

YOU TAKE THE HIGH ROAD, AND I'LL TAKE THE LOW ROAD:
A POST-COLONIAL ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter, Ella:

“You are braver than you believe,

Stronger than you seem,

Smarter than you think, and

Loved more that you’ll ever know”

– From *Winnie-the-Pooh*, A. A. Milne

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*:

A POST-COLONIAL ANALYSIS

ALLISON M. DOBBS-BUCHANAN

ABSTRACT

Post-colonial studies reveal a great deal about the treatment of Scotland in *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's only Scottish play reflects specific English cultural ideologies, which had positioned Scotland as an enemy Other in opposition to England. When James VI of Scotland became James I, the King of England, he manipulated England's xenophobic attitudes: James I redefined the Lowland Scots' cultural identity as English, and he forced Highland Scots into the position of enemy Other by emphasizing Highlanders Gaelic heritage. I argue that these contemporary national attitudes and colonial tensions echo throughout *Macbeth* because Shakespeare crafted his play to specifically mirror James I's ethnocentric rhetoric: the heroes of the play, Duncan, Malcolm, and McDuff, are consistently characterized as Lowland Anglo-Scots while the villains, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and the Weird Sisters, are depicted as Highland Gaelic-Scots. Consequently, I show that *Macbeth* reflects and reinforces the prevalent colonial discourse that was used to excuse, and even perpetrate, the English desire to assimilate and Anglicize the Scottish by means of colonization.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, literary scholars have utilized post-colonial theories in order to analyze the central influence that racial, cultural, and national attitudes played within Shakespeare's works. Such studies are significant because they have identified the ways in which Shakespeare, whose plays embody "the quintessence of Englishness" and serve "as a measure for humanity itself," emphasizes English superiority over uncivilized and marginalized Others (Loomba and Orkin). Thus, these post-colonial discourses have served to "challeng[e] the 'meta-narratives' (or dominant writings . . .) that had excluded and marginalized the experiences and cultures of the underprivileged," because they concentrate on the use of "language as a tool of domination and the means of constructing identity" and attempt to determine the effect the language of these "meta-narratives" had upon the identity constructions of the non-English (Loomba and Orkin 2-3).

However, with the vast sum of criticism centered upon Shakespeare, a quantity which also includes a sizeable amount of post-colonial criticism, it is surprising to note that there exists a significant lack of post-colonial scholarship examining Shakespeare's characterizations in his play *Macbeth*. This lacuna is especially curious since Martin

Orkin has specifically pointed out the relevance of such a post-colonial examination of *Macbeth*. In his essay, “Possessing the Book and Peopling the Text,” Orkin observes that “the kind of cultural constructions” in *Macbeth* can be “profitably juxtaposed against concepts of subjectivity, power, and incipient nationhood” (197). Nonetheless, a brief survey of available scholarship reveals that neither Orkin nor other post-colonial and Shakespearean critics have yet to actually scrutinize *Macbeth* in such a manner that utilizes relevant post-colonial theories in order to further understand the ways that emerging contemporary national attitudes and colonial tensions were reflected in the play.

Originally, post-colonial theory arose out of concern over the effect white European colonization had upon the indigenous peoples of Africa and the Americas. As Frantz Fanon discusses in his essay, “The Negro and Psychopathology,” the involuntary, and frequently violent, colonization of foreign lands and their native inhabitants has had a significantly detrimental impact upon the colonized society’s development of identity and self-worth. Fanon posits, “every society” suffers from a “collective[ly] unconscious” aggression, which the society uses to both forcibly dominate and suppress other less powerful societies, and which is then cathartically released upon these subjugated societies through social outlets, such as literature and language (464). Accordingly, the colonizer will force a native individual to agree with the equation that black is equal to savagery and white is equal to civilization, which in turn causes the individual to reject his family, his history, and his blackness in an attempt to assimilate into the dominant society – an attempt in which he can never hope to achieve total success and acceptance (Fanon 466). These actions create a psychological “neurosis” within a native individual

that Fanon concludes “is the product of his cultural situation;” as a result, one’s “ego collapses and the goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth” (467). Therefore, not only do native individuals suffer from the physical loss of their sovereignty, but they also experience a violent psychological conquest, which can and has lasted for decades and centuries past the time that their colonization ended.

Post-colonial criticism primarily concentrates attention upon the colonization of people who are racially different from the European Imperial nations; however, this discourse has proven to be relevant when examining the time in which William Shakespeare lived even though, at this point, English expansion was a mere fledgling effort when compared to the actions taken by the bellicose imperial nation that Great Britain later became. Since no individual is able to exist entirely independent from contemporary cultural and political structures, every individual is subject to and influenced by the dominant social ideologies through which a nation structures itself, allots social power, defines its identity, and determines socially acceptable language, beliefs, and behavior. As Stephen Greenblatt argues, not only do these ideologies, or social codes, influence the kind of literature produced in any nation, but the literature, in turn, reinforces ideologies further upon a society by reflecting them back to readers. Greenblatt identifies the following as three ways in which literature functions in any system: “as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection of these codes” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 4). As a result, literary critics have been able to identify within various forms of literature very specific political and social rhetoric, which later

would be employed to legitimize future aggressive colonization efforts, developing among the English during Shakespeare's era.

Similarly, the post-colonial theorist Edward Said has focused upon the effect this reproduction of ideologies within literature had by expressing that oft-times, authors who belong to a colonizing nation will echo their society's aggression through presenting in their writings "positive ideas of home, of a nation and its language, of proper order, good behaviour, moral values;" such expressions not only function to "devalue other worlds," but "more significantly," these writings "do not prevent or inhibit or give resistance to horrendously unattractive imperialist practices" (1113). Consequently, when exposed to literature that subtly and subversively devalues an individual's way of life and portrays him as an evil savage, a subjugated native individual will eventually come to believe this identity is true and, as Fanon further explains, will develop "an attitude and way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white," corresponding to the predominant "superior" beliefs of the colonizing society (465). Moreover, Kenyan theorist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o finds that such literature both emphasizes and valorizes the language of the colonizer and, consequently, removes native individuals "further and further from [themselves] to other selves, from [their native] world to other worlds" (1132). Thus, as Thiong'o argues, literature and language are used as a means to dominate not just the physical and economic states of the colonized people, but also "the mental universe of the colonized . . . how they perceived themselves and their relationships to the world . . . To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition" (1135). Subsequently, many Shakespearean critics, who examine Shakespeare's works with these post-colonial ideas in mind, have established that throughout his plays, Shakespeare

employs specific characterizations and imagery that reflect the dominant English cultural ideologies and identity politics which structured Shakespeare's society.

Most post-colonial scholarship typically contends that the way Shakespeare chose to depict his characters and their actions is a reflection of the common English rhetoric that excused both the forced subjugation of natives by the colonization of the Americas and Africa and the marginalization of minority religious and cultural groups. Hence, such criticism asserts that certain characters in Shakespeare's plays, such as Caliban (*The Tempest*),¹ Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice*),² and Othello (*Othello*),³ among others, are vilified not simply because of their active antagonism toward the anglicized protagonists, but also because these particular characters exhibit obvious racial, cultural, and religious differences that were judged as inferior and lacking in comparison to English identity. However, some post-colonial critics have scrutinized Shakespeare's representations of characters whose differences from Englishness are not as overtly obvious to modern reader, but were nevertheless distinct in Elizabethan England.⁴ Since Great Britain had yet to exist during Shakespeare's age, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, while all living closely in relation to one another and being all of the same race since they were descended from similar ancestors, were held as separate and distinct cultures from one another. Consequently, the English first located their identity in opposition to the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh. As Michael Neill explains, "nationality can only be imagined as a dimension of difference – something that sets one apart from what one is not"; consequently, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales each "played an equally crucial part in the determination of English identity, functioning as the indispensable anvil upon which the notion of Englishness was violently hammered out" (3). With this in mind, post-colonial

theorists have examined Shakespeare's plays, especially his plays that focus on the early history of England, to locate instances where Shakespeare reflected England in opposition to or interacting with their neighboring nations. Therefore, certain Shakespearean characters, such as the Welshmen, Glendower (*Henry VI, Part I*) and Fluellen (*Henry V*), along with the Irish MacMorris (*Henry V*), have been shown to be influenced by England's early colonial ideologies that juxtaposed the perceived foreignness and savageness of the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish people with the refined culture and traditions of the English.⁵

Not all Shakespearean scholars agree that post-colonial theories should be extended to analyze *Macbeth* and the ways in which the play's characters and actions function, in the manner that Frantz Fanon identifies, as a cathartic outlet for contemporary colonial attitudes, identities, and events. Christopher Wortham posits that "There is little celebration of England and Englishness in Shakespeare's play written after the accession of James VI of Scotland to his English throne as James I in 1603" (97).¹ However, not only does much of the play reflect the specific cultural ideologies, which allowed England to position Scotland as the enemy Other and define English identity in opposition to the Scottish, but the Scottish were, indeed, one of the first nations colonized by the English as a result of James I's efforts to establish a unified Great Britain through his proposal to the English Parliament, The Union of the Crowns. Furthermore, when James VI of Scotland became James I, the King of England, he actively manipulated England's xenophobic attitudes by rhetorically redefining the cultural identity of the

¹ Throughout this thesis, I will distinguish the time prior to 1603 when James VI and I's succession to the English throne by referring to him as James VI. When making reference to James VI and I after 1603, I will use only James I.

