

MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



EDITED BY ROBERT S. MIOLA

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

William Shakespeare
MACBETH



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
SOURCES AND CONTEXTS
CRITICISM

Edited by
ROBERT S. MIOLA
LOYOLA COLLEGE

W • W • NORTON & COMPANY • *New York • London*

W. W. Norton & Company has been independent since its founding in 1923, when William Warder and Mary D. Herter Norton first published lectures delivered at the People's Institute, the adult education division of New York City's Cooper Union. The Nortons soon expanded their program beyond the Institute, publishing books by celebrated academics from America and abroad. By mid-century, the two major pillars of Norton's publishing program—trade books and college texts—were firmly established. In the 1950s, the Norton family transferred control of the company to its employees, and today—with a staff of four hundred and a comparable number of trade, college, and professional titles published each year—W. W. Norton & Company stands as the largest and oldest publishing house owned wholly by its employees.

Copyright © 2004 by
W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

Every effort has been made to contact the copyright holders of each of the selections. Rights holders of any selections not credited should contact W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110, for a correction to be made in the next printing of our work.

The text of this book is composed in Fairfield Medium
with the display set in Bernhard Modern.
Composition by Binghamton Valley Composition, Inc.
Manufacturing by the Maple-Vail Book Group.
Book design by Antonina Krass.
Production manager: Ben Reynolds.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616.
Macbeth : an authoritative text, sources and contexts, criticism /
William Shakespeare; edited by Robert S. Miola.
p. cm.—(A Norton critical edition)
Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-393-97786-2 (pbk.)

1. Macbeth, King of Scotland, 11th cent.—Drama. 2. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616. Macbeth—Sources. 3. Macbeth, King of Scotland, 11th cent.—In literature. 4. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616. Macbeth. 5. Kings and rulers—Succession—Drama. 6. Regicides—Drama. 7. Scotland—Drama. I. Miola, Robert S. II. Title.

PR2823.A2M56 2003
822.3'3—dc22

2003060994

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110
www.wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., Castle House,
75/76 Wells Street, London W1T 3QT

Introduction

Like the ancient tragedies, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* depicts a fall that evokes, according to Aristotle's prescription in the *Poetics*, both pity and terror. Though ancient playwrights believed in different deities and ethical systems, they too depicted humans struggling with the gods, with fate and free will, crime and punishment, guilt and suffering. Sophocles (fifth century B.C.E.), for example, portrays Oedipus, solver of the Sphinx's riddle and King of Thebes, who discovers that all along he has been fulfilling, not fleeing, the curse of Apollo and its dread predictions. "Lead me away, O friends, the utterly lost (*ton meg' olethrion*), most accursed (*ton kataratoton*), and the one among mortals most hated (*exthrotaton*) by the gods!" (1341–43). In several plays that provided models for *Macbeth*, Seneca (d. 65 C.E.) presents men and women saying the unsayable, doing the unthinkable, and suffering the unimaginable. The witch Medea slays her own children in a horrifying act of revenge. In contrast to Euripides' *Medea*, which ends in a choral affirmation of Zeus's justice and order, Seneca's play concludes with Medea's transformation into something inhuman: she leaves the scene of desolation in a chariot drawn by dragons, bearing witness, wherever she goes, that there are no gods, *testare nullos esse, qua veheris, deos* (1027). Driven mad by the goddess Juno, Seneca's Hercules in *Hercules Furens* kills his children, then awakens to full recognition of his deed in suicidal grief and remorse (below, 95–97). These tragic heroes struggle against the gods and themselves.

Such classical archetypes inform tragedy in the West, Seneca especially shaping Elizabethan tragedy. *Medea* and *Hercules Furens* partly account for the child-killing so prominent in *Macbeth*. (Seneca joins with English traditions of medieval drama, represented below by Herod's massacre of holy innocents, see 85–94.) Child-killing, as many have noted, appears both in the stage action of Shakespeare's play—the murder of Macduff's children, the bloody child apparition—and in its language—for example, in Lady Macbeth's terrible hyperbole:

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
 Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
 And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
 Have done to this. (1.7.54–59)

These lines, transformed, take on a contemporary urgency in William Reilly's film adaptation, *Men of Respect* (1991); there, Ruthie (Lady Macbeth) reminds her husband of her abortion: "I know what it is to have a life inside me, and squashing it out because it's not the right time, it's too difficult. I know what it is to kill for you." Like Lady Macbeth, the murdering mother here forces her husband into a guilty and awed submission.

