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Crime and Punishment in William Davenant's *Macbeth* A Stoic Perception

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Abstract

The article challenges the dominant critical perception which assumes that Davenant's *Macbeth* is a simple adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy. Against this reading, and in harmony with Barthes' theory of the text, *Macbeth* is here read as a dynamic and independent dramatic agent rather than a copy of a superior text. Seen in this perspective, Davenant's *Macbeth* emerges as a manifestation of the Roman Stoics' moral perception of ambition with its destructive course and tragic end. To the Roman Stoics, ambition is a disease that affects the individual's soul and leads to his or her ultimate destruction. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth display the symptoms the Stoics associate with this disease: they exist outside the bounds of nature; experience grave unhappiness; and follow Fortune to their deaths. As a result, the play is not only a dramatic manifestation, but rather a genuine moral examination of the key characters' crimes and their unavoidable punishment. The crimes of Macbeth and his Lady, motivated by their ambition, along with their final downfall are Davenant's dramatic attempt to control the Restoration public's behaviour and warn them against unruly emotions. By association, Davenant urges his audience to denounce the English Civil War and prove their allegiance to the newly restored monarchy. Thus, Davenant's adaptation emerges as an independent play, and as a moral medium which produces a political message suitable to his own challenging time and to the newly restored monarchy.

Keywords: *Ambition, Davenant and Shakespeare, Disease, Stoicism*

1. Introduction

Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier note that 'the Restoration was an early highpoint in the adaptation of Shakespeare' (2014, 1). Understandably, the literary practice of adapting the Bard's plays attracts considerable amount of critical attention. Blanca López Román identifies two different approaches within this critical oeuvre. One approach considers the adapted plays as 'products of the rules of Restoration ... stage'; the other examines the differences and similarities between the adapted and the original play. Such reading is often perceived 'as part of the history of attitudes towards Shakespeare' (1990, 209). The

critical evaluation of Davenant's *Macbeth* follows the same directions. Jean Marsden argues that Davenant's *Macbeth* reveals 'Simplification of Shakespeare's language [and] extensive process of clarification'. She also points out that Davenant turns Shakespeare's 'complex characters into easily comprehensible types' (2015, 24). In her view, such changes 'demonstrate ... the poetic language and the idea of what constitutes a literary work' as perceived by the Restoration audience and their aesthetic taste (1). Marsden condemns the results of such dramatic manipulation as an 'embarrassing group of obscure plays symbolizing the enlightenment's poetic bad taste' (*ibid.*). Blanca López Román shares Marsden's censure of Davenant's simplified version, arguing that he transforms '*Macbeth* to the comparatively superficial level on which Restoration tragedy and characterization commonly operate' (1990, 221).

Davenant's *Macbeth*'s critical accusation of simplicity is rejected by Simon Williams, who points out that 'Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* ... has been treated with scant respect by scholars, most of whom consider it to be little more than a travesty of Shakespeare' (2004, 56). According to him, Davenant's dramatic manipulation gives the play 'a transparency' that Shakespeare's original 'lacks' (57). Like Williams, Mathew Biberman opposes the condemnation of Davenant's *Macbeth*. In his view, *Macbeth* is clear rather than simple. He defends it against accusations of simplicity and writes that, 'After all, *Macbeth* is a tragedy, and as such, it functions best when you know the outcome' (2017, 67). He also proposes that such clarity is essential to the moral message of tragedies, arguing that 'We need the intervening layer provided by the adaptation to perceive how the unconscious resides in the original layer. This bond then mutually informs the meaning we ascribe to those additional layers – the unconscious and the superconscious as well' (69). According to Biberman, Davenant's particular adaptation of *Macbeth* enables the Restoration audience to deconstruct the original *Macbeth* and go beyond the conscious to embrace the unconscious and super-conscious levels. By doing that, they are ready to reconstruct the play and embrace its new meaning on the conscious level. Derek Hughes, one of the foremost critics of Restoration drama, disputes the accuracy of characterizing the dramatic adaptations of the era as superficial. The restoration of theatres in England, which happened at the same time as the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, made adaptations of popular plays an unavoidable choice (2002, 1-29). Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor explain that theatre managers were under tremendous pressure to stage plays for the newly restored monarch, King Charles II, and the London audience (2012, 4). David Roberts explains that the historical milieu of the Restoration was laden with political, social and literary tensions, not only in England but on the continent as well (2014, 7). Thus, adapting and modifying plays emerged as a quick solution to the mounting demands. Understandably, Restoration drama's 'attempts at defusing, resolving, aggravating and skating over the tension' mounted due to the political situation of the time (8).

Emma Depledge argues that modern critics tend to overlook an essential difference between their perception of Shakespeare and that of the Restoration era (2018, 39-66). To the Restoration audience, Shakespeare did not command the dramatic reverence he enjoys in modern times. During the Restoration he was merely one of the popular Renaissance dramatists (Clark 2005, 1-13; Lynch 2007, 8-9 and 11-30). Thus, modifying Shakespeare's plays to suit the dramatic tastes and needs of the time was a necessity, if not a normal practice, dictated by the events that shaped the Restoration era (Hughes 2002, 1-29; Ritchie and Sabor 2012, 4). Fischlin and Fortier criticize the critical double standard when it comes to Shakespeare himself. They argue that 'Shakespeare in his own works was not original ... [as he] produced theatrical adaptations'. They elaborate that his 'theatrical adaptation has remained a relatively marginalized and under-theorized activity' (2014, 4). Thus, Fischlin and Fortier question the

critical legitimacy of accusing others of pillaging Shakespeare and labelling him an original dramatist, when he himself borrowed extensively from other sources.

In his essay 'The Theory of the Text', Roland Barthes insists that 'any text is intertext; other texts are present in it ... the text of the previous and surrounding cultures' (1981, 39). In Barthes' view, the text is not a self-contained object with a single meaning, but rather a dynamic and living entity with historical and cultural transformational abilities. Barthes goes further and insists that 'other texts are present not only as acknowledged sources or influences but also as a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely ever be located' (*ibid.*). For a text to be perceived as a common legacy, Barthes insists that the author must die. In his article 'The Death of the Author', he argues, 'to give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (1977, 148). The author's presence has a restricting influence on the text. The claim to authorship, along with cultural and ideological factors that surround the author, deny a dynamic reading of any given text. As a result, Barthes concludes, 'we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (*ibid.*). If we adopt this perspective, it becomes legitimate to consider Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* as an assimilation of Barthes' concept of intertextuality.¹ Davenant kills Shakespeare and gives life to his own audience. This is understandable as the text was written for the Restoration audience who lived in a cultural and historical environment with particular ideologies and literary aesthetics. The era was one of the most turbulent times in English history. It witnessed a Civil War, the execution of a legitimate King (Charles I), the abolition of the monarchy and its restoration in 1660 under Charles II. Tim Harris reports the initial joyful atmosphere of the Restoration of the monarchy: 'The mood was certainly festive ... great concourses of people gathered in all the towns through which the King passed as he made his way from Dover ... The streets all along the way [in London] were "straw'd with flowers" and hung with tapestries' (2006, 1). Unfortunately, the 'honeymoon period of the Restoration did not last long and the rejoicing of 1660 soon gave way to disillusionment' (Harris 1990, 62). The newly restored king executed those who were involved in the trial and execution of his father Charles I (Weight and Haggith 2014, 18-21). Furthermore, the failure to restore religious tolerance played an essential role in ending the festive atmosphere. Harris writes that 'many who had initially welcomed – and even actively striven for – the return of monarchy found themselves facing persecution for their religious beliefs' (1990, 62). Religion played a major role in the English Civil War and was a destabilizing force during the Restoration. Jacqueline Rose asserts that 'the Restoration Settlement restored both the powers and the problems which had existed in 1641' (2011, 89).