Lowland Scots as congruent with the English cultural identity, and defining both the Lowland Scots and the English in opposition to the Highland Scots, whom James I forced into the position of the less civilized, more Gaelic, enemy Other. These emerging contemporary national attitudes and colonial tensions echo throughout *Macbeth*, as exemplified in the increasingly more culturally based distinctions that Shakespeare made between his villainous and virtuous characters. In fact, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and the Weird Sisters can all be seen as belonging to one of the clans of the Highland Scots because they are increasingly depicted as Gaelic/Celtic/Pict-like. In contrast to the villains, however, Duncan, Malcolm, and Macduff are characterized as belonging to one of the more Anglicized Lowland Scots clans, who, as is revealed in historical documents, were Anglicized much earlier than the Highlanders. Moreover, the commonly held stereotypes of the English, which were further reinforced by James I, portrayed Scottish Highlanders and Celts as savage, brutal, and uncivilized, these Gaelic attributes, are connected specifically to Macbeth and his evil actions. These stereotypes become even more significant when one examines Malcolm and Macduff's inverted scene in the fourth Act, which many critics have found difficult to fully explain; I will argue that Shakespeare's inversion of this scene specifically mirrors James I's ethnocentric rhetoric. Consequently, written simultaneously with some England's first expansions efforts, *Macbeth* reflects and reinforces the prevalent colonial discourse that was used to excuse, and even perpetrate, the English desire to assimilate and Anglicize the Scottish by means of colonization.

CHAPTER II

SHAKESPEARE, ENGLAND, AND THE OTHER

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I is often idealized as a “golden age,” or a time when numerous factors, including a relatively centralized government, a boom in population and significant growth in the economy, the development of England into a leading naval power, English expansion and colonization via ocean exploration, and a flourishing in English arts and literature, allowed for the establishment strong political and social ideologies. During this time, the English citizenry cultivated a strong sense of Englishness, or cultural pride and national identity. As a result, we can clearly identify the type of rhetoric that developed among the English that would become the discursive basis for their colonization of Scotland. Since the English citizens believed Scotland to be a foreign, unknown, and uncivilized land, the English used Scotland and its inhabitants to locate and define everything that England was not and, hence, reinforce everything they believed themselves to be. As William Carroll elaborates, “the English project of nation building and self-definition . . . was constructed, in part, by defining and excluding what it was *not*: England was not Scotland . . . Scotland was constructed as a cultural ‘Other’ demonized as a place and people” (272). This process of identifying Englishness

in opposition to others was exacerbated by the presence of national anxieties concerning Scotland's proximity to England, which made Scotland a persistent foreign military threat. Thus, in her essay, "The Formation of Cultural Attitudes," Sarah Barber explains that as a reaction to these anxieties, the Scots came "to be seen as Enemy. . . . alien to [the English] self-image . . . [that was] confined within a polity that define[d] itself as 'just' . . . alien because [the Scottish were] anathema to social order" (170). As a result, the English, as often reflected in their literature of the day, held Scotland as a harsh land populated by a wild, savage, and violent clan of people, who even "did feed on man's flesh" (Reitemeier par. 6). These extremely negative stereotypes fostered a way for the English to define their national and individual identities in opposition to the Scots; also, as Edward Said shows, such ideologies are designed to "validate [the English] world . . . [and] devalue other worlds" (1113).

Early during Elizabeth I's reign as Queen, these English anxieties over the Scottish threat must have only been compounded by the revelation of multiple plots, which were planned to assassinate Elizabeth and place the displaced Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne. The authorship of play *The Raigne of King Edward the Third* is debatable: several critics favor it as one of Shakespeare's very first plays; most insist that the play is written at least partially by Shakespeare; the few remaining scholars deny that Shakespeare had any hand in the play's production (Lapides 3-31). Nevertheless, critics do agree that *Edward III* was written sometime between 1589 and 1596, thus a few short years after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots for her purported role in the conspiracy against Elizabeth I. The play's characterizations of Scotland and its inhabitants, which Fred Lapides describes as "slander[ous]," is,

therefore, relevant in revealing the contemporary animosity of the English for the Scottish (5). In *Edward III*, the English King Edward III and his son, Edward, are continuously described in heroic and very patriotic terms. In contrast with the positive descriptions of England's King and Prince, Scotland's King David, in just the first scene, is referred to as "treacherous," "Ignoble," "traitorous," and one who easily breaks a sworn oath (1.1.124, 135, 155). Edward III further chastises David I and his Scottish army for taking advantage of the absence of English males as a result of England's war with France by "threatening" "silly Ladies" and pillaging undefended borders (1.1.137). Additionally, in the second scene of the play, the Scots are illustrated with even more despicable terms than they were previously. The Countess of Salisbury expresses her shame and embarrassment at having been captured by "a Scot / Either to be wooed with broad untuned oaths, / Or forced by rough insulting barbarism" (1.2.7-9). The Countess then portrays the Scottish as participating in "wild, uncivil, skipping gigs" and, like asses, "Bray[ing] forth their conquest and our overthrow / Even in the barren, bleak, and fruitless air" (1.2.12-14). Finally, the Scots' "babbl[ing]," arrogant boasts are then immediately shown to be meritless since as soon as word reaches them that Edward III and the English army are on their way to the borderlands, the Scottish army cowardly "dislodge[s]" and "fl[ies]" rather than facing their opponents (1.2.56, 59).

Historically, Scotland had been supported by and had supported France rather than England in matters of economy and war. In fact, if we discount *Edward III* as the work of Shakespeare, the play still provides insight into the contemporary threat Scotland posed to England. Furthermore, in many of his plays, including very early on in his play *Henry V*, Shakespeare recognizes this antagonistic relationship, as shown in the play's

disparaging descriptions of Scots. Throughout the first scene of the play when Henry V is discussing his “claim” to the throne of France, King Henry V and his many advisors, including the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Westmoreland, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, describe the Scots in terms that echo their portrayal in *Edward III*: the Scots are a sneaky and “pilfering” enemy who would use England’s war with France to its advantage and strike at England when England is incapable of defending itself (1.2.96, 136-139, 142-154). King Henry V even acknowledges that when the English army “invade[s] the French,” he must also simultaneously defend England against *all* of Scotland: “We do not mean the coursing snatchers only, / But fear the main intendment of the Scot, / Who hath been still a giddy neighbor to us” (1.2.136-138, 143-145). Later in that same scene, Westmoreland clearly describes the union between Scotland and France with the lines, “If that you will France win, / Then with Scotland first begin” and then likens Scotland to a “weasel” that “Comes sneaking” into “the eagle England being in prey” in order to create havoc by “suc[king] her [England’s] princely eggs” (1.2.167-171). Interestingly, William Hazlitt, a Romantic era critic, observed that England is depicted as an Eagle who has a moral and legitimate right to attack other sovereign nations, but the Scots, who attack England, are weasels, or verminous pests (par. 12). However, when Hazlitt states that this passage is simply “an admirable picture of the spirit of the good old days” (par. 12), he fundamentally misses the real issue: English jingoism was already the inherent basis for the pejorative description of the Scots even in Shakespeare’s day. Clearly, by the time Shakespeare started writing *Macbeth*, England had already begun to accept the discourse validating the forced colonization of people, as later argued by John Stuart Mill, who represented colonization as the “sacred duties” of

“civilized nations,” such as England, to save “those to whom nationality and independence are a certain evil” (qtd. in Said 1112).