Seneca may have directly inspired Lady Macbeth herself. When Medea invokes the gods, she asks them to "exile all foolish fear and pity" from her mind; alone, she rouses herself to a terrible deed of self creation (below, 94–95). In her famous soliloquy Lady Macbeth asks the spirits to "unsex" her, to "stop up th'access and passage to remorse," to take her "milk for gall" (1.5.36ff.). Of course, the differences between the two women loom large and important. Medea achieves a unique selfhood in *scelus* ("crime"); altering the universe by transgressing the bounds of the natural, she becomes a supernatural creation who flies away like a god. Instead of such apotheosis, however, Lady Macbeth comes crashing down. Tormented by guilt and sleeplessness, she last appears in the sleepwalking scene (5.1), a ghost of her former self, haunted, frightened, broken. Perhaps the most celebrated actress in this role, Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) portrayed Lady Macbeth washing her hands vehemently; she imagined her character, "with wan and haggard countenance, her starry eyes glazed with the ever-burning fever of remorse, and on their lids the shadows of death" (below, 236). Medea transforms herself; Lady Macbeth dies offstage.

Macbeth also experiences a breathtaking rise and crashing fall. He appears first as a classical warrior hero, "valor's minion," the bridegroom of Bellona, Roman goddess of war (1.2.19, 55). At a crucial point in the action he justifies the decision to kill Banquo in Senecan fashion: the line, "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill" (3.2.58), echoes Seneca's proverbial saying, *per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter* (*Agamemnon*, 115), "The safe way for crime is through more crimes." But there is no safe way for crimes in Macbeth's world; not even Bellona's bridegroom can carve out his passage with brandished steel and bloody execution. Dagger in blood-stained hand, Macbeth suffers like no classical hero at the very moment of his triumphant murder; he hears the sleeping guards wake:

MACBETH One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen!" the other,
 As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
 List'ning their fear, I could not say "Amen"
 When they did say "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
 I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
 Stuck in my throat. (2.2.29–36)

In David Garrick's celebrated eighteenth-century performance of this scene, the self-reproach ("these hangman's hands") widened into a "wonderful expression of heartfelt horror" (below, 217). Here that reproach accompanies an urgent need for God's blessing and the solace of prayer. Unable to say "Amen," Macbeth expresses a child-like incomprehension and astonishment at what he has done and become. This extraordinary moment marks the differences between him and his classical predecessors, and from the cruel, remorseless tyrant Shakespeare found in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587), the main source of the play.

This moment takes us into the heart of Macbeth's tragedy: he has most need of God's blessing and cannot say "Amen." An imperfect man in a brutal, fallen world, Macbeth needs to be saved but, instead, chooses to save himself, and suffers miserably for his choice. Macbeth's abortive prayer thus illuminates the moral world of the play, the ethical universe in which he must live and die. And we must surely share, at first, in his momentary astonishment: why, after all, can't the man who has just butchered his guest, kinsman, and king manage to mouth an "Amen," even if insincere? What stops him, what sticks the word in his throat—the involuntary reflex of a defeated conscience or some divine refusal to tolerate yet another transgression? The play affords no window through which to look this deeply into Macbeth's soul, but one thing is clear: Macbeth's inability to say "Amen" signals the futility of his crime. Human action and the will to power may prevail in Medea's world but not here, where nature itself gives witness to the immutable order of moral law. Macbeth fears that the very stones will prate of his whereabouts (2.1.58). The night of the King's murder is "unruly": chimneys fall, laments and strange screams of death fill the air, the owl clamors, the earth shakes (2.3.48–55). After, an unnatural darkness strangles the sun, a mousing owl kills a falcon, and Duncan's horses eat each other (2.4.5–18). In the Globe performance of 1611, Simon Forman reports, the blood on Macbeth's hands "could not be washed off by any means, nor from his wife's hands" (below, 205). After Banquo's ghost returns, Macbeth says that stones move, trees speak, and birds ("maggot-pies and choughs and rooks") reveal "the secret'st man of blood" (3.4.125–28). The mix of legend, superstition, and mirabilia

here points to providential order; the capricious pagan gods, Apollo, Juno, and Zeus, do not rule in this world, but the just Judaeo-Christian God, the God who will return at the Last Judgment, the day of the great doom, when the dead rise from their graves and walk like sprites (2.3.73–76).

