course, excesses did exist, and Shakespeare points this out in many of his plays by using the fool, who often warns the protagonist of political reality and individual flaws. In *Macbeth*, the drunken Porter warns of the dangers of lack of moderation. Specifically, the Porter censures those who imbibe too freely in drink:

> Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes: It provides the desire but it takes away the performance. Therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him and it mars him; it sets him on and takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens him, makes him stand to and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him (2.3.26-33).

Shakespeare creates laughter from the issues that arise from not following the rule of moderation and drinking to excess, but, as *Macbeth* illustrates, not all excesses were a laughing matter. As we shall see, excessive behaviors result in disloyalty, treason, regicide, and tyranny.

Excesses, according to Aristotle and Cicero, manifest in every aspect of life, and it takes a man of moral standing to overcome the temptation and dwell in moderation. An excess goes "beyond what is usual, acceptable, or right" ("excess"), and even the most desirable quality can be tragic when taken to its excess; for as Aristotle points out, "for the bad belongs to what is unlimited" (*NE* 117). With this in mind, the possibility exists to have an excess of a valuable trait. For instance, Aristotle considers courage a moderate trait, as its result manifests in excellence. Thus, an excess of courage results in a failure, as courage falls between rashness (an excess of courage) and cowardice (a deficiency of courage) (*NE* 118). Like the civilizations of the ancients, in the early modern era extreme behaviors did still exist, even with the emphasis on moderation. As stated previously, Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* does not delve beyond the ideal form; however, Cicero insists that excessive desire often leads to war (*OO* 112). In the early modern era, violence, Shepard posits, "was a resource open to appropriation and abuse, and in its most extreme forms violence was deployed by men in ways which deliberately contravened prescriptive tenets of self-government" (128). Violence was a way in which a man loses control of self-moderation. Thus, it was a form of hypermasculinity—to be more than a man was a dangerous extreme. The ideal reality, then, requires moderation of all actions and behaviors. The example of cowardice-courage-rashness can also be described in terms of dichotomy or binary opposition.

Excessive traits oppose the societal norms expected in the early modern era, and the significant number of binary oppositions present in *Macbeth* encapsulate the meaning of excess. Critics often refer to "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.10) when analyzing the play, highlighting the importance of the profuse number of binary oppositions throughout *Macbeth*. Led by Ferdinand Saussure, structuralists claim that one cannot define one word (or concept) without describing its opposite; for instance, women's roles in the early modern era were based solely on their relationship to men. Although the study of opposition theory tapered off in the late twentieth century, as Marcel Danesi points out, new analyses have increased the use of this theory to further explore culture.[3] A society's culture hinges on the inhabitants of that culture, their customs, their habits, their laws, and the roles they play. In *Macbeth* and in the early modern era, the culture imposes binary oppositions as definitions: man/woman, public/private, domestic/political, natural/unnatural. However, as Anne Lake Prescott acknowledges, "At times the pairing of opposites … functionally indicates some disquietude or desire" (83). The desires depicted in *Macbeth* translate into behavioral excesses. For instance, Macbeth's courage becomes rashness and his confidence becomes fearlessness.

One pairing of binary opposition in *Macbeth* includes gender. Social constructs define the measure of moderation required to be integrated into a community and gender roles and behaviors are a significant component of social constructs. In fact, Judith Butler maintains, "genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within a contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly

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[3] A recent example includes Shahd Alshammari. "Problematic Politics Of Meanings In Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes." *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches To Cultural Diversity*, vol.14, no. 2, 2013, pp. 13-18. *Academic Search Complete*.

punished" (522). With this in mind, *Macbeth* provides a cautionary warning against excessive masculinity or femininity. Although Callaghan speculates, "Lady Macbeth's real function is to create and address the difference between masculinity and femininity: Macbeth is not enough of a man, and she is more than a woman" (124), Callaghan's statement overlooks the concepts of moderation and excess regarding this particular dichotomy. Notably, Robert Kimbrough examines the ideals of man and woman within the early modern era. Written when gender studies was in its infancy, Kimbrough identifies the ideal traits of masculine and feminine in the early modern era: "to be 'manly' is to be aggressive, daring, bold, resolute, and strong" while "to be 'womanly' is to be gentle, fearful, pitying, wavering, and soft" (177). He adroitly allies these descriptions with the term "natural" to contrast with the witches' hermaphroditic unnaturalness. Kimbrough offers a provocative picture of Shakespeare's insistence on the definition of humanism, an intriguing combination of masculine and feminine characteristics: "[Shakespeare's] works move toward liberating humanity from the prisons created by inclusive and exclusive gender labeling" (175). Peter Erickson agrees. He insists, "The separation [of masculine and feminine] prevents fruitful coordination of masculine and feminine elements, thereby blocking psychic wholeness in the male" (3). The coordination Erickson alludes to prevents either gender from delving into the excesses of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity. Thus, a picture of Shakespeare's works emerges: that of moderate individuals with a mixture of feminine traits to balance the masculine traits. When characters neglect the union of masculinity and femininity, as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth demonstrate, excessive traits appear.

To construct the ideal of the early modern man in England with the moderate behaviors expected by society, one only needs to turn to the education system of that time. The education of early modern men was tied a humanist vision of society; as Plato insists, "By maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing you produce citizens of good character" (125). The education system not only emphasized the classics and these types of teachings, but also taught the social and moral norms necessary for men to become productive members of society. On the other hand, women in the early modern era were rarely educated and were legally bound to a man, whether it be her father or husband. Although many pictures emerge of their completely dependent role, around the private sphere of the home, women were required to be a helpmate and partner to their husband. However, men were publicly compelled to keep their wives and daughters in check. Keith Wrightson, on husbands and wives, explains, "The picture that emerges [of marriage] indicates a *private* existence of a strong complementary and companionate ethos, side by side with, and often overshadowing, theoretical adherence to the doctrine of male authority and *public* female subordination" (92). Delineating the private sphere of the home from the public sphere of civil authority also dates to the ancient classics.

Shakespeare confounds domestic and political spheres in *Macbeth.* The classic writings of the Greeks and Romans insisted that man existed to be part of a community. Within the confines of either the private or public, Cicero contends, "For there is no aspect of life public or private, civic or domestic, which can be without its obligation, whether in our individual concerns or in relations with our neighbor" (4). A member of society was expected to uphold societal norms no matter the situation. In fact, many of

Shakespeare's works can be classified as either a political play or a domestic play. Several of the comedies are often considered under the genre of domestic, whereas the histories are usually political. The domestic sphere allows for companionship between men and women. They are helpmates together, with each having duties and responsibilities within the home. The political realm belongs to men.

Therefore, under the influence of the classical scholars, since man cannot be all things to all people all the time, there must be a hierarchy of where one's duty belongs. Cicero reasons, "if a contrast and comparison were to be made to find out where most of our moral obligation is due, country would come first, and parents; … next come children and the whole family … finally our kinsmen" (58). Perhaps this hierarchy identifies the confusion Lady Macbeth feels when she says, "Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done't" (2.212-13). Since women were not accepted in the public sphere, her father would come first in her moral duties. Although *Antony and Cleopatra* displays the tropes of a love story, both figures are rulers in their own right. *Macbeth* confounds even this thought, as it is difficult to separate Macbeth as king from Macbeth as husband due to the influence of Lady Macbeth. The ideals of gender, norms for the early modern era, reflect Aristotle's balance between the extremes and Cicero's concept of Natural law—that men know who they are and know the right course of action for a productive society. The characters in *Macbeth* are influenced by those who do not (or cannot) participate in societal standards.