Needless to say, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was written for a different audience with particular religious, political and consequently social conditions (Bate 1989, 61-104). The different contexts of Shakespeare's and Davenant's motivate Ann Thompson to suggest the need for a deeper analysis of Davenant's *Macbeth* as an independent play rather than an adaptation. She complains that '*Macbeth* has been somewhat neglected during the critical revolution that has galvanized Shakespeare studies since the 1980s' (2014, 1). *Macbeth's* neglect, as stressed by Thompson, can be attributed to several factors. Clearly, the available criticism lacks enough diversity, in terms of authorship and argument. Furthermore, the failure among commentators to reach consensus regarding its dramatic and ideological value in the history of theatre renders

¹ According to V.M. Simandan, Barthes is the 'most eloquent theorist of intertextuality, who always attacked the notions of stable meaning and unquestionable truth' (2010, 25). For a more in-depth discussion of intertextuality see Allen 2011, 8-55 and 59-91.

Davenant's *Macbeth* unattractive to many critics. The arguments developed in this article follow Thompson's suggestion and take an independent approach, detaching Davenant's *Macbeth* from the dominant critical environment to read it not as an adaptation but as an independent play. In my reading, I argue that Davenant's *Macbeth* is firmly connected to the Restoration milieu as the play is meant to prevent the repetition of the Civil War scenario through controlling the emotion of the vulnerable public and securing their allegiance to the newly restored monarchy. This is achieved through the dramatic manifestation of crime and punishment as perceived through Roman Stoicism's philosophical construct.² Central to the Roman Stoics' moral manifestation of crime and punishment in *Macbeth* is ambition as displayed by the main characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. *Macbeth*'s Roman Stoic perception of ambition, with its particularly destructive course and tragic end is highlighted, in my article, through an analysis of the dramatic dynamism displayed by Macbeth and his Lady. Their ambition is not simply a moral trait but a dynamic force that shapes their dramatic action and consequently the entire play. The argument follows Macbeth and his lady's close emulation of the Stoics' dynamism of ambition into three stages: existence outside the boundaries of nature; grave unhappiness; and subjection to the changing Fortune that leads to ultimate destruction.

This integral relationship between the moral and the dynamic is central to Stoic philosophy. John Sellars clarifies this point and asserts that Stoicism is not only a theoretical construct but also a practical philosophy that can provide moral guidance (2018, 1-7). Stoicism's position, therefore, can be seen as a practical philosophy apt to explain the popularity of Davenant's *Macbeth* on the Restoration stage. In his *Diary* entry on Monday 7 January 1666, Samuel Pepys testifies to the play's popularity. Upon visiting the Duke House to see *Macbeth*, he writes: 'though I saw it lately, yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, though it be a deep tragedy; ... it being most popular here'.

The Restoration audience had a notorious reputation for being difficult and fickle (Langhans 2007, 1-17). David Roberts confirms that the Restoration theatre was 'a cut-throat business environment' (2014, 29); thus, a play needed to be very good to 'warrant polite attention' (Langhans 2007, 15). To ensure the needed result, during the Restoration 'successful performances made carefully planned use of the three hours or so that audiences could spend at a playhouse', enacting 'a series of calculated impacts on the audience' (Roach 2007, 33). Apparently, Davenant's *Macbeth* deserved the audience's attention, who made it popular and gave it a new life. Biberman refers to the audience's engagement with the play at the unconscious and super-conscious levels (2017, 69); however, he refrains from explaining these levels and their connections with the play and the audience. Apparently, Restoration audiences not only understood the underlying message but most importantly endorsed it as well. To be able to reach such an end, both Davenant and his audience must have been very familiar with Roman Stoicism as an acceptable moral construct. Davenant lived his life during an era that was known for its obsession with Roman Stoicism (Barbour 1998, 2 and 12). Douglas Stewart argues that England was not unique in embracing Roman Stoicism, 'since ... [it] was widespread among intellectuals in all European countries' (1997, 49). By the time Davenant staged *Macbeth* in 1664, Stoicism 'was already a vexed issue' in England (Rowe 2004, 173). The translation of the Roman Stoics' moral teachings was common in Restoration England, a factor that rendered it available to the sophisticated Restoration audience (Chew 1988, 6-8; Casellas 2004, 96). Gerald Marshall explains that the Restoration period was 'deeply affected by neoclassical ... values

² Throughout this paper I will refer to Roman Stoicism. Some critics label it as Neo-Stoicism or historical Stoicism to distinguish it from what they call ancient or primitive Greek Stoicism.

... which reflect magnificent attempts at ordering human experience into incarnate harmony, a unity that often contains deeply spiritual ... elements' (1997b, 10). Sarah Hutton stresses the fact that Roman Stoicism 'had a significant impact on seventeenth-century philosophy' in England. This impact was due to the 'Stoic emphasis on the passions ... natural law ... [and] cosmological views'. All of these components, according to Hutton, were essential to the 'moral philosophy of the period' (2015, 59). Hutton also says that, in England, Stoic philosophy 'was known directly through Cicero and Seneca' (60). Of similar importance was the influence exerted by the various English translations of the Stoics' philosophy and the Cambridge Platonists who promoted these works before and after the Restoration (Hutton 2013 and 2015, 59-61).