This God, creator of nature and moral order, figures centrally in Holinshed's *Chronicles*: "almighty God showed himself thereby to be offended most highly for that wicked murder of King Duff, and, surely, unless the offenders were tried forth and punished for that deed, the realm should feel the just indignation of the divine judgment for omitting such punishment as was due for so grievous an offense" (below, 101). And this God makes a surprising number of appearances (fifteen total) in the language of Shakespeare's dark, bloody play, rife with scenes of evil supernaturalism and murderous ambition. Coleridge noted long ago that the witches "strike the keynote" (below, 219) of the play, but there is an insistent, if quieter, divine counterpoint. Orson Welles heard and amplified this music in his 1948 film version, often employing the symbol of the cross amid the gnarled trees and stone of his primitive Scotland, adding a Holy Father to conduct a service against Satan and oppose the rising evil. In Shakespeare's text Ross greets Duncan with unintentional irony, "God save the King!" (1.2.48). Immediately after the murder Banquo declares himself to stand "in the great hand of God" (2.3.129) against treasonous malice. Malcolm asks "God above" (4.3.121) to regulate the alliance with Macduff, echoing the lord who hoped that "Him above" (3.6.32) would ratify the rebellion against Macbeth. Witnessing Lady Macbeth sleepwalking, the Doctor does what Macbeth could not: he says a spontaneous prayer, "God, God, forgive us all" (5.1.66). The Captain compares the opening battle to Golgotha (1.2.40), place of the Crucifixion; Malcolm later praises Siward as the oldest and best soldier in "Christendom" (4.3.193). Commissioning the murderers, Macbeth pointedly asks, "Are you so gospelled to pray for this good man and for his issue, whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave and beggared yours for ever?" (3.1.89–91). Whether or not he alludes specifically to Matthew 5:44 ("Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"), Macbeth here invokes the God whom he has disobeyed and the moral order he has violated. And once again, he adverts to prayer, this time thinking it the cowardly alternative to the manly action of murder.

King Macbeth's newfound contempt for the gospel and prayer marks his moral deterioration. "Had I but died an hour before this chance, / I had lived a blessed time" (2.3.88–89), he himself said earlier. But such blessing as he required and yearned for now lies

out of reach and out of mind. Lennox, ironically, hopes that a "swift blessing" (3.6.48) in the form of divine aid and the English army will come to remove Macbeth and relieve sick, suffering Scotland. The imagery of disease runs importantly throughout the play (see Muir below, 254–66): Macbeth thinks of life as a "fitful fever" (3.2.25); "he cannot buckle his distempered cause / Within the belt of rule" (5.2.15–16). Scotland "bleeds, and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (4.3.41–42); the invading Malcolm is the "med'cine of the sickly weal" (5.2.27). And the English King Edward, in purposeful contrast to King Macbeth, is a religious curer who gives "holy prayers" and the "healing benediction" to the afflicted, who has "a heavenly gift of prophecy" (4.3.155–58). "Sundry blessings hang about his throne" (4.3.159), while Macbeth becomes "a hand accursed" (3.6.50), receiving not love or honor but "curses, not loud but deep" (5.3.27).

In the Shakespeare play that most embodies the "principle of contrast" and "moves upon the verge of an abyss," in Hazlitt's fine phrasing (below, 225), other religious antitheses mark Macbeth's decline. Early on he imagines Duncan's virtues as angels pleading trumpet-tongued against the murder, and pity as heaven's cherubin blowing the horrid deed in every eye (1.7.18–24). He declares himself the kind of man who could appall the devil (3.4.61), but chooses to side with him and his minions. Too late he realizes that the witches are "juggling fiends" (5.8.19) and that he has been deceived by the "equivocation of the fiend / That lies like truth" (5.5.43–44). The association of witches, equivocation, and the devil, many have noted, draws resonance from the anti-Catholic fervor following the discovery of the Gunpowder plot; the Porter alludes to one of the convicted conspirators, the Jesuit Henry Garnet, who wrote a treatise on equivocation (below, 159–60) and was executed in 1606. "Faith here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven" (2.3.7–9). Submitting to the paltering, equivocal witches, Macbeth becomes increasingly identified with the devil: Macduff wants to confront "this fiend of Scotland" (4.3.237); Malcolm calls him "devilish Macbeth" (4.3.118). Hearing Macbeth name himself, Young Siward proclaims, "The devil himself could not pronounce a title / More hateful to mine ear"; "No, nor more fearful" (5.7.9–11), Macbeth responds. Macbeth himself invokes the Prince of Darkness: "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!" (5.3.11). He who had most need of blessing now turns the other way for curses, even threatening the witches themselves: "Deny me this [the truth about Banquo's issue] / And an eternal curse fall upon you!" (4.1.104–5).