CHAPTER II

Monstrous Thoughts and Deeds:

"What are you?" (1.3.45)

Humans exist to be a part of a community, and individuals who cannot function within the structures a society establishes divest themselves of the characteristics that make them human. In the early modern era, moderation supplies the framework by which the community is built. Consequently, intemperate individuals relinquish their humanity to become something other—something monstrous. With this in mind, a problematic question looms over *Macbeth*: "What are you?" (1.3.45). When this question is directed at the bearded women by Banquo, of course, they give no response, allowing the audience to guess at what these three characters are. In sharp contrast to Shakespeare's *King Lear*, whose titular monarch questions, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.205), *Macbeth* teems with "what are you?" Thus, while Lear questions his own humanity, the characters in *Macbeth* question the role humans occupy in English society. King Duncan opens the play with "What bloody man is that?" (1.2.1). The pronoun "what" combined with Stephen Greenblatt's assessment of the play that "*Macbeth* is a tragedy of meltings, vanishing boundaries, and liminal spaces" ("*Macbeth*" 840), opens a new dimension of reading *Macbeth*. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen formulates monster theory as a "way of reading cultures" by examining the monsters that inhabit

literature ("Monster" 3), thus, allowing monster theory to add a new dimension to the reading of *Macbeth* as the monster lurks at the borders and boundaries of the acceptable. Although Cohen specifically insists the monster "resists any classification built on … a merely binary opposition" ("Monster" 7), he emphasizes that his seven theses that encompass this theory are all "breakable postulates" ("Monster" 4). Mark Thornton Burnett fractures the particular premise of binary opposition in his study of Shakespeare's monsters, for Burnett believes that the monster "produced anxieties about singleness and doubleness, autonomy and dependency, sameness and otherness, and civility and savagery" (4). The anxieties Burnett points out manifest and cause chaos within Shakespeare's Scotland through the play's monsters: the witches, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth.

Private and Public Monsters

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth succumb to excessive emotions, desires, and behaviors, causing chaos in an already turbulent Scotland. These excesses dismantle the Macbeths' ability to reason and, consequently, their ability to govern their own behaviors. As *Macbeth* illustrates, the battle with the monster takes place in the home, not in a foreign land. The monster's threat is domestic. For an explanation, one needs to turn again to the classic philosophers—namely Plato. Plato insists that the monster resides in everyone because man's personality forms a "composite beast" consisting of "a many-headed creature," a lion, and a man (330-331). Plato continues, "Then give the whole the external appearance of one of the three, the man, so that to eyes unable to see anything beneath the outer shell it looks like a singular creature, a man" (331).

Consequently, according to Plato, all men contain the monstrous inside; therefore, he insists that every man has the capacity for good and evil. What sets the good apart from evil constitutes moderation. Plato emphasizes that “self-indulgence has always been censured” because self-indulgence “gives too much freedom to the monstrous multiform creature within us” (332). Unlike Aristotle in the *Ethics* but like Cicero, Plato offers prescribed fixes for those who fall prey to their monstrous side. This fix is punishment, either by written or unwritten societal norms.

Laws punish deviant behaviors, and early modern society merges deviant behaviors with monstrous actions. While monstrous “others” (“what” instead of “who”) are usually depicted as natural creatures born outside the societal power and with physical defect, in some instances, the monstrous can be created by specific acts and influences that deviate from the acceptable norms. Deviant behaviors are defined as “deviating from normal social, etc., standards or behaviors” (“Deviant”), and deviancy from the social norms in relation to the monstrous was noted by classic philosophers. Cicero notes how the monster lurks, not just in the body but in one’s disposition. He reasons, “Are physical defects, if they are very noticeable, to cause some degree of aversion, while the deformities of the soul are not? A soul’s ugliness can easily be inferred from its vices” (*The Republic* 115). The vices Cicero points out are all linked to excess including greed, lust, and cowardice. This same framework of deviant behavior being monstrous was brought to the early modern era, as Burnett explains, “a society’s conventions are often as narrowly demarcated as its physical norms, enabling ‘monstrosity’ to signal a range of personality and behavioral traits which fall outside prescribed parameters” (2). Inclusion into society meant following the norms. Those

that failed were labeled as deviants, and in many cases, as monsters. Kathryn M. Brammall's study of Tudor England reveals:

> When it became clear that the real source of deviancy was inward thought, manifested not in appearance but rather in behavior and words, it was inevitable that moral, political, and religious writers would expand the rhetoric of monstrosity to include, at least gradually, those deformities that had no physical counterpart: heresy, tyranny, greed, pride, ungratefulness, disloyalty and treason, and the multitude of other sins which many considered to be undermining the commonwealth. (21)

Brammell explicitly links Cicero's "ugliness of the soul" to public acknowledgement of crimes against fellow citizens and crimes against the state. Her catalogue of crimes includes those punishable by unwritten law, such as ungratefulness and pride, and those punishable by written law which include tyranny and treason. Additionally, as Butler asserts, "gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (522), any of these crimes against ideal behaviors put the offender on public display, whether it be time in the stocks or public execution. In this way, deviant behavior and the concept of the monster merge.

Society dictates that only in the public realm are monsters visible and punishable. Numerous critics have defined the Latin *monstro* as "to show, demonstrate, or reveal." [4] Burnett also defines the Latin *monstrum* as a "portent, prodigy or sign as well as an

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[4] See Mark Thornton Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture*, p.2, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002; Wes Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic*, p. 10, Oxford UP, 2011; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)." *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, p. 4, U of Minn P, 1996.

'unnatural thing'; and *moneo* translates as to give warning of or presage" (2). Burnett captures the monstrous on display by examining the early modern culture of fairs and curiosity cabinets. Giants, elephant men, and bearded women were put on display for all to see while monstrous births were celebrated in print. The monster in the early modern era demands to be a public figure. As Wes Williams points out, "verbs of sight articulate the … need to know" (29). Society wants to see the monstrous. Consequently, throughout *Macbeth*, there is an insistence that the monster be revealed. This is evident using the word "show" twenty-one times, the use of "perform" seven times, and the use of the word "see" over forty times. Great pains are taken in the play to keep the monster from being displayed—to hide it within one's self or within the domestic sphere of the home.

Shakespeare's Monsters

Shakespeare uses monsters to document social unrest. The most recognizable Shakespearean monster is *The Tempest*'s Caliban. Possessing monstrous looks, and performing monstrous deeds, Caliban's classification as monster has been the subject of numerous critical analyses.[5] Many of Shakespeare's characters are not as obviously physically monstrous, but are classified as the monstrous "Other" by Burnett, including Cleopatra and Othello. While Burnett does not include *Macbeth* in his study, Georgia Brown offers an ecocritical monstrous reading of *Macbeth* that finds the monstrous

[5] See Mark Thornton Burnett, "'Were I in England now': Localizing 'Monsters in *The Tempest*." *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture*, pp. 125-153, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002 and Julián Jiménez Heffernan, "Monster: *Le Vilain Caliban*, or, the Question concerning a Thing." *Shakespeare's Extremes*, pp. 109-150, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

resonating in the play. She emphasizes the natural/unnatural elements in the play using Ambroise Paré's 1573 study *On Monsters and Marvels*. Her summation of the monsters in *Macbeth* links the natural and unnatural worlds of the real as she surmises, "Monsters, as examples of distorted objects and curious phenomena, are linked to the magic that fills *Macbeth* because both monsters and magic draw attention to the doubt, the uncertainty of appearances, and the elusive question of what is real and not real" (64). In Brown's compelling argument, *Macbeth* encompasses the variable shifts of nature, yet while she does not delve into the characters, she finds that the witches embody "the elusive and marvellous" which make them monstrous (63). Thus, much like Brammell's definition of the early modern monster, deeds, just as much as physical appearance, can signify the monster.