Despite the English bias against the Scottish, James VI of Scotland nevertheless did succeed Elizabeth I upon her death, to also become James I, King of England and Ireland. We might assume that with this new Scottish king, who was both highly educated and Protestant, the English’s positioning of Scotland as an “Enemy Other” would subside. However, the very opposite was true: English national anxieties increased dramatically at the time that James I was crowned and continued throughout much of his reign. Thus as Andrew Hadfield explicates, at the time of James VI’s succession, the manner in which the English perceived the Scots changed “From being, as they had been deemed by earlier apologists, brothers in Protestantism, the Scots became ‘strangers’ (a term employed with equal venom to describe recusants within England) and ‘barbarians’, an identification that underpins the language of conquest” that was so often employed shortly after by the Imperial Great Britain (161-162). These xenophobic fears created a double-down effect that served to further emphasize and maintain the purity of Englishness over all other cultures, but especially over the Scottish. As Jonathan Baldo observes, the English attempted to reinforce their national identity with three fundamental principles: “(1) that humanity was divided into races or nations; (2) that the purity of the English nation would be sullied by foreign admixtures; and (3) that English language, law, and customs (including dress) were the badges of nationality” (93). Furthermore, Geoffrey Bullough explains that because the English worried that a union between the two countries would result in either the subsumption of England to Scotland or the sully of their Englishness through interaction and intermarriage with

the Scottish, “anti-Scottish outbursts” steadily increased in both frequency and intensity (443). Thus, when James I did propose The Union of the Crowns before the English Parliament, not only did Parliament reject the motion, but it also refused to grant the Scots’ equal standing as citizens of England (Bullough 443). In fact, in reaction to James I’s Union proposal, one member of Parliament, Sir Christopher Piggot, is recorded as declaring that England should “not join murderers, thieves, and the roguish Scots,” while a character in a popular passage of a literary work described the commonly held opinion of Englishmen who would prefer “a hundred thousand of ‘em [Scots] were [in Virginia] . . . we should find ten times more comfort of them [in Virginia] than we do here [in London]” (qtd. in Braunmuller 12-13). Consequently, this self-proclaimed position of the English culture as superior to every other culture and nationality was a pervasive opinion at the time that James I took power and also reflected in the popular writings of the time.

Additionally, when further examining the political discourse of the day, especially that of James I, we can see that James I played a significantly discursive role in encouraging the English colonization of his homeland. In order to reinforce his new position as King of England and increase his influence with the English nobility, James I chose to downplay his own Scottishness and to anglicize himself, his stated attitudes, and his political policies. As Sandra Bell explains, “James tended to de-emphasize, even erase, his nationality” as well as to highlight his hereditary ties to England and the English king, Henry VII (par. 3). Furthermore, the Union rhetoric that James I utilized also served to define the male superiority of the English government by positioning Scotland as the subservient, feminized country. To do so, Bell explains that James I often “used the analogy of unequal halves,” which aligned with “the implicit hierarchy of the

male-English and female-Scottish partners” (par. 5). In fact, in one of his speeches delivered to both houses of Parliament, James I proposes that the English “be the husband, they [the Scottish] the wife” (“Speech of 1607” 294). Furthermore, James I overtly legitimizes England’s colonization of Scotland when he positions the English as “the conquerours” and the Scots as “the conquered” (“Speech of 1607” 294). Advancing the idea of English pre-eminence in another speech to the English Parliament, James I declared that his intentions were to “conform the Lawes of *Scotland* to the Law of *England*, not the the Lawes of *England* to the Law of *Scotland*” (“Speech in Star Chamber” 329). Thus, James I’s proposal, the Union of the Crowns, actively situated Scotland as the colonized and England as the colonizer.

Of even more significance is the attempt James I made to unite the Scottish who lived on the English Borders, the Lowlanders, with the English citizenry in terms far more powerful than a simple coalescence of the physical countries. In order for the Union of the Crowns to achieve lasting success, James I had to integrate two separate national and cultural identities into one whole. Therefore, James I often emphasized the innate similarities between the Lowland Scots and the English. In an address to his English parliament, James I contends:

Hath not God first united these two Kingdomes both in Language,
Religion, and similtude of maners? Yea, hath hee not made us all in one
Island, compassed with one Sea, and of it selfe by nature so indivisible, as
almost those that were borderers themselves on the late Borders, cannot
distinguish, nor know, or discerne their owne limits? (“Speech of 1603”
271-272)

Consequently, as the newly appointed English king, James I strove to remove the English identity marker of Scotland as the alien and savage enemy Other and accentuate his argument with the suggestion that the English and the Lowlanders were divinely created as one “indivisible” people.

James I also worked to thoroughly unite the English and the Scottish Lowlanders by identifying for the English a new enemy Other upon whom they could focus their xenophobic anxieties and ethnocentric stereotypes. Historically, both the Highlanders and the Irish to the west of England had retained much more of their Gaelic/Celtic cultural heritage and customs than either the Lowland Scottish or the English. The Gaelic/Celtic people were descended from the aboriginal Picts, whom England thought to be primitive, cruel, un-godly, and less-than-human. The English, or now the Anglo-Scots, as William C. Carroll explains, believed the “New World Savages” were also descendants of the Picts of Scotland and Ireland; thus, the Irish and the Scottish Highlanders were “as equally primitive and un-English” as the English believed the Native Americans to be (284). Accordingly, since the Irish, Highlanders, and Native Americans were viewed as equal descendants of the Picts, the English, along with James I and the Lowland Scots, held that “Nothing but fear and force can teach duty and obedience . . . [to a] most filthy people, utterly enveloped in vices, most untutored of all people in the rudiments of faith” (qtd. in Takaki 894-895). Consequently, James I played upon these ethnocentric biases in *Basilikon Doron*, writing that the Highlanders are composed of “two sorts of people: the one . . . are barbarous for the most part and yet mixed with some show of civility; the other . . . are utterly barbarous, without any sort of show of civility” (22). Underscoring this description and furthering his unification

design, James I went so far as to organize a group of Lowlanders from Fife, called the Fife Adventurers, in an internal colonization effort to civilize the Highlanders and rid them of their Gaelic cultural practices and Gaelicized language (Highley, “The Place of Scots” 58-60). James I strategically planned this effort of forceful subjugation, which is described by Mary Floyd-Wilson as one where “Lowlanders sought to suppress and civilize the wild and savage Highlanders,” so to provide a “‘middle ground’, an opportunity for the English and Lowland Scots to come together as ‘Britons,’” in order to “remov[e] ‘the reproach out of the haill natioun’” of the unified Great Britain (141). Consequently, James I not only displaced the English aggression toward all Scots to only the Gaelicized group of Scottish and Irish by demonizing them in order to integrate the anglicized Southern Scots with the English, but he also adopted for himself and the Anglo-Scots the English colonial desire to assimilate and civilize all un-English societies through forceful colonization and domination.