Given the company he keeps, we should not be surprised, perhaps, that Macbeth's enemy, Hecate, leader of the witches, delivers the most telling commentary on his spiritual state: "He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear / His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear. / And you all know, security / Is mortals' chiefest enemy" (3.5.30-33). Hecate here plays orthodox preacher, echoing numerous homilies and popular theology pamphlets ("you all know") on the dangers of "security," i.e., spiritual overconfidence and complacency, repose in the pleasures of this world. In 1584 John Stockwood published *A Very Fruitful and Necessary Sermon* "to the wakening and stirring up of all such as be lulled asleep in the cradle of security or carelessness" (title page). The title page of Thomas Rogers' *The Enemy of Security* (1591) exhorts the reader to watch and pray, "pray continually." About the time of *Macbeth* William Est preached in *The Scourge of Security* (1609) that neglect of prayer led to the return of the unclean spirit. In the same year Thomas Draxe explained that the substance of security is contained in the words "I sleep" and the antidote in the phrase "but mine heart waketh" (*The Church's Security*, sigs. B1v-B2). This homiletic fervor motivated John Downname's *A Treatise of Security* (1622), written "to rouse up" sinners "out of this sleep or rather lethargy of security" (Epistle Dedicatory).

Hecate's precise spiritual diagnosis, then, evokes a discrete, clearly outlined, and abundantly available complex of image and exhortation. Shakespeare fully engages this familiar complex but reverses its basic logic: the sleepless Macbeth ever waketh in his cradle of security, not lulled, but racked "in the affliction of these terrible dreams / That shake us nightly" (3.2.20-21). The pervasive images of sleeplessness in the play have been well-remarked, of course—the bewitched insomniac sailor who dwindles, peaks, and pines, the mysterious cry, "Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep" (2.2.38-93), his subsequent yearning for "sleep that knits up the raveled sleave of care, / The death of each day's life" etc. (40ff.), the sleep-walking Lady Macbeth. But to contemporary audiences they must have derived their force from Shakespeare's daring inversion of conventional rhetoric and moral formula. His Macbeth is agonizingly and unremittingly awake, stung by his conscience, the agenbyte of inwit, that full, tormenting, relentless awareness of his sin.

Another terror of the play is that Macbeth's gains are negligible and indistinct, his losses large and clearly articulated: "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends, / I must not look to have" (5.3.25-26). And, correspondingly, the earthly highlands of Scotland are never so precisely mapped as the spiritual landscapes Macbeth traverses. Some of the Scottish references, Saint Colme's Inch (or Inchcolm isle) (1.2.62) and Colmekill (3.1.34), even point to the other world, where the real drama transpires: both localities pay nominal tribute

to St. Columba (521–97), the abstemious missionary to northern Scotland who preached, worked miracles, and converted the pagan Picts and Druids to Christianity. Appropriately, Duncan's body is carried to the "sacred storehouse of his predecessors" (3.1.35) at Colmekill, the monastic "cell of Columba" in Iona, off the West of Scotland. The forces of Christianity thus align themselves in death as in life against the pagan barbarism of Scotland. Macbeth moves between these two opposed realms, as between blessings and curses, angels and devils, and, like one of Hamlet's crawling fellows, between heaven and hell. Lady Macbeth wants the "dunniest smoke of hell" to beshroud the world so that heaven cannot "peep through the blanket of the dark / To cry 'Hold, hold'" (1.5.49–52). "The heavens, as troubled with man's act," the murder, threaten "his bloody stage" (2.4.5–6) with natural disruptions and cosmic events. Macduff says that "new sorrows / Strike heaven on the face" (4.3.5–6). Heaven often appears as a metonym for divine providence. Lennox hopes, if it "please heaven" (3.6.19), that Macbeth will not get his hands on Duncan's heirs. The messenger says to the doomed Lady Macduff, "heaven preserve you" (4.2.68); Macduff asks if heaven looked on at the slaughter of his wife and children (4.3.227–28). Heaven grants the gifts of healing and prophecy to King Edward (4.3.150ff.). Most significantly, heaven appears in contrast to hell as the after-life abode of the blessed and just, the place of peace and happiness. Again, Macbeth himself points the moral before the murders of Duncan and Banquo: the ringing bell summons the king "to heaven or to hell" (2.1.64); and Banquo's soul "If it find heaven, must find it out tonight" (3.1.143).