By appearance and actions, the bearded women are monstrous in *Macbeth*. Nowhere in the play are the three monstrous women referred to as witches, inviting the audience (or directors or critics) to interpret the witches however they choose. Tom Bishop acknowledges, "Questions such as 'How did they do the witches' … [is] still likely to be the first response to a new production" (229). The supernatural references, including potions, visions, and the appearance of Hecate, often leave no doubt to the bearded women's magical identities. Not only that, but the witches are the only characters given physical attributes in the play. Most notably, Banquo asks: "You should be women, / And yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so" (1.3.37-44). The combination of "beards" and "women" has been subject to intense critical interpretation and analysis. In the age of Shakespeare, there was a saying that "the beard made the man" (Fisher 185). Fisher infers that to be without a beard in this time was

effeminate and goes further to state that it was a method to differentiate between the sexes. As Fisher points out, writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, namely Valerian and Bulwer, do not consider women with beards as androgynous, rather they are something to be feared—monsters (170). If we accept the bearded women as something other—something monstrous—Macbeth's interaction with these three hags leads him towards the monstrous himself. As Cohen rightly points out, "The monster prevents mobility (intellectual, geographic, or sexual), delimiting the social spaces through which private bodies may move. To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself" ("Monster" 12). Macbeth's changes are not outward but manifest the monstrous in his thoughts and actions.

In addition to defining the bearded women as monsters, which answers the question "what are these" (1.3.37), the characters in *Macbeth* also ask the monsters, "What is't you do?" (4.1.64). The text reveals the witches' purpose: "A deed without a name" (4.1.65). There are certain actions in Aristotle's *Ethics* which are so dreadful that he describes these horrific acts as "nameless." For instance, Aristotle insists, "Of those who go in excess, the person who exceeds fearlessness is nameless" (*NE* 134). Fearlessness illustrates one example of excess the Greek and Roman philosophers warn against and with which, as we shall see in later chapters, the witches seduce Macbeth. Elliott P. Curie traces the laws governing witchcraft in Renaissance Europe. He labels these "social control systems" (8). He finds that, in 1484, Pope Innocent IV decreed: "It has recently come to our attention … many persons of both sexes … have abandoned themselves to devils … and do not shrink from committing and perpetrating the foulest

abominations and filthiest excesses" (10). While this decree emphasizes the charge of witchcraft as turning away from the Catholic faith and to the devil, it also proves that excesses were being attached to the art of witchcraft. The cry, "Double, double, toil and trouble" (4.1.10) conjures the excess that encompasses the entire play. When the excesses are invoked, trouble follows.

Establishing the Boundaries

In the early modern era, society demanded conformity. Those who could not conform to established norms were ostracized or banished. Societal constructs of the early modern era distinguished two spaces: the domestic space of the home and the political sphere of citizenry. As Lloyd Edward Kermode asserts, "place does not appear *ex nihilo* but is part of a process, a social construct" (4). These private and public defined spaces are societal constructs put in place to prevent deviant behaviors from adding confusion and chaos to the state. The witches in *Macbeth* reside in "an open place" (1.1, 1.3, 3.5) adding a third space to the early modern concepts of the domestic sphere of the home and the public sphere of civic duty. Diane Purkiss acknowledges, "The witches [in *Macbeth*] inhabit a borderland between clearly marked states" (211), marking this open space as a threshold between the boundaries of the public and domestic. In his discussion of liminality, Arpad Szakolczai accentuates the role of tricksters within liminal spaces:

> Tricksters are always marginal characters: they are outsiders, and thus cannot trust or be trusted, cannot give or share, and are incapable of living in a community … However, tricksters can suddenly become dangerous: in a situation where the community lets its guard down, in an instant the

> trickster can capture the occasion and institute a lasting reversal of roles and values. (26)

Szakolczai's definition of the trickster, a character designed to create chaos for societal structure, perfectly describes *Macbeth's* witches. While the status of Scotland seems to be secure at the opening of the play since the rebellion has been put down and an heir to the throne named, Shakespeare introduces the witches who consistently conjure images of confusion and chaos as they cast their spells: "Though his barque cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tossed" (1.3.23-24). In agreement, Purkiss acknowledges, "[the witches'] accoutrements, language and behavior are borrowed from hither and yon without regard for truth or theory [which] reinforces their metaphoric status as figures of and for confusion" (211). The emergence of the witches and the images of discord they call forth suggest a pending rupture of societal norms.

One featured norm of early modern England was the patriarchal structure of both the domestic and political spheres. The father was thought of as head of household, and James I often referred to himself as the father of England; in this sense, the home was considered a microcosm of the state.[6] When one's household runs according to norms and moderation, the stability of the family remains intact. However, what is destructive in the home, may also be destructive to the state. As Callaghan reveals, "Rebellion against the father ... constituted treason and heresy" (18). Not only could one be faithless to the government and church, one can also be faithless in the home. When Macbeth encounters the witches, he finds himself in a space that causes confusion; he cannot be a

[6] Dympna Callaghan's *Women and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* (1989) conducts a comprehensive study of this correlation (9-27).

citizen to the witches as in a public space, and cannot be a husband to the witches as in a domestic space.

With no socially defined role to play, the witches' prophecy easily sways Macbeth. The open space in which the witches' dwell resembles how individuals viewed the culturally different. For example, Michael Uebel hypothesizes about the difference between Christians and Muslims: "Attributions to Muslims of limitless enjoyment and unarrestable desire, of sexual deviation, of powers of seduction, of madness, of disorder … what ultimately binds together these characteristics is an anxiety over the stability and placement of the actual boundaries marking the differences between the two cultures" (274). Cultural differences were marked by excess, and, because the boundary between the public and private establishes a nameless space, many of Aristotle's nameless excesses dwell there. Thus, rewriting this for the early modern era, one can argue that anxieties over English versus Scottish rule, Queen versus King, Catholic versus Protestant worship marks differences between Englishmen. No longer does the monster look different—he (or she) is now one's neighbor.

CHAPTER III

Hiding the Monster in the Home:

"My dearest partner / of greatness" (1.5.9-10)

The early modern era home represents the state. Aristotle asserts, "one's own well-being is inseparable from managing a household, and from political organization" (183), thus tying together the concept of domestic and political behaviors. A moderate household results in a moderate community while chaos in the home creates chaos in the political realm. In the early modern era, both the home and the political community prescribed to the tenets of the patriarchal society. This male dominated society permeated every aspect of society: the relationship between husband and wife, inheritance laws, and government positions. Notably, on the surface, the private home of the Macbeths', Inverness, accentuates the early modern ideal of domestic serenity. One finds a loving wife, a loving husband, and a castle that "hath a pleasant seat" (1.6.1). Hiding behind these public images are tensions residing in the private realm which confirms Wes Williams insistence that the early modern era moved the monstrous into the home (1). So, although King Duncan and his entourage see the temperate beauty that surrounds the castle, the play reveals a separation of the public face of Inverness and the excess (monstrous) that lies within the privacy of the walls.

Self-Control

According to early modern thinking, an individual possesses reason and self-control in order to guide him away from temptation. When Macbeth encounters the witches in the open space, the nameless space that defies cultural definition, he encounters a group of individuals that fit no defined role. The weird sisters are capable of monstrous deeds, which they gleefully gossip about, and, not unlike the biblical apple offered to Eve, they tempt Macbeth with a prophecy: "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (1.3.48). The foretelling these women offer Macbeth resembles Plato's growth of a tyrant. Plato insists, "[the tyrant's] father and family support moderation, and his tempters come in on the other side ... [these wicked wizards] contrive to implant a master passion in him" (310). Perhaps Macbeth has dreamed of furthering his career to become king, but now the prophecy pinpoints his ambitious desires.