It is the era's concern with the neoclassical concept of order that made Stoicism appealing. Such appeal might seem odd considering the fact the Restoration was commonly labelled as the age of libertinism. The newly restored King Charles II, who was also known as the merry monarch, and his hedonistic court promoted libertinism. J.G. Turner gives an uncanny picture of Charles II's court:

To ... every eager consumer of gossip and lampoon, the Court presented a monstrous spectacle of "wanton tal" and obscene writing, drunken brawling, riot, injury, outrage ... and wife-snatching ... The age that coined the "noble Savage" also produced the savage noble. (2002, 166)

Libertinism, however, with its extreme emotional indulgence and lack of any type of restraint was not confined to the royal court. It found its way into the larger literary and public scenes. Jeremy Webster observes that

Throughout Charles II's reign, the libertine was a familiar figure as a sexual adventurer and radical questioner of social, political, and moral values. Not only was the libertine a dominant figure in the poems and plays of the Restoration period, but he was also a frequent subject of conversation in the alehouses and coffee shops of London, in the corridors of Whitehall, and in the drawing rooms of country houses. (2005, 2)

The sharp contrast between the moral construct of Stoicism and libertinism is more than obvious, and the co-existence of these two moral constructs during the Restoration has been acknowledged by critics (see Marshall 1997b, 7-8; Shifflett 1998, 174-186). By considering the historical context and consequently the mind construct of the Restoration, one can find logic in the strong presence of Roman Stoicism in the era. Davenant, who was a royalist during the Civil War and after the restoration of Charles II, along with *Macbeth's* performance was part of a historical moment marked by the strong appeal of Roman Stoicism.

The precarious political context of the Restoration, along with the bloody legacy of the Civil War, were a constant and serious threat to the stability of the period. Keeping in mind Davenant's brilliant theatrical mind along with the cut-throat business environment of the Restoration, staging *Macbeth* was far from being random (Roberts 2014, 29). The Roman version of Stoicism, which was dominant during the Restoration, 'produced a new awareness of the role of the individual within the cosmic plan' (Casellas 2004, 96). This awareness made the 'literature of the Stoic ... a literature ... of community' (Shifflett 1998, 5). This was most appealing to the Restoration mind that perceived history and its men as a guide to reach 'moral and political edification' (Marshall 1997b, 9-10; see also Woolf 1997, 209). Davenant taps into his audience's collective mind and embodies the Roman Stoics' perception of the individual's duty towards his community. With his *Macbeth*, Davenant created an instrument apt to warn his audience, who suffered tragically during the English Civil War, against the disease of ambition

with its strong individual traits and lack of emotional control. Katherine Rowe explains that by 1653 Davenant was concerned with the passion construct of the public, an issue that was of a major concern in seventeenth-century Europe (2004, 171). Such concern is the result of the constant wars that dominated Europe throughout the seventeenth century. The English Civil War and the destruction of the hereditary monarchy before its Restoration made the control of public passion a priority (172). It was believed that the public were 'prone to passion that overruled judgement' (*ibid.*). Such tendency means that 'allegiance can never be secured' (*ibid.*). To secure the Restoration public's allegiance to the newly restored monarchy, Davenant employs *Macbeth* to promote Roman Stoicism with its teaching to accept one's position in life and control passion for the good of the community.

The Stoic writings of Seneca, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius about the perception of ambition as a disease that has a negative effect on the community and the individual is a key element in the argument. The rationale behind the choice of the Roman Stoics is connected to three reasons: the first factor is their moral construct which promotes duty toward the community; second is the strong presence of Roman Stoicism in seventeenth-century England in general and the Restoration period in particular; the third factor behind the choice of the Roman Stoics is their identity as Romans and the nature of their lives. Ancient Rome was known for its ruthless military and political ambition, a theme that is at the heart of *Macbeth*.³ Furthermore, the chosen philosophers were at the centre of political power with its moral challenges. Their particular circumstances made them a suitable choice to discern the mechanism of ambition along with its destructive end. Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE) was a powerful Roman senator and imperial advisor. Through his experience and close relationships with ambitious emperors and treacherous friends, he forged his Stoic philosophy (Wilson 2014, 1-22). The game of power led him to exile and death sentences by Emperors Caligula, Claudius and Nero (who was also his pupil). Nero accused Seneca of being part of a Pisonian conspiracy against his life and ordered him to kill himself, which he did with a true Stoic spirit. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BCE-43 CE) was a Roman consul, statesman, philosopher and one of Rome's greatest orators (Tempest 2014, 9-19). He was deeply involved in Rome's power struggle before and after Julius Caesar's assassination. Like Seneca, he was exiled by the Senate (113-114). Eventually, the notorious bloody struggle for political supremacy in Rome led to his murder, ordered by his enemy Mark Antony and the reluctant concession of Octavius Caesar. His head and hands were nailed on the Rostra, in the Forum Romanum (2). The reign of Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (CE 121-180), or the philosopher king, was dominated by Rome's wars against rebellious and ambitious states, like Parthia, Syria, Britain, Armenia, and the Germanic tribes who were seeking independence. Due to the nature of his position as an emperor, Marcus Aurelius was constantly and directly challenged by ambitious and corrupt men pursuing their own self-interest (McLynn 2009, xi-xvii). The political and moral experience of the chosen philosophers positions the legacy of Roman Stoicism at the heart of Davenant's *Macbeth*.

2. *Ambition and the Sick Souls: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*

Before examining Davenant's *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth's* dramatic course of crime and punishment, it is essential to discuss the moral perception of ambition as conceived by the Roman Stoics. Thus, by highlighting the Stoics' definition of ambition, it will be possible to

³ For a panoramic yet rich view of Rome's wars as a republic and an empire, see Goldsworthy 2000. For information about the Roman generals who fought Rome's ambitious wars see Goldsworthy 2003.

ascertain its traits as displayed by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Douglas Stewart confirms that the Restoration public 'looked on Seneca [as] perhaps the greatest Roman Stoic writer' (1997, 50). Cicero's *On Duty*, which was largely available, promotes the individual's duty toward his community (Reydams-Schils 2005, 63; Casellas 2004, 96). This means that the dramatic manifestation of the Roman Stoics' moral teachings could be easily perceived by the audience. In 'Of a Happy Life', Seneca defines ambition as 'the thirst of glory and dominion' (1834, 138); he adds that ambitious men 'run mad after wealth and honor' (*ibid.*). In 'Avarice and Ambition' he wonders: 'What is the end of ambition ... when at best, we are but stewards of what we falsely call our own? All those things we pursue with so much hazard and expense of blood, as well to keep as to get, for which we break faith and friendship' (Seneca 2011, 43). The Stoics attribute the suicidal behaviour of ambitious individuals to their sick and unhealthy souls. In *Disputations*, Cicero defines ambition as a disease that affects the soul. He also explains that the person who is infected by this disease displays 'intensely strong opinion, inherent and deeply seated, concerning some objects which ought not to be sought' (1886, 211). In his view, the intense desire for forbidden objects is the result of 'confusion of perverse opinion' (109). Such opinions 'deprive the soul of health, and trouble it with diseases' (*ibid.*). Furthermore, in his letter 'On the Disease of the Soul', Seneca argues that ambition is a 'disease of the mind' marked by 'persistent perversion of the judgement' (2016c, 204).