On the opposing side, the Porter imagines himself keeping the gate in hell and comments on the condemned residents. Though reviled by Elizabeth Montagu ("entirely absurd," below, 215), Samuel Taylor Coleridge ("disgusting," below, 218), and others, this great serio-comic scene (2.3) appropriately gives, as Harry Levin observes, the other place a local habitation and a name. The Macbeths walk the broad and royal road to hell; in fact, they sometimes seem to live there already. Reliving her crimes over and over again, Lady Macbeth, one of the living dead, murmurs "Hell is murky" (5.1.31). In Trevor Nunn's celebrated film production, Judi Dench turned this into a discovery—"Hell is murky"—as she recoiled from the abyss opening for her. Hearing a night shriek, Macbeth observes: "I have supped full with horrors. / Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts, / Cannot once start me" (5.5.13–15). Macduff calls Macbeth a "hell-kite" and a "hellhound" (4.3.220; 5.8.3), thus echoing his pronouncement, "Not in the legions / Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned / In evils to top Macbeth" (4.3.56–58).

Damned in evils—*Macbeth* takes us on a thrilling, terrifying jour-

ney into the heart and soul of the damned. Staging the morality-play sequence of temptation, sin, and death, Shakespeare degrades repentance in this Everyman to a melancholy remorse, leaving both Macbeths to the consequences of their actions, to the “deep damnation of his [Duncan’s] taking off” (1.7.20). The resulting portraits of sin, punishment, and damnation stand worthily next to those of Dante’s *Inferno*: to Ezzelino the tyrant in Phlegethon, the boiling river of blood (Canto 12); to Vanni Fucci, defiant and making an obscene gesture to God (Canto 25); to Ugolino, who eats the bodies of his dead children (Canto 33); to Fra Alberigò and Branca Doria, whose souls are already in hell though their bodies live on earth (Canto 33); to the traitors Judas, Brutus, and Cassius, writhing from the mouths of Satan in the ice of Judecca (Canto 34). Such compelling, full-bodied figures all contrast with the sterilized wraiths of the English *de casibus* tradition, tediously moralizing their histories, reciting their faults, and preaching repentance. Dante and Shakespeare portray the sinners themselves, living human beings, groaning, sweating, suffering, cursing, excusing, regretting, all their faults and imperfections on their heads, their sins in full and flagrant blossom. And, like Macbeth, the damned souls throughout the nine circles of Dante’s *Inferno* are capable of every kind of speech, noise, eloquence, and remorse, save one: they cannot pray.

The play’s focus on damnation inspired one recent actor, Derek Jacobi, to summarize his conception of the lead role thus: “I tried to plot his journey from the golden boy of the opening to the burnt-out loser accepting his own damnation of the conclusion” (below, 342). This journey, we should remember, Shakespeare consciously constructs from numerous possibilities in Holinshed’s account. In his notes for plays and poems John Milton apparently envisioned a different kind of *Macbeth*; starting with the conference of Malcolm and Macduff (4.3) and including the ghost of Duncan, he imagined perhaps a political play in the form of a classical revenge tragedy. Shakespeare’s drama of damnation, by contrast, purposefully evokes and engages contemporary theology, particularly the disputes about divine foreknowledge, human responsibility, the nature of grace, and the freedom of the human will. These disputes occupied preachers on the pulpit as well as the best theological minds of the early modern period. Asserting the total efficacy of God’s foreknowledge and divine grace, the Protestant reformer Martin Luther emphatically denied the existence of free will:

I misspoke when I said that free will before grace exists in name only; rather I should have simply said “free will is a fiction among real things, a name with no reality.” For no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil, but rather,

as was rightly taught by the article of Wyclif which was condemned at Constance, all things occur by absolute necessity. (below, 119)

Arguing that free will cooperates with grace, Erasmus responded to Luther, at one point in the voice of a Bible reader speaking to God:

"Why complain of my behaviour, when all my actions, good or bad, are performed by you in me regardless of my will? Why reproach me, when I have no power to preserve the good you have given me, or keep out the evil you put into me? Why entreat me, when everything depends on you, and happens as it pleases you? Why bless me, as though I had done my duty, when whatever happens is your work? Why curse me, when I sinned through necessity?" What is the purpose of such a vast number of commandments if not a single person has it at all in his power to do what is commanded? (below, 124)

Erasmus contends that the doctrine of predestination invalidates God's commandments and renders absurd the concept of divine justice.

The controversy provides an illuminating context for the depiction of witches, sin, and punishment in *Macbeth*. First, it disposes summarily the notion that the Weird sisters can in any sense possess or control Macbeth. Those early Protestants and Catholics who believe in witches never grant to them such power. Instead, they debate the nature of God's foreknowledge and the predestination of the elect and reprobate, the saved and the damned. Whatever his personal convictions, Shakespeare clearly adopts a Catholic view of the action and theology of free will in this play. Macbeth repeatedly adverts to the terror implicit in free will, in his awesome power to choose good or evil: "I dare do all that may become a man / Who dares do more is none" (1.7.46–47). He never contemplates the pre-dispositions of fate or the deity, but thinks instead on the consequences of his choices and actions, consequences he would desperately evade and deny. Recalling the prophecy about Banquo, he emphasizes his own responsibility and autonomous agency:

If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man
To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings! (3.1.66–72)

Macbeth has chosen evil, in his words, "given" his soul to the devil. To emphasize the point, Shakespeare departs from Holinshed in his

depiction of Banquo, who encourages him in jest to "purchase" (below, 104) the crown, and who knows in advance of the assassination. Shakespeare's Banquo, a clear foil to Macbeth, freely and steadfastly resists temptation: first he prays, "Merciful powers, / Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose" (2.1.7–9); then he confronts Macbeth directly, asserting that he must lose no honor, must keep his "bosom franchised and allegiance clear" (2.1.26–28). Rejecting the Protestant dichotomy between the elect and reprobate, Shakespeare deploys the Catholic view of free will perhaps from theological conviction, but more certainly from theatrical necessity. For the doctrine of predestination renders human action essentially undramatic: when the end is known, preordained, and absolutely just, there can be no real choice, suspense, conflict, or resolution. This conception of divine justice and human action renders pity an impertinence, terror a transgression, and tragedy an impossibility.

Consider, for example, the death of the reprobate, as described by the popular Calvinist William Perkins, *A Golden Chain, a Description of Theology containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation* (1591): "The reprobates when they die do become without sense and astonied like unto a stone; or else they are overwhelmed with a terrible horror of conscience, and despairing of their salvation, as it were, with the gulf of the sea overturning them" (sig. V5). Perkins illustrates the first option with the story of Nabal who hears of God's judgment against him: "his heart died within him; he became like a stone. About ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died" (1 Kings 23:37–38). He illustrates the second with the story of Judas, who hanged himself in despair (Matthew 27:5). However these ends may bear comparison with the death of Lady Macbeth off-stage, they contrast jarringly with Macbeth's final moments—with his somber reflections and military resurgence. Here as throughout the play, the vitality and eloquence of Macbeth distinguish him from the reprobate of the popular imagination, the heart-dead stone, Nabal, or the despairing, suicidal Judas. Shakespeare presents instead a tragedy of free will and damnation.