The prophecy shakes the foundation of Macbeth's self-control. He charges, "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, / Shakes so my single state of man that function is smothered in surmise, and nothing is / But what is not." (1.3.138-141). Macbeth's "single state of man" typifies the natural law that both Aristotle and Cicero insist all men are capable of; the rational being tamps down desire allowing moderation to prevail. Additionally, Aristotle insists "Thought by itself sets nothing in motion" (178). The rational man should deliberate about the best course of action. In this way, although Macbeth's thoughts lead him toward excess, he portrays an unwillingness to actually act on them. At this point, that Macbeth still displays the qualities of a rational, reasonable man. Macbeth still has his capacity for rational thought, for he exhibits awareness of the delicate balance required to maintain self-control; however, the

temptation he faces threatens to overwhelm him. In the next scene, however, Macbeth discovers more startling news—Malcolm has been named the Prince of Cumberland, the heir to the throne. Macbeth's desires seem to take on new life as he states, "Let not light see my black and deep desires" (1.4.51). Similar to Plato's multi-faceted man discussed above, desire overcomes the rational man allowing one's inner beasts to take control. Macbeth actively contemplates horrific actions to ensure his desires can come to fruition. As the monster inside Macbeth grows larger, his reasoning diminishes. More importantly, Macbeth begins to hide his monstrous side not only from those around him but also from himself. He separates his actions from his inner sight: "The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be / Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see" (1.4.52-53). Although Macbeth has not performed any actions to see his desire come to fruition, his thoughts expose his ultimate desire and willingness to be turned away from reason.

Moderation and Marriage

The marriage between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth goes beyond a moderate marriage to one where the husband and wife share equally their social position, contrary to the social norms of the early modern era. The Macbeths' marriage contradicts the standard definition of an early modern marriage. Scodel insists, "The ideal of a conjugal moderation sustained the gender hierarchy. It was commonplace that women, less rational and more emotional than men, tended to dangerous extremes … husbands had to ensure that moderation prevailed" (145). However, Macbeth uses Lady Macbeth as counsel by imparting his conversation with the witches in a letter. Macbeth, as we have seen, moves towards the monstrous with his excessive personal desires and the letter he

sends to his wife further emphasizes Macbeth's penchant for intemperance. Within the letter, Macbeth uses the moniker "My dearest partner / in greatness" (1.5.10-11). The superlatives used in this short phrase imply an excessive relationship, both privately (dearest) and publicly (partner in greatness). Additionally, the letter from Macbeth reveals the witches' prophecy as news "of what greatness is promised *thee*" (1.5.11 my emphasis). Shakespeare's intentionality with words is well documented, so the use of the pronoun "thee" not "us" or "me" highlights the stronger partner in the marriage. Although husbands should utilize their wives' advice, ultimately, the wellbeing of the household was clearly the husband's duty.[7]

However, contrary to the patriarchal tenets that defined the early modern era, Inverness is solely Lady Macbeth's domain. She considers Inverness her sphere, not one owned or even mutually shared with her husband. She informs the audience that King Duncan will be staying "under *my* battlements" (1.5.38 my emphasis), and formulates a plan to ensure the witches' prophecy transpires not as what may be, but as a "promise" of advancement (1.5.11-14). Lady Macbeth immediately and willingly forsakes her humanity for the crown as she calls to the spirits to "unsex me here" (1.5.39). She willingly becomes a monstrous figure. However, Lady Macbeth believes Macbeth's flaws stand in the way of the crown she desires. While Macbeth is "not without ambition" (1.5.17) and "wouldst not play false" (1.5.19), Lady Macbeth derides Macbeth for being "too full o'th' milk of human kindness / To catch the nearest way." (1.5.15-16). Lady Macbeth taunts Macbeth for what she considers an excess of feminine qualities in a man, but also that he is too slow to act, another feminine weakness. Lady Macbeth's

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[7] Janay Nugent analyzes role responsibilities for keeping correct morals within Scottish communities.

solution is to “chastise with the valour of my tongue / All that impedes thee from the golden round” (1.5.25-26). Instead of acting as a “partner in greatness,” Lady Macbeth seeks to direct Macbeth’s actions. Cicero’s warns:

> Can I call the men free whom a woman governs, to whom she gives laws, lays down direction, orders and forbids what to her seems fit; while he can deny and dare refuse nothing that she commands? Does she ask? He must give. Does she call? He must come. Does she order him off? He must vanish. Does she threaten? He must tremble. (*Cicero’s* 280-281)

Cicero’s comparison of a henpecked husband to a slave has similarities to Shepard’s finding that an early modern man who could not control his household was considered effeminate (79). Macbeth’s inability to maintain authority over his household intensifies his inner turmoil. When Macbeth attempts to take control of his household by refusing to murder Duncan, Lady Macbeth revives Macbeth’s composite nature: “What beast was’t then / That made you break this enterprise to me?” (1.7.47-48). By challenging Macbeth’s inner beast to overcome the man, Lady Macbeth urges Macbeth towards excess that she, herself, embraces.

Consequently, within the private sphere of the home, Macbeth is an effeminized husband, but also, by following his wife’s directives to be “so much more the man” (1.7.51), she instills in him excessive masculine qualities. This turns Macbeth into, not a moderate man, but a man who contains a vicious extreme—what in modern terms would be termed hypermasculinity. Although numerous critics emphasize the feminization of Macbeth, it is only within one social role, that of husband, that this occurs. Macbeth’s other roles, that of friend, citizen, and ultimately king, suffer from his penchant for

excessive masculinity. When Cohen discusses the cultural interpretation of Saracens as monsters, he remarks, "This representation [of Saracens] … was part of a whole dictionary of strategic glosses in which 'monstra' slipped into significations of the feminine and hypermasculine" (8). While Cohen is explicitly discussing cultural differences, the monster in *Macbeth* is a tangled mass of excessive desires, both self-inflicted and forced upon him by external coercion by his wife.

The succession of the crown delivers another disturbance to Macbeth's rationality. One of the key aspects of a home involves a fruitful marriage. Specifically, in the early modern era, a home and marriage require children. Although Wrightson insists infertility was not a blemish on a woman, "[children] were...guarantees of the perpetuation of the family line to those concerned with their lineage" (104). From the onset of the play, the Macbeths' childless marriage is a source of contention, made even more so with the prophecy that Banquo's progeny will inherit the crown. This, once again, thwarts the basic precepts of the patriarchal system. Lady Macbeth begins her torment of Macbeth by taunting his husbandly manhood both before and after Duncan's murder. When Macbeth tells his wife to "Bring forth men-children only, / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (1.7.73-75), he was speaking derisively; however, even a man-child could not survive Lady Macbeth's torments, for she "would while it was smiling in [her] face, / have plucked [her] nipple from his boneless gums / And dashed the brains out" (1.7.56-58). This is just as well, for her cries to the spirits to "…unsex me here /. . . /And take my milk…" (1.5.39-46) reflect her desire to hold a crown, not a babe. For Macbeth, the crown and the babe are one in the same: "Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown, / and put a barren sceptre in my grip,

/ . . . / No son of mine succeeding" (3.1.62-65).). The order of succession preys on Macbeth's mind from the start. When Duncan gives the title of Thane of Cawdor to Macbeth, his next pronouncement is that Duncan's son, Malcolm, would be named inheritor of the estate. Macbeth's first reaction is, "…that is a step / On which I must fall down or else o'erleap, / For in my way it lies" (1.4.48-50). Macbeth soon finds the number of steps he must "o'erleap" to hold onto the crown keeps increasing: Duncan's two sons, Banquo's progeny, and a new menace: Macduff.