When we consider Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's reaction to the witches' prophecy that promises them greatness and kingship, the same symptoms the Stoics attributed to the disease of ambition become apparent. Both characters display perverse reasoning and intense desire for an object they should not seek. Upon meeting Macbeth for the first time, the witches greet him:

All hail, *Macbeth*, Hail to thee *Thane of Glamis*;
 All hail, *Macbeth*, Hail to thee *Thane of Cawdor*.
 All hail, *Macbeth*, who shall be King hereafter? (1.1, 5)⁴

The witches address Macbeth using his current title 'Thane of Glamis' followed by 'Thane of Cawdor' and then 'King'. Macbeth reacts to these greetings in a confused and irrational way. He orders the witches, 'Stay! You imperfect Speakers! Tell me more' (1.1, 5). Macbeth is left confused and, therefore, he demands clarification. Furthermore, his particular reaction shows that he takes the witches seriously. Bewildered, he asks:

But how of Cawdor, whilst that *Thane* yet lives?
 And, for your promise, that I shall be King,
 'Tis not within the prospect of belief. (1.1, 5)

In the middle of his confusion, he receives confirmation of the witches' first prophecy. Macduff, in fact, informs him:

...the King; ...
 ...
 Bad me, from him, to call you *Thane of Cawdor*:
 In which Addition, Hail, most Noble *Thane!* (1.1, 6)

⁴ All quotations from Davenant's *Macbeth* are taken from Davenant 1674. Since in this edition there are no line numbers, all quotes will be followed by act, scene, and page number.

Upon becoming the Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth immediately displays perverse judgement. Talking to himself, he gives his own assessment of the situation:

The Prince of *Cumberland!* that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap;
For in my way it lies. ... (1.1, 9)

Macbeth's deep desire for power causes him to think in an irrational manner. Legally, the prince of Cumberland is the legitimate heir to his father, King Duncan. Macbeth's desire to remove King Duncan's heir from his path and wear the crown means that he intends to remove Duncan as well. His intense desire for the throne engulfs his mind and causes his perverse judgement. Consequently, such judgement reveals his sick soul. Aware that he is seeking kingship that 'ought not to be sought', Macbeth warns:

... Stars! hide your fires,
Let no light see my black and deep desires.
The strange Idea of a bloody act. (1.1, 9)

Fully aware of the evil nature of his bloody desires, Macbeth does not seem to be uneasy about his black ambition: he simply wants to hide it.

However, he is not alone in having a black and bloody ambition; his wife, Lady Macbeth, suffers from the same disease. Upon reading Macbeth's letter, in which he informs her of the witches' prediction of future honours and greatness, she declares, '...I already feel / The future in the Instant' (1.1, 12). In embracing the witches' prophecy with such enthusiasm, Lady Macbeth reveals a lack of moral sense and sound judgement. With sheer, ill-placed determination, she transfers herself to the future where she is queen to King Macbeth. She confesses: '*Glamis* thou art, and *Cawdor*, and shalt be / What thou art promis'd...' (1.1, 12). Like Macbeth, the promise of a crown engulfs her mind completely as she ignores the presence of a living legitimate king and heir. Immediately, she starts to devise a plan to turn the witches' prophecy of kingship into a reality. To her, the only obstacle on the way to the crown is Macbeth himself. She complains that he

...
Has too much of the milk of human kindness
To take the nearest way: ...
Thou do'st not want ambition: but the ill
Which should attend it: ... (1.1, 11)

Lady Macbeth is concerned that Macbeth's kindness will prevent him from taking the throne. She believes him ambitious but she also knows that he does not possess the ruthless nature required to remove the obstacles in their path to the crown. Lady Macbeth's lack of sound judgement is clear not only through her insistence to turn the prophecy into a reality but also through her condemnation of upright moral conduct that deny her access to the crown. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth display the symptoms the Stoics associated with the disease of ambition. Their desire is so intense that it deprives them of sound opinion and judgement. As such, they are determined to obtain what does not belong to them through bloody and evil means. In 'Of a Happy Life', Seneca writes: 'Ambition aspires from great things to greater; and propounds matters even impossible, when it has once arrived at things beyond expectation. It is a kind of

dropsy; the more a man drinks, the more he covets' (1834, 138). Seneca further explains that ambition has no end and no boundaries. It goes beyond great things to seek the impossible, just like Macbeth and his Lady. In spite of their wealth and high social rank, they are not satisfied as they are in pursuit of Duncan's crown.

To confirm the notion that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's souls are infected with ambition, it is useful to compare them with Banquo and Lady Macduff. Macbeth's response to the witches' prophecy stands in sharp contrast to that of Banquo. The witches inform Banquo, 'Thou shalt get Kings, thou shalt ne'r be one' (1.1, 5). Significantly, Banquo does not seem to be interested in the witches' promise that his descendants will be kings as he refrains from demanding more information. When the witches' prediction regarding Macbeth's attainment of the title Thane of Cawdor is fulfilled, he responds:

...
 But many times to win us to our harm,
 The Instruments of darkness tell us truths,
 And tempt us with low trifles, that they may
 Betray us in the things of high concern. (1.1, 7)

Banquo remains unaffected by the fulfilment of the prophecy. In fact, he remains cautious of their gifts and harm. He labels them as the instrument of darkness when Macbeth perceives them as the source of immortal knowledge and light. He even warns Macbeth against their fantastic temptation and tragic betrayal. Banquo's cautious words are in harmony with the Stoics' warning against ambition. From the Stoic perspective, Banquo's deep understanding of the danger of ambition qualifies him to be considered wise. Being wise means that he possesses stable judgement and consequently a healthy soul. Lady Macduff displays similar Stoic wisdom as she considers ambition an evil pursuit. Lady Macbeth tries to comfort Lady Macduff who is distressed and concerned for her husband's safety. In an attempt to comfort her, Lady Macbeth says, 'the bright glories which / He gain'd in battle might dispel those Clouds' (1.1, 10). Inconsolable, Lady Macduff responds

The world mistakes the glories gain'd in war,
 Thinking their Lustre true: alas, they are
 But Comets, Vapours! By some men exhal'd
 From others bloud, and kindl'd in the Region
 Of popular applause, in which they live
 A-while; then vanish: and the very breath
 Which first inflam'd them, blows them out agen. (1.1, 10)

Lady Macduff openly criticizes the dominant view that encourages ambitious men to achieve glory through blood and wars. To her there is nothing worthy or honourable in gains acquired on the dead bodies of many. In her view, ambition is a collective disease that engulfs the entire society, encouraging men to achieve glory only to destroy them. Lady Macduff's independent views encourage Anne Greenfield to oppose the dominant view of her character. She argues that Lady Macduff is far from being a 'flat icon of idealized and submissive' wife (2013, 40). Her bold condemnation of ambitious men seeking glory through death and destruction echoes Seneca's attitude as expressed in 'Avarice and Ambition.' In 'Of a Happy Life', Seneca wonders if ambitious men 'could but look into the hearts of men that have already gained these points, how it would startle them to see those hideous cares and crimes that wait upon ambitious

greatness: all those acquisitions that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar are but false pleasures, slippery and uncertain' (1834, 138). Seneca stresses the heavy price ambitious characters will eventually pay. He is surprised that people do not learn from the negative experiences and unhappy ends of those who follow self-centred designs.