Another contemporary controversy, the debate over regicide, also informs *Macbeth*, just as it does, *mutatis mutandis*, Shakespeare's other history plays and tragedies. *Macbeth*, however, features not one regicide but two. The play asks that we condemn the murder of King Duncan, and, with equal conviction, applaud the murder of King Macbeth. To insure the condemnation Shakespeare denies Macbeth a coronation scene and suppresses Holinshed's notice of Duncan's inadequacies, Macbeth's possible claim to the crown, and his years of just rule. Thus Shakespeare portrays the first regicide as a mon-

strous rebellion, in accord with the Elizabethan *Homily against Disobedience* (below, 148–54) and the beliefs of Banquo's descendant, King James I, proponent of the divine right of kings. To portray the second regicide as virtuous restoration, Shakespeare amplifies the witches, the sinister influence of Lady Macbeth, and Macbeth's crimes. But according to the *Homily* and divine right theory, even bad kings had to be obeyed and tolerated: "let us either deserve to have a good prince, or let us patiently suffer and obey such as we deserve" (below, 150). To justify the second regicide, Shakespeare draws upon the opposing resistance theory, which holds that citizens owe obedience to kings but not to tyrants, i.e., rulers who by unlawful entrance or vicious practice forfeit their rights of sovereignty. The Jesuit Juan de Mariana, for example, argues that, under certain circumstances, anyone may depose a tyrant for the good of the commonwealth and in so doing earn gratitude and praise (below 154–59).

Accordingly, Shakespeare portrays King Macbeth as a tyrant both in the language and the action of the play. Macduff calls him "an untitled tyrant, bloody sceptred" (4.3.105), neatly alluding to both his unlawful entrance (by assassination) and vicious practice (the subsequent murders). "This tyrant holds the due of birth" (3.6.25) from Duncan's son; the "sole name" of this tyrant "blisters our tongues" (4.3.12). Like the archetypal Herod, the tyrannical Macbeth massacres the innocents. Macduff threatens to display Macbeth's picture on a pole with the legend "Here may you see the tyrant" (5.8.27). And, accordingly, Shakespeare depicts the deposer Macduff as "anyone," as an ordinary, flawed man. Macduff makes the fatal error of leaving his wife and children unprotected; he has no claim to fame except his birth by Caesarean section; and, as one Royal Shakespeare Company actor who had played the role five times observed to me, he is typically ineloquent or silent: relating Duncan's murder to others, Macduff says, "Do not bid me speak" (2.3.68); Malcolm urges him, "give sorrow words" (4.3.210); "I have no words / My voice is in my sword" (5.8.6–7), Macduff says later to Macbeth.

In this, as in other regards, the eloquent Macbeth, speaking fully thirty percent of the play's lines, stands in colossal contrast with the avenger and putative hero, Macduff. Shakespeare thus recapitulates the strategy of his previous tyrant play, *Richard III*, wherein Richmond's forgettable piety opposes Gloucester's grand and thrilling blasphemy. But both blasphemy and piety in many forms resound throughout Macbeth's speech—alternating, simultaneous, interdependent—creating memorable and musical discord. Blasphemy appears in the eerie invocation to night and "its bloody and invisible hand," which Macbeth hopes will "cancel and tear to pieces that

great bond" that keeps him pale (3.2.49–53). It continues throughout the consultation with the witches (4.1). And, at the last, Macbeth, perversely mimicking his former valor instead of repenting, redefines the very terms of salvation and damnation: "Before my body / I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff, / And damned be him that first cries, Hold, enough!" (5.8.32–34). Identifying "him" as God by looking toward the heavens, Jacobi's Macbeth pointed the blasphemy with a curse against the deity. Less explicitly, an equally potent denial appears in the world-weary nihilism of Macbeth's famous meditation:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing. (5.5.19–28)

Only those who have experienced some elevation can fall to this nadir; and the Macbeth who piously believed in evenhanded justice and heaven's cherubin, we recall, once saw life as a feast nourished by that very same progression of days, each capped by restorative sleep:

Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care,
 The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
 Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
 Chief nourisher in life's feast—(2.2.40–43)

Here the diurnal rhythms of waking and sleeping express not meaninglessness but moral order. This belief in moral order motivates Macbeth's distinctive verse music, such piety, like blasphemy, taking various shapes. Seconds after the murder Macbeth feels an incredulous repulsion and self-alienation: "What hands are here? Ha, they pluck out mine eyes!" "To know my deed 'twere best not know myself" (2.2.62, 76). Soon after, pretending to mourn the King, he speaks truer than he intends: "from this instant / There's nothing serious in mortality. / All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead" (2.3.89–91). Racked by his guilty conscience, the man who yearned for renown and grace soon envies his victim:

Better be with the dead,
 Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. (3.2.21–24)

There is even a clear moment of moral vision and remorse in the final meeting with Macduff:

Of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back. My soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already! (5.8.4–6)

The eloquent and elegiac register of such piety rarely survives translation or adaptation. Plangent and moving, it arrests the hero's descent into darkness while marking the speed and distance of his fall. Coleridge thought *Macbeth* "the most rapid" of Shakespeare's plays, "being wholly and purely tragic" (below, 218); Bradley called it "the most vehement, the most concentrated" (below, 238) of the tragedies. Consequences follow so quickly and inevitably that they seem embedded in actions themselves, even in the thoughts preceding action. The confusion of tenses attending the verb "to do" sometimes collapses past, present, and future so that planning, acting, and suffering become coexistent aspects of the same crime. Lady Macbeth urges:

Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. (1.5.20–23)

And Macbeth contemplates, "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly" (1.7.1–2); he resolves, "I go, and it is done" (2.1.62). The interconnectedness of conception, execution, and consequence heightens the sense of Macbeth's dizzying plunge and, once begun, its inevitability. "I have done the deed" (2.2.14), he says simply after the murder. "What's done is done" (3.2.14), Lady Macbeth counsels; and then later in a rueful echo while sleepwalking, "what's done cannot be undone" (5.1.58–59). Writing a travesty of *Macbeth* in the nineteenth century, Francis Talfourd shrewdly seized upon this inevitability to turn the play into topsy-turvy burlesque. In his version Duncan returns from the dead, nodding and winking at Macduff, and reclaims his crown. Before Banquo and Lady Macbeth return arm-in-arm from the nether world, Macbeth rises and addresses the King:

I tender, sir, of course, my resignation,
Since all's in train for me to leave my station.
So at your feet I lay my regal diadem
Without regret, nor wish again that I had 'em. (below, 185)

The comic fantasy strikes at the heart of Shakespeare's play, where evil freely chosen becomes a driving force, absolute, uncontrollable, irreversible, irrevocable.

Thus the play enables us to experience the thrill and misery of evil as few others do. Recoiling from this heart of darkness, William Davenant greatly expanded the role of Lady Macduff to provide a clear moral contrast to Lady Macbeth, the good wife matched against the evil one. His successful seventeenth-century adaptation also presented a Macbeth who dies not with a defiant snarl but with a belated confession of folly, "Farewell vain world, and what's most vain in it, ambition" (below, 173). Such changes diminish the evil in Shakespeare's play, reducing it to comfortable and conventional moral schema. Expanding the witches' roles, Davenant likewise transformed the evil into a spectacle located safely in the other, in the nonhuman. Such revision can constitute a strategy of evasion, modern critics remind us, for the witches release and reveal the evil in human beings and their social orderings. Janet Adelman (below, 293–315) observes that the play initially constructs maternal power as malignant and demonic then stages an exorcism of this power in a dream of masculine control; but the dream turns out to be a nightmare as such order appears finally as sterile and self-destructive. Stephen Orgel comments that witches "live outside the social order but embody its contradictions": their gender indeterminacy, women with beards, females played originally by male actors, suggest that nature is "anarchic, full of competing claims, not ordered and hierarchical" (below, 347). Evil cannot be summarily demonized, dislocated, and dismissed.

Early modern controversy supports modern critical insight about the ambivalent nature of the witches as both demonic and human, as both other and ourselves. James I depicted them as "ungodly creatures, no better than devils" (below, 138) in a pamphlet, *News from Scotland* (1591), and later in his *Daemonology* (1597). He spoke about their supernatural powers to create storms and topple kings. James was writing against such sceptics as Reginald Scot (*The Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584), who thought witches ordinary people, either deluders or deluded themselves, "women which be commonly old, lame, blear-eyed, pale, foul, and full of wrinkles, poor, sullen, superstitious, and papists, or such as know no religion, in whose drowsy minds the devil hath gotten a fine seat; so as what mischief, mischance, calamity, or slaughter is brought to pass, they are easily persuaded the same is done by themselves" (below, 113). Shakespeare's play takes full advantage of the controversy without deciding it: *Macbeth* provides chilling testimony to the existence of supernatural evil and the forbidden black arts, well conforming to popular superstition and James' views. But, the play insists equally, Macbeth