In the early modern era, a visual representation of female excess was depicted in monstrous births. Shakespeare accentuates the issue of the Macbeth's childless marriage in Act 4. When Macbeth demands answers of the weird sisters, he commands, "…though the treasure / Of nature's germens tumble all together …/ answer me" (4.1.74-76). Nature's germens are "the seeds from which all nature grows" and "According to Renaissance theories of biology, if they were tumbled together, they would become barren or produce only monsters" (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, note 6, 879). With their unwillingness to live within the constraints of self-control and societal norms, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth prove themselves unwilling to follow natural law as defined by the ancient philosophers and early modern thinking. This unnaturalness is similar to the mixing of "nature's germens." A monstrous birth by the Macbeths' would publicly display their monstrosity.

Because displaying monstrosity is to become subject to written law, the inward monstrosity of the Macbeth's must remain hidden from public view. As Williams contends, "To be human is to respect the Law" (288). Lady Macbeth begins to see the monster lurking in Macbeth: "Your face, my thane, is like a book where men may read

strange matters." (1.5.60-61). She urges Macbeth to show no sign of the monster, for once the monster is seen it becomes part of the public realm and must be destroyed. Consequently, there are constant reminders to keep the monster within: "Look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't" (1.5.64-65) and "Away, and mock the time with fairest show. / False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (2.1.81-82). Secrecy becomes a cornerstone of the Macbeths' machinations. Diane Purkiss insists, "Witchcraft is the resort of women because it symbolizes the only way they can work politically; by stealth, in secret, rather than on the public field of battle or debate" (191). But Lady Macbeth is not the only member of the family to work by stealth and secrecy. When Macbeth hires the murderers to kill Banquo, he reveals the necessity for secrecy: "And thence it is / That I to your assistance do make love, / Masking the business from the common eye" (3.1.124-126). The Macbeths' insistence on ruses and secrecy further emphasizes hiding away the monster from public view.

Moderation and Friendship

Similar to the way Macbeth values Lady Macbeth's opinions at the beginning of the play, Macbeth respects his intimate friendship with Banquo. Friendship was considered an indispensable element in the early modern era; friends were encouraged to act as advisors and assist in keeping one's monstrous self from emerging. Aristotle emphasizes the necessity of communication between friends "because two are able both to 'notice' and to act better than one" (*NE* 209). Banquo also sees the allure of the prophecy put forth by the bearded women, and he cautions Macbeth to not fall prey to temptation: "oftentimes to win us to our harm / The instruments of darkness tell us truths,

/ Win us with honest trifles to betray's / In deepest consequence." (1.3.120-124). Banquo acknowledges how desire and temptation can lead one astray. Upon hearing the prophecies, Macbeth requests of Banquo, "Think upon what has chanced, and at more time, / The interim having weighed it, let us speak / Our free hearts to each other" (1.4.152-154). In this manner, Macbeth still retains his rationality and ability to reason, calling on friendship for assistance in parsing out the unexpected and enthralling prophecy. As Cicero insists, "In times of greatest success we must exploit the advice of friends to the full, and lend even greater weight than previously to their authority" (*OO* 32). Instead of relying on Banquo's advice, Macbeth changes the rules of friendship. Macbeth tells Banquo, "If you should cleave to my consent when 'tis / It shall make honour for you" (2.1.23-24). No longer is Banquo a friend with whom one shares thoughts and advice; Banquo becomes a useful friend. The ancient philosophers emphasize that a useful friendship is not a lasting relationship; it lasts only as long as one partner can provide something advantageous or profitable to the other. However, Cicero warns, "Things which seem to be useful—public offices, riches, sensual pleasures, and the like—must never take precedence over friendships" (*OO* 98-99). The excesses that Cicero notes should not take priority over friendship, but those excesses consume Macbeth, and consequently damage the relationship.

Banquo serves as a foil to Macbeth to depict how a rational man should deliberate and make decisions. Aristotle maintains that the good man understands the soul contains two facets: "one aspect of the soul is non-rational, while another possesses reason" (109). Similar to Macbeth, Banquo also receives a prophecy from the bearded women: "Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none" (1.3.65). However, in contrast to Macbeth, Banquo

reason is such that he can control his desires. Langis points out, “Macbeth reveals himself caught between rational and appetitive will … unable to integrate them like Banquo” (47). Both Macbeth and Banquo suffer from the weight of keeping their self-control amidst the temptation of desire. For every non-rational, monstrous action Macbeth performs, Banquo handles it as a moderate individual capable of using logic and reasoning. As Macbeth notices, “[Banquo] hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour / To act in safety” (3.1.54-55). Both men are beguiled by the weight of the witches' prophecies, and one way Shakespeare depicts mental conflict is sleeplessness. Stephen Greenblatt explains Shakespeare's tragic heroes regarding sleep:

> Governance, as Shakespeare imagines it, is an immense weight whose great emblem is the insomnia that afflicts the competent, tough-minded usurper Bolingbroke, after he has become Henry IV. There are books now that profess to derive principles of governance from Shakespeare's works, but the sleeplessness—tormented, constant sleeplessness—is one of the only principles that [Shakespeare] consistently depicts. (“Shakespeare” 71)

For Greenblatt, the weight of the usurped throne in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* precludes a restful sleep. However, in *Macbeth*, both the responsibility and the underlying monstrosity of Macbeth's thoughts and subsequent actions cause Macbeth to suffer from sleeplessness: “wicked dreams abuse / The curtained sleep” (2.1.50-51). Furthermore, Banquo also suffers from sleeplessness: “A heavy summons lies like lead upon me, / and yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers / Restrain me in the cursed thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose” (2.1.6-9). In other words, Banquo's insomnia results from the

fear that he, too, will concede to the non-rational part of his soul. Aristotle notes that this dilemma afflicts even the most excellent of men:

> Excellence in the exercise [of the non-rational segment of the soul] appears to be something shared and not distinctively human: this part, and this capacity, seem to be most active when things are asleep, and it is most difficult to tell the good and the bad man apart when they are asleep. (*NE* 109)

For Macbeth and Banquo, their restlessness is caused by fear of the non-rational side of the soul—the animal side—taking over. Macbeth allows the monstrous to take control; Banquo, a man who achieves rationality and reason, suffers the consequences.

The Transition from Private to Public

When Macbeth murders Banquo, the monstrous Macbeth enters into the public realm. Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth during the banquet scene in which the castle of Inverness is hosting the lords of Scotland and dismantles the remnants of Macbeth's rationality. Similar to the manifestation of the dagger earlier in the play, Macbeth's hallucinations are the public display of his loss of self-control and rationality. Unlike the scene with bloody dagger, Banquo's ghost appears where others witness Macbeth's torment. Cicero maintains:

> But when it comes to acts of wickedness against men … no expiation is possible. So the offenders pay the penalty, not necessarily imposed by the courts … but they are chased and hounded by the Furies, not with the

> burning firebrands as in the plays, but with the torment of their conscience and the agony of their guilt. (*The Republic* 111)

The Furies were known to be relentless in their vengeance against those who committed crimes against the natural laws, especially patricide.[8] Macbeth's misdeeds facilitate his delusions. As the ghost of Banquo silently rebukes Macbeth, Macbeth's responses to the ghost trigger a public reaction—Macbeth's health is questioned by all present. While Macbeth and Lady Macbeth dismiss his actions as "a strange infirmity" (3.4.85) which is but "a thing of custom" (3.4.96), it invites questions as to Macbeth's state of mind by all present.