Shakespeare had for several years prior to *Macbeth* been vilifying and scapegoating the Scots in previous plays as I have shown. It is worth mentioning here, though, that the Scotland references in *Macbeth* differ considerably from prior references to Scotland and its citizens because this is the first and only time that Shakespeare set a play almost exclusively in Scotland and used almost all Scottish characters. In other words, in his previous plays, Shakespeare had always portrayed all Scots as treacherous, yet cowardly, villains; in *Macbeth*, though, Shakespeare depicts a select group of Scots as both heroic and virtuous. Accordingly, because of *Macbeth*’s change in setting and characters combined with the significant historical events that occurred at the start of Jacobean England, many critics have agreed that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* very early

in the reign of James I because of the abundant contemporary references that have been identified throughout the play. Sally Mapstone takes a very similar stance to many other *Macbeth* scholars, asserting that “The first version of *Macbeth* was composed in 1606” because she finds that “As a play, it clearly manifests many anxieties about the capacity of rulers to go in the direction of tyranny, for power remorselessly to corrupt; the idea of a Scottish king, of a presence known but also unfamiliar, gave Shakespeare perhaps the opportunity to figure those questions with some sharpness” (181). Similarly, other critics frequently debate “the political positioning of the play in relation to the Stuart monarchy:” either the play “supports the mythology crafted and promoted by the king,” or the play was designed “to warn James VI and I of the inherent dangers of imperialist and absolutist thought” (Alker and Nelson 381). However, no critic has yet to examine the way the play reflects the contemporary colonial attitudes shared by the Anglo-Scots as well as James I and, consequently, the way the play functions as the kind of literature that Fanon identifies as a cathartic outlet for the release of the “forces accumulated in the form of aggression” (464). By examining the way Shakespeare contrasted the actions, characters, settings, and language of the “heroes” and the “villains” in the play, we can clearly identify the common rhetoric underscoring the popular English opinion of their exclusivity and superiority, Scots-Gaelic savagery, and the need to civilize and assimilate the Other within the English culture.

CHAPTER III

MACBETH: THE PLAY

In *Macbeth*, the demarcation between the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands is highlighted very early. In the second scene of the play, Shakespeare not only establishes the violent war already taking place in Scotland, but also identifies the war as one between the Gaelic-Scot Highlanders and the Anglo-Scot Lowlanders: the “merciless MacDonwald,” since he is described as “a *rebel*, for to that / The multiplying *villanes of nature* / Do *swarm* upon him – from the Western Isles / Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied” (1.2.10-13, emphasis added). We can easily discern that MacDonwald is a Scotsman not only from his Scottish-sounding name, but also because he could not have been rebelling against Duncan, the King, were MacDonwald not a Scottish subject of Duncan. Additionally, the “Western Isles” would have described “the Hebrides,” the Scottish Islands to the west of mainland Scotland, which were populated by Gaelic-speaking clans and ruled by the Highland Scottish thanes (*Macbeth* 6, fn. 12). Moreover, not only is the rebellious MacDonwald and his Gaelic army thought to be inherently villainous and savage, but the language Shakespeare employs in this description likens them to a “swarm,” imagery typically associated with a plague of locusts or vermin. As a

result, this description mimics the imagery that the English had been employing to portray the Scottish as “hoards of beggarly Scotsmen swarming across the border and devouring England’s prosperity” and immediately establishes the Enemy threat of the Gaelic Others, as Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson reveal in their essay, “*Macbeth*, the Jacobean Scot, and the Politics of the Union” (383).

Directly following MacDonwald’s death and the collapse of his insurrection, the King of Norway attempts to take advantage of the Scots’ weakened condition and invades Scotland with the help of a “most disloyal traitor / The Thane of Cawdor” (1.2.53-54). Shakespeare reveals the Norwegian army is as quickly defeated as MacDonwald’s rebel forces. However, the speed with which Norway’s armies are rebuffed is not what is significant about this brief passage, rather it is important to note from where in Scotland the Thane of Cawdor, the Scottish traitor who assists Norway, originates. Maps of Scotland that date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show that Cawdor was located in the heart of the Scottish Highlands near Inverness and Nairn (Mercator “*Scotiae Regnum* [north sheet]”). Thus, at the very opening of the play, Shakespeare introduces two treacherous and villainous Highland Scots; with these characterizations, Shakespeare not only replicates his standard depictions of the Scottish from his earlier plays, but Shakespeare also mirrors the contemporary conflict between the English sense of superior civility and the position of the Scots-Irish as enemies and the uncivilized Other.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOWLANDERS

Shakespeare establishes early in the play that Duncan, the Scottish king, is a Lowlander. As Ronald J. Boling elucidates, “Duncan belongs to the Atholl clan of the southern Scottish coalition” (3). As such, we can see that within Duncan’s characterization resides an anglicized Lowland Scotsman. He is repeatedly described as “royal” and “of golden blood,” “father”-like, “meek,” “great in office,” and displaying heavenly “virtues;” such descriptions serve to reinforce the supremacy and goodness of his nature (1.7.17-19; 2.2.13; 2.3.97, 109). However, Shakespeare’s rendering of Duncan’s nature is a marked and purposeful divergence from the historical descriptions of Duncan’s character. In his characterization of Duncan as a fatherly and venerable ruler whose murder shocked and dismayed his loyal Thanes, Shakespeare obscures Holinshed’s portrayal of Duncan as a king who is young, inexperienced in both ruling and war (as such Scotland suffers many military defeats), and “negligent . . . in punishing offenders” (Bullough 432; Holinshed qtd. in Bullough 489). Duncan’s significant weaknesses prompted his subjects to view him as “a faint-hearted milksop, more meet to governe a sort of idle moonks in some cloister, than to have the rule of such valiant and

hardie men of warre as the Scots were” and to express “little general regret” upon his death (Holinshed qtd. in Bullough 489; Bullough 432).

Additionally, in *Macbeth*, Duncan is not only “a most sainted king,” but his right to reign is also depicted as in alignment with the England’s belief in the Divine Right of Kings (4.3.109). Duncan’s murder, in fact, prompted many evil and aberrant omens to occur; these portents were commonly believed to be the universe’s reaction to the unnatural death of a King, who was chosen and anointed by God. Similarly, upon the discovery of Duncan’s dead body, Macduff also evokes Duncan’s heavenly appointment when he laments that a “Most *sacrilegious* murder hath broke ope / The *Lord’s anointed temple*” (2.3.53-54, emphasis added). Nonetheless, history reveals that the actual Duncan’s sovereignty was neither divinely appointed nor was it obtained through virtuous actions. In fact, prior to Duncan becoming King of Scotland, Malcolm II, Duncan’s grandfather, utilizing methods not unlike those of Macbeth, “founded his dynasty upon murder” (Boling 8). Not only did Malcom II kill “his predecessor Kenneth III, [who was] grandfather to . . . Lady Macbeth,” but he also “murder[ed], among others, Findlaech, Macbeth’s father” in order “to place his grandson [Duncan] on the throne” (Boling 3, 8). Therefore, even though the historical Duncan obtained his crown as a result of very similar actions for which Shakespeare vilifies Macbeth as a murderous tyrant, nowhere in *Macbeth* does any allusion or hint make reference to Duncan’s own questionable right to be King of Scotland.

Furthermore, the historical Scottish political system at the time in which *Macbeth* occurs was one of tanistry. Boling explains that in Scotland’s Gaelic society, the kingship was alternated “between ruling class members of the southern and northern

Scottish clans,” so as to keep the clans on equal footing and stop one group from achieving more power than any other (3). Nevertheless, Duncan, a Lowlander, effectively abandons the tanistic tradition in favor of primogeniture, or a dynastic monarchy of kingship, when he names his eldest son, Malcolm, as his heir after Macbeth’s defeat of MacDonwald and the Norwegian invaders (1.5.40). By violating Scotland’s long-established system of tanistry and naming Malcolm as the next king, Duncan not only robs one ruling member of the Highland clan of his royal entitlement, but he also abandons a very Gaelic tradition for a very English one. Moreover, Shakespeare reinforces the idea of Scottish inferiority to Englishness by using language that also imagines Duncan’s designation of Malcolm as future king of Scotland as being legitimized by divinely appointed authority. Directly after giving Malcolm the title of “Prince of Cumberland,” Duncan declares that the “honor must / Not unaccompanied invest in him only, But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine / On all deservers,” and throughout the play, characters state their belief that Macbeth “holds the due of birth” from Malcolm (1.5.40-43; 3.6.25). Thus, Malcolm’s birthright is one that is supported by the natural elements in the universe, again reflecting the Renaissance belief that the heavenly bodies would react to the birth and/or death of a rightful, divinely appointed king or ruler.

While portraying Malcolm as the rightful heir to the Scottish throne, who is blameless in his opposition to the tyrannical Macbeth, Shakespeare depicts Malcolm as a thoroughly anglicized Lowlander; in fact, the “Prince of Cumberland” is arguably perhaps the most anglicized character in all of *Macbeth* (1.5.40). Indeed, as Alker and Nelson point out, Malcolm “is, in fact, half English” (389). Significantly, then,

Cumberland was, and still is, a northern English county bordering Southern Scotland.