In spite of the fact that, in this essay, *Macbeth* is not read as an adapted play, yet, it is essential to stress that Lady Macduff's scene is not in the original play (Shifflett 2016, 174-186). The addition of this scene serves to highlight the multileveled significance of Lady Macduff's clear condemnation of ambition, which stresses Davenant's intention to warn his audience of the grave consequences of ambition. In keeping with the Restoration's new tradition of allowing women to act, Lady Macduff's role was performed by Mrs. Long. Having a real female voice on the stage gives tremendous power to the female population. The actress's voice can be read as the women's voice in the audience who suffered during the Civil War and lost their loved ones, their houses and livelihoods. Cynthia Lowenthal writes that 'The late Restoration playhouse was filled with women – women spectators ... and women performers'. She stresses the powerful influence not only of the actresses but also of the 'female spectators' (2003, 111). On another level, Lady Macduff can be considered a female Stoic voice with respected rights to wisdom and opinion. Stoic tradition 'tended to emphasize the intellectual equivalency of the sexes' (Shifflett 1998, 6); thus, being intellectually equal to men, Stoics insist that women 'should study philosophy to enhance their rational decision-making' (Reydams-Schils 2016, 24). During the Civil War and after the Restoration, women, like men, were interested in the moral teachings of Roman Stoicism (Shifflett 1998, 9-11). The Stoic female voice of Lady Macduff is of strong influence on the audience who can easily remember the role played by ambition in the Civil War that destroyed their communities. The 1640s were the years of the English Civil War (1642-48), in which mature Davenant played an essential role in supporting the cause of King Charles I (Stubbs 2011, 1-16). Peter Gaunt writes about the direct effect of the war on the population by stating that 'A large proportion of the population was directly involved in the fighting ... Towns ... suffered attack [and] substantial war-related damage, ... plundering, violence and disease. The war was bloody, brutal and at times barbaric ... [It] caused death, destruction on a huge scale' (2003, 8-9). People not only lost their lives but their way of life as well. Ben Coates documents the destructive influence of the war on the economy. He explains that 'Domestic trade was directly affected ... Overseas trade slumped in the 1640s, with two major troughs in 1643 and 1648' (2016, 139 and 163). The Restoration looked at history and its men as a guide to reach 'moral and political edification,' (Marshall 1997b, 9-10; Woolf 1997, 209). In harmony with this perception, Davenant looked at the history of the Civil War and the moral teaching of Roman Stoicism to help his community to regain its strength. Rowe explains that, by 1653, Davenant was concerned with the passion construct of the public, an issue that was of a major concern in seventeenth-century Europe (2004, 171). Such concern is the result of the constant wars that dominated Europe. The English Civil War and the destruction of the hereditary monarchy before its Restoration made the control of public passion a priority (172). It was believed that the public were 'prone to passion that overrule[d] judgement' (*ibid.*). Such tendency means that 'allegiance can never be secured' (*ibid.*). Davenant allows Lady Macduff and Banquo to emerge as wise persons, guided by what the Stoics consider a healthy mind and soul. They stand in sharp contrast to Macbeth and his lady, with their sick souls and evil minds. With *Macbeth*, Davenant wants to warn his audience, who suffered tragically during the Civil War, against the disease of ambition and, at the same time, to secure the Restoration's public allegiance to the newly restored monarchy and create political stability, Davenant believed that Roman Stoicism was the most suitable perspective.

3. *The Existence outside the Bounds of Nature: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*

According to the Stoics' moral construct, the ambitious person's way of life is marked by three characteristics: existence outside the bounds of nature; grave unhappiness; and subjection to fickle Fortune. Significantly, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's way of life is a close emulation of these three characteristics. In 'Of a Happy Life' Seneca argues that mankind should follow the dictates of nature and be 'Content with his lot, without wishing what he has not, and that the great business of his life, like that of nature, is performed without ... noise' (1834, 85). Aurelius advises human beings to 'Lay ... aside all ... discontent with the portion which has been given' to them (2015 II, 72). By considering the Stoics' moral standpoint, it can be perceived that Macbeth's existence outside the bounds of nature is multi-layered. His discontent with his position in life is manifested through his pursuit of what does not belong to him, his murder of innocent people and his communication with the witches. Macbeth's desire for the crown, which does not rightfully belong to him, is one layer of his existence outside the boundaries of nature. After the witches' promise of the title Thane of Cawdor is fulfilled, Macbeth considers the crown. Talking to himself, he says,

Th'have told me truth as to the name of *Cawdor*,
That may be prologue to the name of King.
Less Titles shou'd the greater still fore-run,
The morning Star doth usher in the Sun. (1.1, 7)

Legally, the crown belongs to Duncan and his direct descendants. However, Macbeth seems oblivious to this fact. He shows no respect for the natural course of things and chooses to seize the crown by force. In 'Of a Happy Life' Seneca condemns such behaviour and believes that 'it is only for a narrow mind to condemn the order of ... Nature' (1834, 114). Needless to say, Macbeth's lack of logic does indeed mark him as a narrow-minded character. To take the crown, he resorts to violence and murder: he murders not only his king, but also his best friend Banquo, and the family of his cousin Macduff. In *The Meditations*, Aurelius writes that by nature men are made for 'co-operation and not discord. ... To act against one another ... is contrary to nature' (2015 II, 72); in his opinion, man separates himself from nature when he acts against his fellow humans. Interestingly, Macbeth is aware that, by murdering King Duncan, he is also killing nature in himself. He perceives the murder as 'the Death of nature in my self' (1.1.14). In spite of the fact that Banquo is his devoted friend, Macbeth finds it necessary to sacrifice his life to cover up Duncan's murder. Unhappy with Banquo's share in the prophecy, Macbeth complains that the three witches

... hail'd him Father to line of Kings.
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless Crown,
And put a barren Scepter in my hand:
...
For *Banquo's* Issue, I have stain'd my Soul
For them: the gracious *Duncan* I have murder'd: (3.1, 30)

Although he is well aware of his vile crime, he fails to express any regrets. He is unhappy with the fact that the fruit of his crimes will go to Banquo's descendants. To him it means that he is wearing a 'fruitless Crown' and carrying a 'barren Scepter'; and he clearly expresses his fears in relation to Banquo's future:

I am no King till I am safely so,
 My fears stick deep in *Banquo's* successors;
 And in his Royalty of Nature reigns that
 Which would be fear'd. ... (3.1, 29-30)

To prevent Banquo's descendants from inheriting the crown, Macbeth reveals a plan:

... I will attempt yet further,
 And blot out, by their blood, what e're
 Is written of them in the book of Fate. (3.1, 30)

Thus, he makes it clear that he is going to prevent the witches' prophecy from becoming a reality. To him murdering Banquo and his son is the only way to secure the crown for himself and his 'issue'. He gives clear instructions to kill both father and son. He explains to the assassins:

Fleance, his Son ... keeps him company;
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than that of *Banquo's*: he too must embrace the fate
 Of that dark hour. ... (3.1, 32)

Macbeth's men kill Banquo but his son Fleance escapes. Unfortunately, Lady Macduff and her children fail to escape death. To secure the crown he has usurped, Macbeth orders the death of his cousin's family. Lenox informs Macduff of the tragic fate of his wife and children:

Your Castle is surpriz'd, your Wife and Children
 Savagely Murder'd: to relate the Manner,
 Were to increase the Butchery of them,
 By adding to their fall the Death of You. (4.1, 55)

Lenox makes it clear that the murder is so savage that to describe it could kill Macduff with grief. Macbeth's divergence from nature goes further as he seeks the help of supernatural entities, the witches. He has absolute faith in their powers, and this motivates him to actively seek their advice to maintain his power and safety. According to the perception of witchcraft in seventeenth-century England, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's reaction to the witches' prophecy was problematic if not a sin. Witches were considered wicked devil worshippers and the 'foe both of the King's laws and those of God' (Sharpe 2013, 14 and 33). As such, it was believed they should be avoided at all costs (34-39). The hostility to witches and witchcraft was so strong in England during the seventeenth century that it unleashed a real witch-hunt. As Ian Bostridge writes:

In the seventeenth century, witchcraft was a handy ideological tool. ... During the 1640s ... witchcraft prosecution had acquired a dangerous association with disorder, notably through the witch "craze." ... The discourse of witchcraft had not spent its force by 1660. ... There were established clerics in the British Isles busy persecuting witches ... many of them were Scottish. (1996, 312-313)⁵

Bostridge points out that during the Civil War period, witchcraft was associated with disorder. As a result, the pursuit and persecution of suspected witches were widespread. After the Restoration,

⁵ For more information about witchcraft during the Civil War and the Restoration era, see Sharpe (2013, 70-76).

the hunt continued with the same force. This attitude allows the Restoration audience to view Macbeth's pursuit of the power of darkness to satisfy his ambition as an evil endeavour. In their turn, the Stoics have a rather complex view of witchcraft. Keimpe Algra complains that 'Demonology is among the less studied aspects of Stoic thought. ... This may be partly due to the fact that the evidence is scarce and scattered' (2009, 359). Indeed, the available information regarding the Stoic attitude to demonology is limited. In *The Meditations*, Aurelius writes: 'Nothing is more wretched than a man who ... pries into the things beneath the earth ... without perceiving that it is sufficient to attend to the daemon within him' (2015, 720). The Stoics agree that demons are psychic entities that could be internal or external. To the early Stoics, the view 'appears to have been that the inner demon simply is the self' (Algra 2009, 366), an inner demon, therefore, which reflects the inner voice of the person. The Stoic perspective also accepts the existence of external non-human demons, whose evil nature 'as in the case of humans, is due to their own choices' (385). From the Stoic perspective, it can be concluded that Macbeth is under the influence of both internal and external malevolent powers. While his inner demon can be connected with his sick soul which has been damaged by his ambition, the witches represent the external evil power that influences him. The very fact that he enlists their assistance to obtain what is not his diminishes the boundary that separates them. This is most obvious when he seeks their council in their cave. He asks: 'What Destinie's appointed for my Fate?' (4.1, 48), and also inquires about Banquo's issue: 'Tell me ... / Shall *Banquo's* Issue o're ... / This Kingdom raign?' (4.1, 48). By contacting them to protect his power, he becomes one of them and secures his place outside the limits of nature.

Like her husband, the ambitious Lady Macbeth reveals multifaceted unnatural inclinations. She desires the crown and for that she is willing to murder King Duncan and obtain the help of the demonic spirits. Talking to herself after receiving Macbeth's letter that reports the witches' prophecies, she makes it clear that she has a deep desire to be queen of Scotland. To attain such honour, her husband needs to be crowned as the king. She swears '... thou ... shalt be / What thou art promis'd: ...' (1.1, 11). Since she has no rightful claim to the crown, Lady Macbeth invokes unnatural and malevolent entities for support. She commands the evil spirits of darkness to de-sex and dehumanize her. Using highly charged metaphorical language, Lady Macbeth expresses a strong desire for a transformation into an unsexed entity. She calls:

... Come all you spirits
That wait on mortal thoughts: unsex me here:
...
... come, and fill my breasts
With gall instead of milk: ... (1.1, 12)

Lady Macbeth makes it clear that to kill Duncan she needs to renounce her nature as a human being and, more, as a woman. Conventionally, human beings do possess a definite sex, either a man or a woman. Lady Macbeth does not want to be either. Conventionally, women are associated with kindness and motherhood. Mother's milk symbolizes love and life. The desire to replace milk with poison, and love with hatred, is a testimony of her unnatural inclination. Her desire to be unsexed reminds us of the witches, who do not have a clear sexual identity. Her unnatural inclination is further stressed through her desire to be dehumanized. She invokes the evil spirits to

...
Empty my Nature of humanity,
And fill it up with cruelty: make thick
My bloud, and stop all passage to remorse; (1.1, 12)

Lady Macbeth wants to be a monstrous entity that lacks empathy. She demands to be completely possessed by the 'murthering Spirits', so she can murder Duncan. She calls:

... make haste dark night,
And hide me in a smoak as black as hell;
That my keen steel see not the wounds it makes: (1.1, 12)

Being so detached from natural inclinations, it is easy for Lady Macbeth to be willing to commit the most outrageous crimes. The murder of King Duncan is a stark proof that Lady Macbeth, like Macbeth himself, has transcended the limits of humanity into an unnatural domain where death, evil, and darkness prevail.