More importantly, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth initiate private conversations in a public hall which further endangers their secret machinations. Unlike their previous exchanges in which they speak in the privacy of their chambers, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth argue only steps away from their guests. As Janay Nugent notes, "The public-private divide could be breached by members of the community. The physical divide of the household did shield the activities of those within, but there were limits to the privacy that a house provided" (223). The eavesdropping destroys the Macbeths' secrets and allows the monstrous to appear in public. While neither Macbeth or Lady Macbeth admit outright to the murder of either Duncan or Banquo, Lady Macbeth does criticize Macbeth for his imaginative outbursts: "This is the air-drawn dagger which you said / Led you to Duncan" (3.4.62). Additionally, Macbeth muses about dead bodies not staying dead like in olden days and concludes, "This is more strange / than such a murder is" (4.4.81-82). Those present in the dining hall are privy to the conversation. As a consequence, in a

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[8] The link between Hecate, the witches, and the Furies is widely referenced, most notably Arthur R. McGee's "*Macbeth* and the Furies" (1966).

later scene, Lennox, who attended the banquet, unravels the implausible sequence of events with another lord: "My former speeches have but hit your thoughts, / Which can be interpreted further. Only I say / Things have been strangely borne" (3.6.1-3). As Lennox and the Lord contemplate the murders, they determine the story to be too far-fetched to be believable. Lennox and the Lord officially give the title "tyrant" (3.6.22, 3.6.25) to Macbeth and proceed to take action against the usurper by joining with Malcolm and Macduff.

The public revelation of Macbeth's monstrous demeanor into the public domain arises at the same time Macbeth acknowledges his intemperance. Macbeth admits his loss of self-control to Lady Macbeth: "For mine own good / All causes shall give way" (3.4.134-135). He turns his back on society and gives in to the master passion the weird sisters instilled in him. Macbeth is no longer in conflict, and even seems to revel in his immoderation. However, he needs a support system. As he has lost the lords, he now turns to the witches for advice: "I will tomorrow to the weird sisters. More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know" (3.4.131-133). Szakolczai indicates how liminal figures can transform individuals:

> When actually pushed to the limit by the force of events, human beings cannot take structures for granted; they need models to follow or 'imitate.' Under such conditions, people are easily convinced to act contrarily to what is best for them while not apparently acting against their 'interests' … Thus they are misled instead of led and, still further might have their identities altered. (30-31)

In considering this, from the time of the initial prophecy, Macbeth engages in actions that oppose established norms. Macbeth acknowledges this shift: “My strange and self-abuse / Is the initiate fear that wants hard use” (3.4.141-142). Macbeth has murdered his intimate confidant, Banquo, and he has ceased relying on his wife for advice. The models he turns to are the liminal characters of the witches. By returning to the witches, Macbeth, himself, transforms into a liminal figure. He renounces the established community of humanity, for once Macbeth makes the decision to consult with the witches, he never again converses with his wife. Additionally, he never converses with any fellow nobles until he meets them on the battlefield.

CHAPTER IV

Monsters Out in Public:

"Th'expedition of my violent love / Outrun the pauser, reason" (2.3.107-108)

The decisions Macbeth makes in his attempt to keep the crown in his hands result in both self-destruction and destruction of the state. To be part of the state means abiding by the laws that govern the state, and Macbeth's excesses condemn him as a social deviant in the public sphere. In fact, Cicero reveals, "There is but one single justice. It binds together human society and has been established by one, single, law. That law is right reason … A man who does not acknowledge this law is unjust" (*The Republic* 112). From Cicero's standpoint, those who do not use reason and wisdom to guide behavior break the law of all humanity. Reason inhibits excessive behaviors and excessive behaviors lead to vice; furthermore, vice corrupts and causes men to behave like beasts. J.M. May maintains Cicero's continued use of beast and monster metaphors is "central to [Cicero's] belief about human beings and their relationship to their community and to the state … [for] when someone … assails the community of justice that has been established by his fellow human beings, that person's own humanity is diminished" (149).[9] In light of Cicero's interpretation of humanness, by leaving the established societal models for

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[9] The original text found on the University of Iowa's download site *Deepdive* for James M. May's article "Cicero and the Beasts" reads: "central to [Cicero's] belief about human beings and dieir [sic] relationship to dieir [sic] community and to die [sic] state"

correct action, Macbeth also leaves behind his humanity. Since reason validates one's humanity, the law of reason applies even to a king. Ernst H. Kantorowicz insists that reason is the basis for a good monarchy. Considering the transition of kingship from a religious office to a law focused body, Kantorowicz invokes Frederick II and indicates, "The emperor, in his manifesto, strongly emphasized that he was *legibus solutus*, but at the same time [Frederick II] acknowledged that he was bound to Reason which commands all kings" (106). In other words, while the king has the authority to impose his will on his subjects, the king's decision still must be guided by reason.

While his heroics on the battlefield in Act I establishes Macbeth as an ideal subject, Macbeth's excesses result in the deterioration of Macbeth's humanity. In Act I, Macbeth exemplifies what Aristotle holds up as the example of all that is good; a man's actions should work towards the end goal, that of a political and social figure whose character and decisions promote what is best for both himself and for his fellow citizens. In this way, Macbeth is shown as an exemplary subject. Good citizens supported the monarchy. *Macbeth* begins with the introduction of Macbeth—a war hero. A soldier giving the accounting of the battle reports, "brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name" (1.216) while King Duncan describes Macbeth as "valiant" and "worthy" (1.2.24). The initial framing of Macbeth's character as a model for all to follow in an Aristotelian sense signifies a political ideal man. Macbeth succinctly sums up his role as a citizen and Duncan's as a ruler:

> … Your highness' part
>
> Is to receive our duties, and our duties
>
> Are to your throne and state children and servants

Which do but what they should by doing everything

Safe toward your love and honor. (1.4.23-27)

The King is worthy of respect and honor due his title, and Macbeth is a worthy subject for adhering to societal mandates concerning his role as a citizen of the country. Macbeth's actions at the beginning of the play as a citizen and subject validate his capability for reason. However, after Macbeth receives the prophecy, his conduct disregards and abuses the early modern conventional norms of self-control and reason.

The Usurper on the Throne

Fundamentally, Macbeth's usurpation of the throne places him in a position he is not prepared for, for only those who can effectively keep themselves in a state of moderate behaviors can effectively rule over others. Plato insists, "The tyrannical character … is in all ways still worse off when he ceases to be a private citizen, and is compelled by fate to become a real tyrant and to control others though he cannot control himself" (318). As noted above, a ruler must be able to control himself. In the play, Angus notes Macbeth's intemperance and remarks, "now does [Macbeth] feel his title / Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe / Upon a dwarfish thief" (5.2.20-22). Macbeth's ambitions for an elevated status and his excessive desire for the title of king mitigates Macbeth to the status of a diminutive figure to his people. The association of dwarfism and gigantism in the early modern period was included in the monstrous stories that emerged from the era. Anne Lake Prescott reminds us that the tales of Gargantua and Tom Thumb flourished. As Prescott reveals the binary oppositions of the little and big personas, she rationalizes that early modern writers' use of the monsters was an

"insistence on responsible hierarchy" (83). The giant figure of the ruling class was continually opposed by the pygmy citizens. Macbeth, although a noble, usurps the throne; thus, the robe worn by the rightful king can never fit his role. "Giants," Prescott warns, "should remain giants and pygmies (that is, most of us), pygmies" (84). In addition, Linda Woodbridge examines the early modern rogue literature and hypothesizes the Elizabethan culture feared "finding a monster imposter" amongst one's peers. Monsters, she reasons, culturally represent anxieties about unstable social class (para. 8-11). Particularly in the early modern era, maintaining one's rightful position in the correct manner was important.