While England and Scotland had often vied over ownership of the land, Cumberland had been primarily in England's control for centuries prior to the time in which Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*. Furthermore, Alker and Nelson posit that Malcolm's relation to Siward, the lord of Northumberland, and his English heritage "suggest flexibility, or even deterioration, in the boundaries" separating England and Lowland Scotland, and as such, these "border relations extend beyond the peaceful into the familial" (394).

Consequently, in order to emphasize the validity Malcolm's royal inheritance, Shakespeare alludes to the Divine Rights of Kings, titles Malcolm as the "Prince" of the English Cumberland, and reveals the English heritage of Scotland's future king; obviously, Shakespeare is using Malcolm's proximity to England, and even his Englishness itself, as the sole means of imparting authenticity and legitimacy to the Scottish throne.

Another way in which Shakespeare emphasizes Malcolm's Englishness is by simply changing the historic Malcolm's name, which had already been anglicized in earlier historical documents, to an even more English-sounding name that erased any traces of Gaelic ancestry. Furthermore, in juxtaposition to Malcolm's name, Shakespeare notably chooses to retain, and even emphasize, Malcolm's brother's Gaelic name. Malcolm's surname was Canmore, but in Gaelic his name was rendered Mael Coluim Cenn Mór mac Donnchada;⁶ Malcolm's brother, Donal, had the surname, Bain (in Gaelic: Domnall Bán mac Donnchada)⁷ (Gleeson 132). Rather than maintaining Malcolm's full name, Shakespeare anglicizes Malcolm by entirely eliminating any vestige of his Gaelic surname, but Shakespeare merges Donal's given name and his

Gaelic surname into one – Donalbain. Logically, then, and in contrast to his brother Donalbain, who chooses to escape to the Gaelic Ireland, the anglicized Malcolm chooses to flee to the English court after the murder of his father (2.3.135-136). Curiously, in the play, Malcolm is the only one to return to Scotland to avenge his father's death; Donalbain is never again seen once he enters Ireland. However, the historical accounts of Macbeth and Malcolm actually reveal that upon Malcolm's death, "the Scots chose as king Donald, Malcolm's brother, and drove out all the English who were with King Malcolm before . . . [in] clear preference for the old system of succession" (qtd. in Boling 5). Shakespeare thus omits the real historical events that follow this incident in order to further accentuate a divinely-inspired future of Scotland with Malcolm as the head of a fully anglicized royal dynasty.

Additionally, during his time in England, Malcolm not only associates with the saintly King Edward the Confessor, but he is also "indoctrinated into English culture and politics at Edward's court in London" (Boling 4). As such, Malcolm begins to identify King Edward as his model of the ideal ruler – a king so virtuous and divinely appointed that he possesses "the heavenly gift of prophesy" and the "most miraculous work," "the healing benediction" that cures subjects from "the Evil" (4.3.147-148, 157-158). Consequently, in Act 4, scene 3, when Macduff approaches Malcolm to entreat him to return to save Scotland and after Malcolm first defines himself in contrast to Macbeth, Malcolm also proceeds to reveal his true identity is in harmony with his idealized version of a king. Malcolm discloses himself to be full of "graces, / As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness, / Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness / devotion, patience, courage, fortitude" (4.3.92-95). Such qualities are reminiscent of the Christian ideals, the

fruits of the spirit, and, consequently, also would be the exact same qualities that the divinely appointed, saintly English king, Edward the Confessor, rather than the usurping tyrant, Macbeth, would exhibit.

Therefore, by finding an example in the King of England for the kind of pious and virtuous king he wants to be, Malcolm starts to locate both his identity and his self-worth in that of King Edward, and as Frantz Fanon points out, starts to actively pursue an English identity. As such, upon Malcolm being hailed as “King of Scotland” after Macbeth’s defeat, Malcolm rejects his “savage” Scottish ancestry, opting instead to adopt the seemingly more sophisticated English culture by declaring his “thanes and kinsmen” as “earls, the first that ever Scotland / In such an honor named” (5.8.59, 62-64). Moreover, since a Scottish Thane is the equivalent of an English Earl, Malcolm’s belief that simply renaming his Thanes as Earls is enough of a reward for their loyalty, rather than providing them with some sort of tangible promotion, suggests that Malcolm indeed values an English identity over Scottish tradition and history.

Of perhaps even more significance than is Malcolm use of English titles to reward his Scottish Thanes are the words Malcolm speaks to his newly appointed Earls. In fact, these words are the last words readers and playgoers are left with since they close the play: “So, thanks to all at once and to each one / Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone” (5.8.75). While the play closes with the anticipation of Malcolm’s coronation, which certainly seems like a logical conclusion, and Malcolm’s invitation, which is also seemingly benign, we should note that Scone is located at the heart of the Scottish Lowlands. As a result, with his invitation to accompany him to Scone, Malcolm is relocating all the previous very Gaelic, Scottish Thanes to an anglicized Lowland area

where the English wield a strong cultural influence. Of further interest is that Malcolm's invitation is not only an obvious reference to the traditional Scottish coronation site, the Stone of Scone, but it is also a masterful allusion that works in a very similar fashion as did Malcolm's earlier title, "Prince of Cumberland." By the time Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, the Stone of Scone had been in the possession of the English rulers for almost exactly three centuries; indeed, the Stone was even fitted beneath the seat cushion of the English coronation chair ("Stone of Scone"). Thus, the Stone of Scone not only had strong contemporary connotations with Englishness, but the Stone also reflected England's desire to subsume Scotland and subject the Scots to English domination. Consequently, Shakespeare repeatedly uses both proximity to England and the English crown itself to lend any sort of legitimacy to the future reign over Scotland by its thoroughly anglicized King, Malcolm.

Malcolm's choice to anglicize himself upon his entry into England is clearly reminiscent of James I's choice to purposefully negate his own Scottish identity. As previously mentioned, James I repeatedly invoked his English heritage through his maternal ties to Henry VII. Likewise, Malcolm too is half-English since Siward, the English Earl of Northumberland, who accompanies Malcolm back to England with an army of "ten thousand men" to overthrow Macbeth, is his "worthy uncle" (4.3.190; 5.6.2). While certainly most of the soldiers are Englishmen, the lawful "Scottish" king is leading them; moreover, many of the Scottish Thanes had joined Malcolm as well, probably making the army a thorough mix of English and Scottish forces. Nonetheless, Shakespeare makes no attempt to distinguish between the soldiers or give Scotland any

credit for the defeat of Macbeth's forces, as is exemplified in the repeated references to the "English pow'r," the "English force," and scourge of English (5.2.1; 5.3.19, 57).

Moreover, Shakespeare also evokes the femininity of Scotland and further places it in a passive position, which was first rhetorically established by James I with his marriage rhetoric. Claire McEachern explains that "All speak of Scotland as female and diseased, a body in need of a purge" (96). Consequently, implicit within Malcolm's use of an English army to overthrow Macbeth is not only the failure of the inferior Scottish to succeed independently of the superior English, but also the dependency of the infected and sickly Scotland entirely upon the uncorrupted English to cleanse the Scots of their depravity. Therefore, the imagery Shakespeare employs is one of an English military force overthrowing a Scottish ruler; as such, as Baldo argues, it "bore very timely implications for the Union question . . . [of the way] Scotland would be treated: 'a conquered and slavish province to be governed by a Viceroy or Deputy'" (96). In the end, it does not really matter if Macbeth is a legitimate king or a tyrant because what is important for English culture is that Malcolm has placed his country and his countrymen in their suitable position – as a wife that is in subjection to her English husband.