4. *Stoicism and an Unhappy Life: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*

To the Stoics, the certain end of those who transcend the limit of the law of nature is grave unhappiness. In 'Of a Happy Life' Seneca writes that one reaches such a state because 'We make a false calculation of matters; because we advise with opinion, and not with Nature: and this ... leads us to a higher esteem for riches, honour and power, than they are worth' (1834, 144). Macbeth and his lady have exaggerated the value of kingship and power which, according to the laws of nature, are worthless. As such, and in accordance with the Stoics' readings, they face the tragic consequences of their ambition. The individual miscalculation of what is of value and what is not, pushes people away from happiness. Unknowingly, individuals tend to look for happiness in the wrong places. Seneca comments on such ill-navigated journeys:

There is not anything in this world, perhaps, that is more talked of, and less understood, than the business of a *happy life*. We live however, in a blind and eager pursuit of it; and the more progress we make in a wrong way the farther we are from our journey's end. (80)

To the Stoics, happiness can be achieved through tranquillity and not through ambition. As Seneca writes, 'The greatest blessings of mankind are within us ... *Tranquillity is a certain equality of mind, which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress*. Nothing can make it less, for it is the state of human perfection' (81). Seneca believes that tranquillity is the essence of human happiness; it is a mental condition independent of any external influence. Significantly, King Macbeth and his queen fail to attain the expected happiness they attached to the crown. Their unhappiness is obvious through their lack of peace, which can be traced through two factors. First, they live their present under threat and anticipate their future with anxiety. Second, they suffer from what the Stoics call perturbation of the mind. After murdering King Duncan and claiming his crown, the new king and queen express their discontent with their present state. Talking to herself, the queen questions their contentment:

Where our desire is got without content,
Alas, it is not Gain, but punishment!
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Then by Destruction live in doubtful joy. (3.1, 36)

Lady Macbeth makes it clear that they live in a state of perpetual unease. It is true that they have gained the crown but they are not content. To her, the crown becomes a punishment rather than a reward. She even stresses that their previous state, which they have destroyed, was safer.

Since they cannot reverse time, they will need to endure their new condition of 'doubtful joy' (3.1, 36). Like his queen, Macbeth is keenly aware of their current precarious situation. Far from being satisfied, he warns her:

Alas, we have but scorch'd the Snake, not kill'd it,
She'l close and be her self, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former Sting. (3.1, 36)

Macbeth makes it clear that their situation is not safe. They live under the constant threat of their detractors and the consequences of their bloody actions. To the Stoics, such a situation is the expected consequence of breaking the natural law. In 'On the Shortness of Life' Seneca writes about those who, like Macbeth and his lady, follow their own passions but fail to enjoy what they gain. He writes:

Their own folly afflicts them with restless emotions which hurl themselves upon the very thing they fear ... Even their pleasures are uneasy and made anxious by various fears and at the very height of their rejoicing the worrying thought steals over them: "How long this last?" ... This feeling has caused kings to bewail their power, and they were not so much delighted by the greatness of their fortune as terrified by the thought of its inevitable end. (2005, 26-27)

Macbeth and his queen are not enjoying their power: they are terrified of losing it. Their concern with their precarious future prevents them from living in tranquillity. Macbeth tells his wife:

... I am in Blood
Stept in so far, that should I wade no more,
Returning were as bad, as to go o're. (3.1, 41)

In 'On the Shortness of Life', Seneca writes about the laborious troubled life of those who are discontent. He argues that

It is inevitable that life will be not only very short but very miserable for those who acquire by great toil what they must keep by greater toil. They achieve what they want laboriously; they possess what they have achieved anxiously. ... They do not look for an end to their misery. (2005, 28)

Macbeth and his lady are exactly in the position Seneca describes: they need to be constantly labouring to maintain their power. They are mired deep in blood, and they need to go even deeper to protect the crown. As such, they can be viewed as an accurate representation of Seneca's view of the miserable conditions of ambitious individuals. Their life is a constant misery, wasted in opposing nature, conspiring to gain what is not theirs and murdering family members and friends. Tragically, they do not have the time to enjoy their gain as they are anxiously striving to keep it.

Significantly, their physical world is not the only place where they need to labour constantly: their emotional state is just as turbulent. Both Macbeth and his Lady suffer from what the Stoics call 'perturbation' of the mind. In *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero explains that this state of mind is the result of 'The confusion of perverse opinions and their mutual repugnancy [which] deprive the soul of health, and trouble it with diseases' (1886, 209). He gives more details about these 'inward perturbations.' He writes, 'Let it then be understood that the perturbation of mind, when inconsistent and confused opinions are tossed to and fro, implied perpetual unrest' (210). Lady Macbeth experiences perpetual unrest. Her strong desire to crown Macbeth, has

motivated her to encourage, plan Duncan's murder only to experience a change of heart and regret. She tells her once beloved husband:

... See me no more.
As King your Crown sits heavy on your Head,
But heavier on my heart: I have had too much
Of Kings already. ... (4.1, 53)

The gulf that separates Macbeth and his queen is obvious. The queen, who has been inseparable from her husband, does not want to see him any longer. She is inwardly disturbed and his presence makes her feel worse. The picture she gives of her heavy heart, although metaphorical, is very eloquent. Mentally and emotionally disturbed, she declares that Duncan's ghost follows her as a shadow. She tells her husband:

Duncan is dead.
...
And yet to Me he Lives.
His fatal Ghost is now my shadow, and pursues me
Where e're I go. (4.1, 52)

Obviously, Lady Macbeth is mentally and emotionally disturbed. This is stressed through her sleep-walking. Her lady-in-waiting reports the queen's unusual actions:

I have seen her rise from her bed, throw
Her Night-Gown on her, unlock her Closet,
Take forth Paper, fold it, write upon't, read it,
Afterwards Seal it, and again return to Bed,
Yet all this while in a most fast sleep. (5.1, 56)

The queen's unusual state is made more alarming in her dialogue with herself while sleep-walking:

Out, out, out I say. ...
'Tis time to do't: Fy my Lord, fy, a Souldier,
And affraid? what need we fear? who knows it?
...
Yet who would have thought the old Man had
So much Blood in him
...
Macduff had once a Wife; where is she now?
Will these Hands n'ere be clean? ...
... Yet here's
A smell of blood; not all the perfumes of *Arabia*
Will sweeten this little Hand. (5.1, 57)

As a result of Lady Macbeth's confessions of their crimes while sleep-walking, she moves in a three dimensional level: physical, mental and metaphysical. She exists in the real physical world but at points she moves to the mental state of sleep while retaining her conscious condition. This is obvious through what can be called a 'sleep-conscious condition'. Within this state she displays actions usually performed in the conscious state, like rising from bed, dressing, writing, washing and talking. The metaphysical dimension is revealed through the queen's confessions

of her crimes while in the sleep-conscious state. Pushed by her seriously disturbed soul, she unconsciously reports her and Macbeth's crimes. Seaton tells Macbeth that the queen is, 'Not so Sick, ... as She is troubled / With disturbing Fancies' (5.3, 59).