In fact, Hecate validates Macbeth's inability to execute his duties in the proper manner. She acknowledges the intemperance of Macbeth as she lambasts her fellow witches: "And, which is worse, all you have done / Hath been but for a wayward son" (3.5.10-11). Hecate's description of Macbeth as "wayward" paints an accurate portrait of Macbeth. Specifically, one who embodies the qualities of "wayward" is "disposed to go against the wishes or advice of others or what is proper or reasonable" ("wayward"). Macbeth's actions led to two murders and the abandonment of his family and his peers to "trade and traffic" with the weird sisters (3.5.4). Macbeth exchanges his domestic support structures for advice from the hags in an attempt to ascertain his current and future activities. Plato's interpretation of the tyrant includes the pleasurable excesses that take away one's ability to reason: "Then a precise definition of a tyrannical man is one who, either by birth or habit or both, combines the characteristics of drunkenness, lust, and madness … and the madman whose mind is unhinged imagines he can control gods and men and is quite willing to try" (310-311). Macbeth attempts to control the men

around him, if not by coercion, then by murder. Hecate explains Macbeth's (and all human) intemperance: "And you all know security / Is mortals' chiefest enemy (3.5.32-34). Security, as used by Hecate, confirms Macbeth's excesses, causing "A false sense of [absence of worry or anxiety]; culpable absence of anxiety; overconfidence, complacency, carelessness" ("security"). The overconfidence Macbeth embraces further reiterates Plato's characterization of tyranny being affixed to the characteristics of lust and madness. In other words, throughout the play Macbeth has seized what is best for himself without considering the consequences of his actions, or as Aristotle clarifies, looking at the end result.

Macbeth's usurpation of the throne obscures Macbeth's ability to reason and this results in tyranny. Aristotle indicates that deliberation occurs when one employs right reason towards a good end. He also argues that excellence is "doing [tasks] to the person one should, to the extent one should, when one should, for the reason one should, and in the manner one should" (121). Only a person of excellence navigates all of these successfully. Macbeth grasps what is desirable from the witches' prophecy by any means necessary, proving he is not a person of excellence; additionally, he detaches himself from the undesirable elements of the prophecies. When Macbeth returns to the weird sisters for the second time, he demands answers for his future. The hags call forth their "masters" who appear as apparitions to answer Macbeth's (unasked) questions. The third apparition divulges, "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him (4.1.108-110). Macbeth responds, "That will never be / … / on's high place Macbeth / Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath / To time and mortal custom" (4.1.110-116). Macbeth's attempts to grasp what is best for

himself while disparaging other prophecies from the same source challenges Macbeth's ability to rationalize. Additionally, his rash manner (another Aristotle excess) precludes his ability to deliberate at all: "From this moment / The very firstlings of my heart shall be / The firstlings of my hand … / … be it thought and done" (4.1.162-165). Macbeth ceases to use his own reason to determine the right course of action and relies strictly upon the desirable elements of the prophecies to guide him in his actions.

The Consequences of Excessiveness

Indeed, the apparitions that the witches conjure appeal to Macbeth's monstrous side. Recalling Plato's explanation of man's soul being made up of a many-headed monster, a lion, and a man, the second apparition urges Macbeth to "Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn / The power of man" (4.1.95-96). Similarly, the third apparition begins the prophecy with the edict, "Be lion-mettled, proud and take no care" (4.1.106). Thus, the specters urge Macbeth to give into the many-headed monster of appetitive will. As Plato reasons:

> Then let us point out that to say it pays this man to do wrong and not to do right, is to say that it pays him to give the many-headed beast a good time, and to strengthen it and the lion and all its qualities, while starving the man till he becomes so weak that the other two can do what they like with him; and that he should make no attempt to reconcile them and make them friends, but leave them to snarl and wrangle and devour each other (331).

The payment Plato fashions here is one of pleasure. A man will seek out pleasure once he has a taste for it. The appetitive will completely takes over Macbeth.

Specifically, Macbeth's monstrous appetites materialize in the excesses he embraces. For instance, for Macbeth, the loss of the crown is the same as loss of life. Notable to this conclusion is Aristotle's notion that fear is directly related to courage. Fearlessness is the excess of courage which causes rash and impetuous behaviors. When Macbeth is given the first prophecy that he should be king, Banquo admonishes Macbeth's actions: "Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair?" (1.3.49-50). Macbeth's fear is based upon the thoughts that whirl through his head, for his "Present fears / Are less than horrible imaginings" (1.3.136-137). In contrast, Lady Macbeth incites Macbeth: "But screw your courage to the sticking place / and we'll not fail" (1.7.60-61). As the play progresses, Macbeth fears narrow in his effort to keep the throne. As Macbeth contemplates his reign, realizing it is Banquo's heirs who shall inherit the throne, not his own, Macbeth charges, "There is none but [Banquo] / Whose being I do fear" (3.1.35-36). Macbeth murders Banquo, not in fear of his life, but for the fear of losing the crown. In a paradox, Macbeth demonstrates the same fear against Macduff as the apparitions disclose "Beware the Thane of Fife" (4.1.88). Macbeth responds, "For thy good caution, thanks. Thou hast harped my fear aright" (4.1.90), but with the next prophecy, he quickly counters, "Then live Macduff—what need I fear of thee?" (4.1.98). Macbeth's equivocation throughout this passage obscures the meaning of fear. To justify his unnatural fearlessness, he invokes the witches' prophecy: "The spirits that know / All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus: / 'Fear not, Macbeth" (5.3.4-6). Macbeth's fearlessness overtakes him as he utters, "I have almost forgot the taste of fears /… / Direness, familiar to my slanderous thoughts, / Cannot once start me" (5.5.9-14). Aristotle notes, "Of those who

go to excess, the person who exceeds fearlessness is nameless … but he would be some sort of madman, or someone immune to pain, if he feared nothing" (134). Macbeth's excessive courage which Aristotle deems fearlessness, a trait his wife aroused in him and the witches encourage, reveals just one excess which leads to his downfall.

In this same excessive vein, Lady Macbeth opposes her husband's fearlessness with cowardice. Aristotle insists, "Dying to escape from … something painful, is not a feature of courage but rather of cowardice; … and the person in this case accepts death not because it is a fine thing to do, but because he is running away from something bad" (134). Cowardice, for Aristotle, is the deficiency of courage. More importantly, Aristotle argues "the city imposes a penalty, and a certain dishonour is attached to the person that has done away with himself, on the grounds that he is acting unjustly towards the city" (175). Michael Macdonald and Terrance R. Murphy examine the motives for suicide and acknowledge family shame and dishonor as two prime examples of what drives the early modern person to suicide. "Dishonour and shame," write Macdonald and Murphy, were "the social and emotional consequences of violating the cultural rules" (274). In fact, many people in the early modern era took to suicide to avoid disgrace once their crimes were exposed to the public (Macdonald 283-285). Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking and subsequent conversations with herself about the murder of Duncan and Lady Macduff are overheard and discussed by the Gentlewoman and the Doctor. Ironically, Lady Macbeth's suicide occurs just as Macbeth acknowledges the loss of his sense of fear.