Finally, Shakespeare's Anglicization of Macduff goes hand-in-hand with his Anglicization of Malcolm because it is a clear and purposeful alteration from Shakespeare's primary historical source, Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Indeed, Holinshed states that Macduff utterly condemns Malcolm for being "so replet[e] with inconsistent behaviour and manifest vices of *Englishmen*" (qtd. in Bulloughs 502, emphasis added). However, Shakespeare eliminates such a damaging description of both Malcolm and his Englishness in order to relocate Malcolm's purity and kingly righteousness strictly upon

the time he spent at England's court and within his English heritage. Furthermore, the anglicized Macduff is the one to behead Macbeth and rid Scotland of its "Great tyranny" (4.3.33). It is interesting that the character who kills Macbeth hails from a Lowland region and one that is a neighboring village and county to Scone. Significantly, Fife is the same Lowland area from which the "Fife Adventurers" originated, the men who were employed by James I to go on the mission to "save" and cleanse the Highland savages by civilizing and eradicating their Gaelic tendencies. Similarly, Macduff, too then, can be seen as the one chosen to save Scotland – by killing Macbeth, Macduff has removed "the reproach out of the haill natioun" (Floyd-Wilson 141). While this similarity may just be a coincidence, it can still be taken as evidence that Shakespeare may be subconsciously reflecting and validating the contemporary inner-colonization efforts of James I in *Macbeth's* setting and characters.

CHAPTER V

THE HIGHLANDERS

At the opening of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare clearly identifies his title character as a valiant man-of-war, who loyally defends his monarch against the two principal threats to Duncan's regency: the rebellious Highlanders led by MacDonwald and the incursive Norwegian army assisted by another traitorous Highlander, the Thane of Cawdor. In only the second scene of the play, a captain, who is reporting to Duncan on the status of the Highland rebellion, describes MacDonwald and his forces as "all too weak; / For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name" (1.2.15-16). Shortly thereafter, the captain not only details Macbeth's victory over the rebel armies and his execution of MacDonwald, but the captain also notes that rather than taking time to revel in the hard fought victory, Macbeth immediately turned his attention to the Norwegian army and the Thane of Cawdor with "doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe" (1.2.39). In response to these descriptions of Macbeth's heroism, Duncan calls Macbeth his "valiant cousin" and a "worthy gentleman" who "smack[s] of honor," and as such Duncan decides to reward Macbeth with a new title, Thane of Cawdor (1.2.24, 44, 66).

These early representations of Macbeth's nature deviate considerably from the fiendish Macbeth whose character, motives, and actions have intrigued critics for centuries. Scholarly convention typically explains Macbeth's drastic change in behavior as either a result of his impatient ambition,⁸ the influence of witchcraft and/or evil,⁹ or his wife's incessant challenges to his manliness.¹⁰ However, these explanations have neglected to examine, or even acknowledge, the role that Macbeth's new title, Thane of Cawdor, might have played in his devolution from honorable warrior to traitorous murderer.

At the start of the play, Macbeth is Thane of Glamis. This original title is not just a simple form of address or a way to reveal where an individual resides or what land he might have ownership over. As Derek Cohen explains, Macbeth's "title alone tells a great deal about Macbeth the individual subject and Macbeth the social and political personage, . . . [and] indicates a locus in a social order that is itself imbricated in an established political and historical tradition" (48). Consequently, Macbeth's place in Scottish society, the role he plays, the actions he takes, the manner in which others view him and judge his character, and even his own sense of identity is intricately tied to his individual title, first as the Thane of Glamis and then as the Thane of Cawdor.

Significantly, the name Glamis is derived from the Gaelic word *glamhus*, which translates to "a wide gap . . . open country, a vale" (Johnston 143). If Glamis is located in a wide open area, it undoubtedly would be considered a part of the Scottish Lowlands rather than the mountainous Highlands. Confirming this idea, maps of Scotland, which date back to the end of the sixteenth century, show that Glamis is located south of Forfar and just north of Dundee, both of which are parishes in the Scottish Lowlands (Mercator

“Scotiae Regnum [south sheet]”). Therefore, while he is fighting fully on the side of Duncan and as the Thane of Glamis, Macbeth’s identity is one of an anglicized Scottish Lowlander, just as Duncan, Malcolm, and Macduff. However, Duncan rewards Macbeth with a new title, Thane of Cawdor. In direct contrast to Glamis, as already discussed, Cawdor is located in the heart of the Scottish Highlands. By rewarding Macbeth in such a manner, Duncan effectively relocates and alters the basis on which Macbeth’s identity is built: Duncan moves Macbeth from the Lowlands, an area populated with faithful and honorable Thanes, to the Highlands, an area, which we have already seen, that produces Thanes who are treacherous and villainous. Accordingly, it is not until after he becomes Thane of Cawdor and evolves into a Highlander that Macbeth even starts to entertain any sort of seditious thoughts. Upon learning of his reward, Macbeth seems to grasp the change his new title has affected upon his previous nature, and he expresses a deep sense of foreboding within his aside that occurs shortly after Ross greets him with the news of his reward:

I am Thane of Cawdor.

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs

Against the use of nature? (1.4.136-140)

Nevertheless, this trepidation Macbeth expresses immediately warps into “horrible imaginings” of murder:

Present fears

Are less than horrible imaginings.

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man . . . (1.4.140-143)

Clearly, with these lines, Shakespeare shows that Macbeth's new title and its location within Scotland have a significant influence over the way in which Macbeth perceives both his role and his actions within his country's social and political system.

Furthermore, after naming Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor, Duncan declares that he will come and stay in Macbeth's home: "From hence to Inverness, / And bind us further to you" (1.5.43-44). Inverness is even slightly more north and far more west than Cawdor, which places Inverness deep within the territory of the Highlands. In fact, Inverness has often been identified as the natural capital of the Highlands, and even today, the area still has the largest Gaelic-Scots speaking population in the world ("Highland Council"). As a result, Macbeth's home, his strong-hold, and the place of his heritage has moved even farther north, and it is here, when he is now embedded in the very heart of the Gaelic-Scottish Highlands that Macbeth progresses from contemplating and imagining murder to actually deciding upon and committing regicide.

Ronald Boling elaborates that the historical Macbeth, whose history he extends to the play's Macbeth too, "is the leading noble of the northern Morays" and would have been next in line for the Scottish crown had the anglicized Duncan not violated the tradition of tanistry (3). While, as the Thane of Glamis, the play's Macbeth has already been shown to be an obvious Lowland Anglo-Scot, Shakespeare's alteration from his historical sources is quite significant: it not only highlights the characteristics that the Highlanders and Lowlanders were perceived to have inherently embodied as revealed in the immediate and drastic change of Macbeth's character as soon as he becomes a

Highland Scot but it also places the Gaelic-Scots Highlanders and Anglo-Scots Lowlanders in direct opposition with each other. Furthermore, as Boling also argues, by murdering Duncan and usurping the divinely appointed Malcolm, Shakespeare is drawing attention to the idea that Macbeth is attempting to overthrow the Anglo-Scots in favor of the Scots-Irish. Macbeth's eventual failure, though, is crafted by Shakespeare to indicate the supremacy of the English culture over the Scottish culture.

Shakespeare, too, crafts his characterization of Macbeth to progressively reinforce and vilify his increasingly Highland nature, polarizing the Gaelic-Scots Macbeth against the anglicized Lowlanders, Duncan, Malcolm, and Macduff. In "Harming *Macbeth*: A British Translation," Paul Innes states that "the play unfairly demonizes its protagonist . . . the denigration of the Macbeth character . . . is associated with *blackness*," as well as hellish imagery on stage, as he moves "dressed in black . . . toward the central pit of the stage . . . [which is] the representation of hell's mouth" (121-122). Macbeth is further associated with increasingly malevolent images, including a "devil more damned," "fiend," "untitled tyrant, bloody-sceptered," "black" and "Devilish Macbeth," a "hellhound," and "something wicked" as well as shown committing progressively more cruel and ferocious acts – including regicide, femicide, and infanticide – emphasizing the feral savagery that is inherent to the Scottish culture (4.1.45; 4.3.53, 57, 105, 118, 237; 5.8.3). Additionally, as Claire McEachern elaborates, Macbeth's insistence on a violent death, one where he will "fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked," is "a terrifying vision of a radical and self-consuming independence . . . frighteningly savage [and] barbarously Scottish" (5.3.31; McEachern 106). Finally, Macbeth is also juxtaposed with the Anglo-Scottish characters in the play by the Gaelicisms scattered throughout his

speech as he progresses through the play. Innes further states that with Macbeth's colloquialisms in his violent outburst in Act 5, scene 3, such as "devil damn thee black," "cream-fac'd loon," "goose," "prick thy face," "over-red thy fear," "lily-livered," "patch," and "whey-face," is language that Shakespeare would "have considered a more appropriately outlandish 'Scottish' vocabulary" and "reinforce[s] Macbeth's devilish associations" (5.3.11-17; Innes 119).