Like his queen, Macbeth proves to be detached from the real world. When told that his thanes, who have abandoned him, are united with the English army against him, he responds:

Poor *Thanes*, you vainly hope for Victory:
You'll find *Macbeth* Invincible; or if
He can be O'rcome, it must be then
By *Birnam Oaks*, and not by English-men. (5.3, 59)

It is obvious that Macbeth believes himself to be immortal and consequently untouchable. Such an unreasonable attitude from a professional warrior who knows death too well, is most telling about his mental state. To the Stoics the symptoms displayed by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth indicate a chronic disease. Cicero, in *Tusculan Disputations*, explains that 'evil flows into the veins and inheres in the bowels, and becomes a disease which, when chronic, cannot be extirpated' (1886, 210). Indeed, Macbeth and his queen's perturbation of the mind is a culmination of their evil passion and blind ambition. Their symptoms proved incurable and their tragic end is a direct consequence of this chronic disease.

5. *Stoicism and Fickle Fortune: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*

According to the Stoics' concept, the root of Macbeth and his queen's misery lies in their dependence on Fortune to wear Duncan's crown. In 'Of a Happy Life' Seneca writes, 'Never pronounce any man happy that depends upon fortune for his happiness; for nothing can be more preposterous than to place the good of a reasonable creature in unreasonable things' (1834, 125). In his epistle, 'On Business as the Enemy of Philosophy', Seneca explains that it is a mistake to depend on Fortune, since it 'gives us nothing we can really own' (2016b, 190). The witches can be read as the instrument of Fortune. Both Macbeth and his lady have allowed themselves to be guided by their predictions. They have made a mistake and 'depend upon fortune for the felicity of life' (123). When the witches' first prophecy is fulfilled, Macbeth responds:

Th' have told me truth as to the name of *Cawdor*,
That may be prologue to the name King.
...
Fortune, methinks, which rains down Honour on me,
Seems to rain bloud too: ... (1.1, 7)

Macbeth believes that Fortune will shower him with great honours. His obsession with such an unforeseen prospect is most obvious through his letter about the witches' prophecies, which he immediately sends to Lady Macbeth. It reads:

This have I imparted to thee, (my dearest partner of Greatness) that thou might'st not lose thy rights of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what is promis'd. ... (1.1, 11)

His words reveal that the promise of a crown has transported him into a state of ecstasy. Seneca does not approve of such an attitude towards Fortune's promises. In 'On Business as the Enemy of Philosophy', Seneca writes with condemnation of man's reaction when Fortune smiles. He

asserts, 'we stand expectant, and whatever Fortune has thrown to us we forthwith bolt . . . to catch' (2016b, 190). Indeed, this is exactly how Macbeth reacts to the witches' tidings: he rushes after the prophecies to report to his Lady, instantly building hopes and visualizing the future. Significantly, Lady Macbeth proves similar to Macbeth and places great hopes on the words of the witches. Upon her first encounter with Macbeth after receiving his letter, Lady Macbeth greets him:

Great *Glamis!* worthy *Cawdor!*
 Greater than both, by the all-Hail hereafter;
 Thy Letters have transported me beyond
 My present posture; I already feel
 The future in the instant. (1.1, 12)

Like her husband, Lady Macbeth is transported to the glorious future promised by the witches. Significantly, the queen does not survive long enough to enjoy what she craved, that is Duncan's crown. Upon hearing the news of his wife's death, Macbeth laments:

I brought Her here, to see my Victines, not to Die.
 To Morrow, to Morrow, and to Morrow,
 ...
 ... all our Yesterdays have lighted Fools ...
 ... Out, out that Candle,
 Life's but a Walking Shaddow, 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 Ideot, full of Sound and Fury
 Signifying Nothing. (5.4, 61)

This is an expected conclusion of a man with a sick mind and soul like Macbeth. He believes that his life turns out to be an empty apparatus with no significance. In his letter to Lucillius, 'On the Fickleness of Fortune', Seneca writes that a wise man, 'reflects on the possible ups and downs in human affairs before he feels their force' (2016d, 351). However, Macbeth proves to be unwise to the very end. His lack of wisdom is obvious through his failure to perceive the tragic consequences of the crimes he committed along with his wife to gain the crown. Such an end, along with the Stoics' reading of ambition and its destructive course, has a strong resonance with the war-weary Restoration audience. They are directed to perceive Macbeth and his wife's mistakes and learn from them. Davenant does not want them to become like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, who not only fail to control their emotions but also fail to acknowledge their mistakes before it is too late. The audience are urged to act like true Stoics and learn from past mistakes and try to avoid living them again. The Civil War was started by ambitious characters, like Macbeth and his Lady, who wanted what did not belong to them. *Macbeth* manipulates the audience to understand that the key to stability is to acknowledge their place in the community and support the newly restored monarchy.

6. Conclusion

Davenant makes it clear that theatre is a key tool to control the audience's emotions and secure their political allegiance. *Macbeth*, which he staged in 1664 after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, is a clear manifestation of such a concept. The play dramatizes crime and punishment through Roman Stoicism's moral construct of ambition. Davenant intends his play as a dramatic warning message against ambition and disloyalty toward the newly restored monarchy. Such an

approach confirms that Davenant and the Restoration audience were familiar with the Roman concept of Stoicism. This suggests that the audience can comprehend Davenant's political message. This proved most obvious by the popularity of *Macbeth* on the Restoration stage. Davenant allows his key characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, to be a faithful dramatic manifestation of the Roman Stoic's concept of the disease of ambition with its evil course and unavoidable tragic end. Macbeth and his lady display the symptoms of ambition as indicated by the Roman Stoics: the existence outside the boundaries of nature, the experience of grave unhappiness and the pursuit of Fortune to tragic ends. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's lack of wisdom motivate them to follow passion rather than reason. Being ambitious, they fail to accept their position in life and desire King Duncan's crown. By desiring what does not belong to them they place themselves outside the boundaries of nature.

Under the evil influence of their ambition, they realize that the only way to obtain what does not belong to them is to oppose the laws of nature. Their unnatural course is most obvious through their violence and contact with evil supernatural powers. By opposing the laws of nature, they find themselves living under constant threat and fear. As a result, they suffer what the Stoics call perturbation of the mind – a chronic and incurable affliction of the mental faculties. The ambitious Lady Macbeth is constantly haunted by the ghosts of those they murdered. Macbeth, in his turn, becomes more and more bloody and violent. Their misery and lack of security cause the full disintegration of their world. Unable to bear the mental and emotional pressure, Lady Macbeth dies, and Macbeth is killed by Duncan's legitimate heir. From the Stoics' perspective, the unhappy life and tragic end of Macbeth and his queen are natural punishment for their ambition and its bloody course. The tragic consequences of their actions remind the Restoration audience of the destructive Civil War that took place through the deeds of ambitious men like Macbeth, who desired what does not belong to them. In such situations the audience are expected to follow the Stoics' teachings, be wise and learn from past mistakes, control their emotions, and avoid another destructive war. To achieve these goals, they need to be dutiful to their community, accept their position in life, and show their allegiance to the newly restored Charles II.

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