The Implementation of Written Law

While Macbeth turns to the monstrous witches for guidance, Macduff and Malcolm turn to each other in an attempt to save the country from the chaos Macbeth has caused with his intemperance. Malcolm scrutinizes the traits of a good king and the societal deviant to assess Macduff's allegiance to the rightful heir to the throne. Malcolm establishes the virtues of good king: "justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness, / Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness, / Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude" (4.3.93-95). These moderate characteristics are traits that all men should possess. In contrast, Malcolm lists the excessive behaviors that deviants possess: "bloody, / Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, / Sudden, malicious" (4.3.58-60). All of these qualities reiterate the excesses that all men should be able to overcome with reason and rational thinking. Uhr frames this scene as "[Malcolm's search] for the breaking point in Macduff's tolerance of personal vice in their pursuit of public virtue" (287). Macduff must choose the excesses he, as a subject of the crown, can overlook, and which vices are unsupportable in a king. Macduff's limit for Malcolm's intemperance occurs when Malcolm explains what happens when an intemperate tyrant is on the throne; the tyrant will "pour the sweet milk of concord into hell, / Uproar the universal peace, confound / All unity on earth" (4.3.98-101). With this statement, Malcolm acknowledges he understands the end results of tyranny, for as Aristotle insists, "But we deliberate, not about the ends, but about what forwards those ends … but rather [excellent men] take the end for granted and examine how and by what means it will come about" (128). Unlike Macbeth, who could not see the end result of his usurpation of the throne, both Malcolm and Macduff recognize that personal excesses result in chaos to the state.

In the final scenes of the play, Macbeth's excesses require retribution. Aristotle declares, "So too at the beginning the unjust person and the self-indulgent one had the option not to become like that, and hence they are voluntarily unjust and self-indulgent; but once they have become like that, it is no longer possible for them not to be" (131). Macbeth's desires and actions prove irreversible. Macbeth then repudiates the witches, his sole remaining alliance: "And be these juggling fiends no more believed" (5.10.19). Macbeth stands isolated as a product of his excesses. Moreover, he also refuses to reestablish himself as a member of the community: "I'll not yield / To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (5.10.28-29). Since Macbeth's immoderacy refuses to conform to self-control and unwritten influences, written law must intervene. Plato declares, "That wisdom and control should, if possible, come from within; failing that, it must be imposed from without...And this is plainly the intention of the law" (333). Macbeth's death satisfies the need to restore order through written law. Macduff announces that although Macbeth's body will die, his infamy will:

> Live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
>
> We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
>
> Painted on a pole, and underwrit,
>
> 'Here may you see the tyrant.' (5.10.24-27)

Macbeth will live to be a warning, a *moneo,* for those who choose to live without reason and give in to excess. Furthermore, the display of the severed head after execution was the norm of the early modern era, for public punishment serves as a warning.[10] However, since Macbeth's monstrosity is inward, the display must include a written account of

[10] Michel Foucault traces the history of punishment and the excessiveness of public executions *Discipline and Punish* (47-50 and 89-92).

Macbeth's crimes. With this in mind, Cicero succinctly sums up the necessary punishment for tyrants:

> Indeed, the whole of that noxious, sacrilegious breed should be banished from human society. Just as certain parts of the body are amputated once they begin to be drained of blood, and in their virtually lifeless condition affect other parts, so once the savagery and brutality of the beast takes human shape, it must be excised, so to say, from the body of humanity which we all share. (*OO* 94)

Macbeth's decapitation facilitates a symbolic meaning by removing the head of the state from the body politic.[11] Additionally, the beheading of the monster, a typical trope in medieval and early modern literature, removes the inhuman monster from human society. The fragmentation of the monster's form and the presentation of the head for all to gaze upon demonstrate the exercise of authority and authority's allowable tolerances and the punishment for exceeding those tolerances.

The punishment of the tyrant monster protects the home, protects the country, and ultimately, protects humanity. Excessive desires disrupt one's ability to reason. Once the ability to reason ends, the behaviors that separate man from beast, including wisdom and deliberation, become overpowered by excessiveness. Above all, those in power must ensure self-discipline. Foucault insists, "Thus, the prince's moderation … serves as a basis of a sort of compact between the ruler and the ruled: the latter can obey him, seeing that he is master of himself" (*The Use* 174). When Macbeth allows his desires and

[11] Marjorie Garber supports this theory as she discusses James I's political writings concerning his views on being the head of state (88).

excesses to overcome reason, the social contrast between subject and ruler becomes null and void.

CONCLUSION

Examining Fair and Foul

At the borders of humanity lie monsters. Humanity consists of living correctly within the thresholds imposed by the state. Moderation establishes the limits, defining the meaning of these boundaries. Those that inhabit the spaces outside of norms effectively abandon all that makes them human. The fundamental tenets of living correctly inside a community ensures the monster that lives in all of us is kept restrained. While these individuals who permit excesses to control their lives present no physical affectations, their souls reflect their monstrous inhumanity. Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero all warn of the monstrous being that lives inside every man. For Aristotle, man's soul contains a rational and irrational component. Excessive traits such as ambition, self-indulgence, and fearlessness cause the irrational part of the soul to overcome the rational aspect of an individual's demeanor. Plato agrees, but further breaks down one's soul into three sections: the monster, the lion, and rational man. Excessiveness feeds the monster and the lion which suppresses reason. Cicero maintains that man's soul becomes infected by vice. Individuals who relinquish reason and indulge in personal desire and excess, forfeit their claim to humanity.

Monstrosity in human form pervades history. Caesar, Hitler, Stalin, and Saddam Hussein have all received the moniker "tyrant." Their excessive desires, not only of

ambition, but self-indulgence, have also labeled these individuals as “monsters.” Shakespeare accentuates the premise of excess as he portrays four characters—Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff, and Malcolm—that experience desire and temptation. How these characters react when compelled by these excessive forces confirms the classic notion that emphasizes moderation; excesses result in the ruination of men and, furthermore contribute to the ruination of the state. Those who lose the ability to reason become outcasts in society, while those who follow the dictates of self-control (at times with assistance from intimates) attain excellence. By correctly utilizing the education system, a stable home life, and intimate friends, a man establishes a life of moderation. When these regulatory measures fail, written law must intervene and a man’s misdeeds are publicly punished to serve as a warning to others.

Plato asks his followers to consider, “What is the origin and purpose of the conventional notions of fair and foul?” (332). Then, in true Plato fashion, he answers with a question, “Does not the one subject the beast in us to our human, … while the other enslaves our humaner nature to the beast?” (332). When the witches incant “Fair is foul and foul is fair” they call to Macbeth’s animal nature allowing the beast to overwhelm his rational thought. Macbeth becomes enslaved to excess, and he transforms from Scotland’s valiant and worthy subject into the monster that dismantles the country. Thus, moderate behavioral boundaries set in place by the era’s social structure prevent chaos within the entwined domestic and political spheres of the country.

The early modern era empowers each man to safeguard against excess and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* attests to the dangers that befall those individuals that succumb to excess. These individuals cede reason for desire. The danger lies when the excessive

individual occupies a position he or she is not prepared for. Consequently, the relevance of *Macbeth* to the modern era is striking. We live in a world where excess is celebrated and often individuals who possess these traits are revered. Unfortunately, there is little or no room for moderation.[12] By placing emphasis on the dangers of excess and immoderation in *Macbeth*, the modern world may be reminded of the perils of congregating at the extremes of social norms.

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12 For more on political moderation in the modern era see Robert Zaretsky. "In Defense of Moderation." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 62, no. 22, Feb 2016, pp. b14-b16. *MLA International Bibliography*. ISSN: 0009-5982.

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