Nowhere else in the play is Macbeth more clearly identified in opposition with the anglicized Scots as in Act 4, scene 3, where Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty while at the English court, as has already been briefly touched on in previous paragraphs. To test Macduff's loyalty, Malcolm describes himself as possessing the same qualities as that of Macbeth, stating that he has "All the particulars of vice so grafted / That when they shall be opened, *black* Macbeth / Will seem as pure as snow" (4.3.52-34). Malcolm further elaborates, testifying that while Macbeth is "bloody, / Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, / Sudden, malicious, smacking in every sin / That has a name," Malcolm, himself, has "no bottom, none, / in [his] voluptuousness" (4.3.58-62). While Floyd-Wilson, in her essay, "English Epicures and Scottish Witches," states that Act 4, scene 3 functions to "serve as an assessment of whether Scotland's future king is up to the task," she still identifies the scene overall as "a puzzling scene" because Shakespeare chooses to invert the standard literary test by having Malcolm first "clai[m] to outstrip Macbeth in corruption, only to then '[u]nspeak' his 'own detractions'" (160). However, when examining this scene while keeping in mind the ways in which Shakespeare has already mirrored the demonizing of Macbeth with the contemporary cultural demonization of the Highland Scots, one can fully understand why Shakespeare inverted this scene: by

describing himself as worse than Macbeth, Malcolm directly attributes all these negative extremes to Macbeth and, consequently, his Scottishness as well. Moreover, by then saying that he is not, in fact, like Macbeth, the anglicized Malcolm attributes his purity to his Englishness.

While we are able to observe the change that occurs within Macbeth as he transitions from Lowlander to Highlander, Lady Macbeth only enters the play after Macbeth has become Thane of the Highland area, Cawdor. While we are denied explicit descriptions of any changes to her personality that may have occurred as she moved with Macbeth from the Scottish Lowlands to Highlands, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth clearly exhibits characteristics that the English explicitly described as belonging strictly to the Highland Gaelic-Scots. As Hector Boece describes, unlike English mothers who commonly employed wet-nurses, Scots-Gaelic mothers uniquely "gave sucke themselves" to their children and "eschewed strange milke;" as a result, they had to bear "intollerable paines to bring up and nourish [their] owne children . . . so well-nourished after their births with the milke of their brests" (qtd in Bullough 506). Mirroring Boece's description, in the first scene of the play's second act, Lady Macbeth reveals that she, just as every other Gaelic-Scottish mother, has "given suck, and know[s] / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me" (2.1.54-55). Moreover, Boece follows up his description of these devoted, nursing Scottish women by asserting that they could also be ruthless and dangerous at appropriate times. He describes Scottish women as possessing "no lesse courage than the men, for all stout maidens and wives;" in fact, Boece further elaborates that "so soone as the armie did set forward, they [Scottish women] slue the first living

creature that they found, in whose blood they not onely bathed their swords, but also tasted thereof with their mouths” (qtd. in Bullough 506-507).

At various points throughout *Macbeth*, Shakespeare’s characterization of Lady Macbeth echoes Boece’s description of blood-thirsty Highland women. For example, immediately following Lady Macbeth’s admission that she had loved, “given suck,” and nurtured a child, she also, quite shockingly, discloses, “I would, while it [the baby] was smiling in my face, / Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums / And dashed the brains out” (2.1.56-58). Moreover, Lady Macbeth’s willingness to participate in, and even encourage, her husband’s regicidal plan clearly reflects her willingness to take actions that are as violent as Macbeth’s. Additionally, Shakespeare’s description of Lady Macbeth’s blood-stained hands once she emerges from Duncan’s chamber after planting the murder weapons on Duncan’s attendants as well as her preoccupations with removing the blood covering her hands later in the play is strikingly parallel to Boece’s description of Gaelic-Scottish women bathing in and tasting their enemy’s blood.

Furthermore, Shakespeare presents an explicit link between Macbeth, his family, and the Weird Sisters, who function to represent the unchristian bestial-like behavior associated with the Celtic/Pict ancestry of the Gaelic-Scots as well as highlight the “Otherness” implicit within the Highlander identity. While the belief of witches was not strictly limited to only the Scottish, the belief that witches were able to control specific areas of or kinds of witchcraft was associated with specific geographical regions. As Floyd-Wilson cites, “northern witches, unlike those in England, were especially adept at controlling the climate. . . . England witches were rarely ‘suspected’ of interfering with the weather” (147). Therefore, in various lines throughout their scenes, the witches

mention their power; for instance, in the third scene of the play, they discuss providing each other with different types of a “wind,” which will “blow” “the very ports” and make the sea “tempest-tossed” (1.3.12, 16, 26). Consequently, Shakespeare repeatedly marks the Weird Sisters as belonging to the northern, Highland region. Shakespeare clearly reveals the northern characteristics of the witches again in Act 1, scene 3: when Macbeth and Banquo first encounter the Weird Sisters, they are headed to and approaching Forres, which, just as Cawdor and Inverness, is an area in the Scottish Highlands (1.3.40; Mercator “Scotiae Regnum [north sheet]”). In fact, since another of the witches appearances occurs when Macbeth leaves Inverness in order to actively seek out the witches immediately following his banquet with the Scottish Thanes, almost every scene in which the Weird Sisters appear can be logically placed within the Scottish Highlands.

Shakespeare further emphasizes the Weird Sisters’ Highland Otherness with Banquo’s physical description of them. When he and Macbeth first happen upon the witches, Banquo is bewildered by their appearance:

What are these,
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th’inhabitants o’th’earth,
And yet are on’t? . . .
.....
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your *beards* forbid me to interpret
That you are so. (1.3.40-49, emphasis added)

With this description, Shakespeare, again, is deviating from any of the historical documents that have been forwarded as Shakespeare's possible original sources and the manner in which these sources portray the Weird Sisters' appearance. In Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Shakespeare's witches are described in terms quite different from Shakespeare's play. Holinshed reveals that "common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the *goddesses* of destinie, or else some *nymphs* or *feiries*" (Holinshed qtd. in Innes 116, emphasis added). Not only does Holinshed never question the women's true gender, but also while he may still describe the women as being clothed "in strange and wild apparel," the terms goddesses, nymphs, and fairies certainly possess far different, more positive connotations than Banquo's floundering attempt at finding words adequate enough to describe the witches' bizarre appearance (Holinshed qtd in Bullough 495). Moreover, Shakespeare also added to Banquo's description, the presence of the Weird Sisters' beards. As Brett Hirsch explains, "the European mind identified . . . the foremost cultural Other, both 'widely imagined and graphically represented as being bearded'" (102). In their cultural and social imaginings, Europeans did not identify these beards as belonging "exclusively of men," but rather many reports also described foreign women as possessing beards (Hirsch 102). Such reports, as Hirsch shows, include the *Topography of Ireland*, in which Gerald of Wales describes Celtic and Gaelic women's "external characteristics of beard and dress" and explains that such unnatural characteristics were a reflection of people "so barbarous that they cannot be said to have any culture" (102-103). Consequently, by adding beards to the Weird Sister's description, Shakespeare is not only

distinctly marking them as different and as Other, but he is also equating this Otherness as belonging specifically to the barbaric Scottish Highlanders.

Additionally, Macbeth describes the witches as able to “untie the winds and let them fight / *Against the churches*” in order to wreak havoc and destruction everywhere (4.1.52-53, emphasis added). That Macbeth identifies the witches effects as working against churches and a few moments earlier in the scene, too, the audience experiences the witches, around a cauldron, brewing “charm of powerful trouble, / Like a hell-broth boil and bubble” composed of poisonous animals, a “Finger of a birth-strangled babe,” and bodily organs of “blaspheming Jew, / . . . / Nose of Turk and Tartar’s lips,” these images explicitly connect the Weird Sisters not only with an inherently violent and inhuman un-Christian pagan origins, but also ties them with multiple images of heathen alien Enemy Others (4.1.18-19, 26, 29). Therefore, as Paul Innes argues, “the play’s representation [of] . . . the witches . . . conflate elements of paganism and Renaissance elements . . . [and is] ill-defined, . . . black and evil” (118). As such, through his association and reliance upon the witches’ prophesy, fiendish Macbeth enters into an unholy and unchristian union; through his interaction with the witches, Macbeth is progressively influenced by the Sisters. One can see that with such lines as “This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good” and Macbeth’s claim that “nothing is, / But what is not,” that, as A. R. Braunmuller points out in his introduction to *Macbeth*, “Macbeth’s speech absorbs the ‘sickening see-saw rhythm of witch-language . . . and he accurately echoes witch-thinking as well” (1.3.129-130; 1.3.140-141; Braunmuller 50). Floyd-Wilson concludes that the powerful sway the witches seem to have over Macbeth is meant to “represent it’s protagonist’s troubling susceptibility – and the

diminished will it can imply – as barbarically Scottish . . . that ethnological differences may lie in . . . the unreformed Scottish, body, mind, and soul” (146). Hence, not only does the implication that only a vicious Scot of Gaelic ancestry is capable of Macbeth’s brutality function to reinforce the English stereotype of the Scottish intrinsic “savage nature,” but it also provides the English society with an excuse for their domination over an entire group of people – the more uncivilized a society is, the more necessary it is for a civilized society to save and “Christianize the savage [person’s] soul” (Fanon 462).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

With this evidence presented of contemporary cultural biases reflected throughout *Macbeth*, therefore, one can see that Shakespeare persistently replicates the established colonial discourse of the Irish-Scots as the evil Enemy Other in opposition to the English. In third scene of the fourth Act, Malcolm states, “all the particulars of vice so grafted / That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth / Will seem as pure as snow” (4.3.52-54). This blackened image of Macbeth does not work as simply a portrayal of his escalating cruelty towards others; rather, Shakespeare’s use of “black” to describe Macbeth also echoes the popular racist terms found within the contemporary literature of Shakespeare’s day, which Fanon states was used to associate the dark skin of “Negroes or Indians” as “the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage,” and cannibals (464). The colonial mentality of the English, Ronald Takaki elaborates, was one that associated the qualities of these races of the indigenous Americans, who were first identified the descendants of the Picts and Gaels and, consequently, the brethren of the Scots and Celts, as the inherited traits of a “heathen . . . vile race” who possessed “a ‘more unnatural brutishness’ than wild animals” (904). Furthermore, as Andrew Hadfield exemplifies, the Picts were associated solely with Scotland, where they fought

and intermingled with the Scots, helping to form the Scottish people, and were invariably opposed to the Britons and Saxons” (171). Thus, the equation of native people, and more specifically the Scottish Highlanders, as vicious animals is the foundation for the colonial ideology detailing England’s divine, Christian responsibility to “inhabit and reform [such] barbarous” nations (qtd. in Takaki 894). Consequently, as Said shows this rhetoric developed into “the custom of distinguishing ‘our’ home and order from ‘theirs’ [and] grew into a harsh political rule for accumulating more of ‘them’ to rule, study, and subordinate” (1113).

In addition, by strictly associating the demonized Macbeth and his Gaelic-Scot culture with blackness, Shakespeare, by default, links whiteness and purity to the anglicized characters, Duncan, Malcolm, and Macbeth. Fanon argues that colonial literature identifies a white individual with “the bringer of civilization . . . who carries truth to savages – an all-white truth” (464). Theoretically, the immediate contrast of black to white, too, functions again as a way to identify oneself, and one’s culture, in opposition to the blackened or darkened “Enemy Other.” With this kind of social context and as the binary opposite of blackness, the whiteness of the English culture is transformed into the justified and invisible norm – an ideal standard upon which to judge all other cultures, societies, and civilizations as lacking in some ways and validate one’s own cultural power and influence. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare is of course not causing the colonization of Scotland; he is, however, replicating the strategies that validate his contemporary way of life and certainly not criticizing the subjugation and violent oppression of entire groups of people – such colonial behavior has created lasting physical and psychological devastation among the culture’s generations that followed.

By examining Shakespeare's historical sources, we can see these devastating effects exemplified in the Scottish people during Malcolm's reign. As previously shown, Malcolm's time in England produced within him a psychological "neurosis" and an English "attitude and way of thinking and seeing" (Fanon 465, 467). As Hector Boece illustrates in his *De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus Gestis Scotorum*, the historical Malcolm truly was the first Scottish king who introduced an English influence into the Scottish culture by "introduce[ing] New and Foreign Names . . . Such as are *Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Barons, Riders, or Knights*" (qtd. in Bulloughs 517). Raphael Holinshed further asserts that once Malcolm ascended the throne, the Scottish "manner began greatlie to change and alter. . . through our dailie trades and conversation with [the English], to learne also their maners, and therewithal their *language* " (qtd. in Bulloughs 507, emphasis added). The change in the Scottish language was highly sought after by James I, especially in his Fife Adventurer mission with which he aimed to "eradicate [the] Gaelic culture and *language*" (Highley, "The Place of Scots" 60, emphasis added). James I focused on eliminating language because he recognized the intrinsic nature of language is to convey and propagate a culture's identity. As Thiong'o explains, "language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition to themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe [The] language and literature [of the colonizer take] the [colonized] further away from" themselves and closer to the dominant culture (1126). Consequently, language, in general, but also the language of literature, acts as a tool with which one can further subjugate a colonized group of people and begin to assimilate a culture at the core of its identity.

The question, then, remaining for modern readers is the one Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin also identify: “In what voices do the colonized speak – their own, or in accents borrowed from their masters?” (7). Homi Bhabha’s concept of resistance, mimicry, and hybridity attempts to solve this mystery. In “Signs Taken for Wonders,” Bhabha states that the European book/literature, the “sign taken for wonders” among the native people who are exposed to it, “acquires its meaning *after* the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial . . . Paradoxically, however, such an image can never be ‘original’ – by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it – nor ‘identical’ – by the virtue of the difference that defines it” (1171). This combination between its originality and the repetition of its copies forms a hybrid – the book is both an original and derivative. Bhabha defines “hybridity” as “the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination . . . [that] unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identification in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power” (1175). Language, then, for Bhabha is not only a tool for the active suppression of a culture’s identity, but also one that can undermine and challenge the oppressive colonial presence among a subjugated group. Therefore, in whose language does the colonized Scottish speak? In relation to *Macbeth*, the answer is located in the recent attempts to translate Shakespeare’s only Scottish play into the Scots’ language. Accordingly, such Scottish translations are an attempt to sabotage and invalidate the pervasive modern colonial discourse Shakespeare employs in the characters, actions, and cultural depictions within *Macbeth*.

NOTES

1. A variety of post-colonial discourse concerning *The Tempest* is available. For example, see Brotten 23-42; Ashcroft 29-44; and Willis' 256-268. These are just a few of the works available.

2. For a sampling of critical discourse centered upon anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice*, see Hammond 1-21; Metzger 52-63; and Shapiro 73-91.

3. Critical discourse about *Othello* is much too vast to list, see Lim 57-78; Gehl 251-266; and Danson 1-25.

4. A wide variety of discourse exists that is concerned with the development of English identity and nationalism, their evolution, and their impact upon the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh. For a sampling of such discourse, see Baker, *Between Nations*, especially 1-10; Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, McCabe 51-67; Quinn *The Elizabethans and the Irish*; and Rabl 47-59. For a discussion on the Renaissance concept of savagery and primitivism, including its impact upon the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, see Hodgen, especially chapter 9, "The Problem of Savagery," and chapter 10, "The Place of Savagery in the Chain of Being" (354-430).

5. See Highley, "Wales, Ireland, and *I Henry IV*" 91-114; Stetner 17-53; Baker, "Wildehirissheman" 193-203; and Dollimore and Sinfield 210-231.

6. See Brown 158 and 166.

7. Ibid., p. 158.

8. The scholarship concerning Macbeth's ambition is far too vast to list in full, so the following is just a sample of work available. See Kerrigan 13-24 and Foakes 7-29.

9. See Stallybrass 189-209; Greenblatt, "Shakespeare Bewitched" 108-135; Beckwith 143-161; and Caro 455-458.

10. Refer to the following for a sample of the discourse available: Adelman 90-121; Kahn 151-192; Kimbrough 175-190; and Ramsey 285-300.

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