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Corporate Hexes: The Conundrum of Bound Leaders in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

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Abstract

Shakespeare's stage in *Macbeth* is red. It is a vivid and bloody reminder of the power and violence that comes with hubristic behaviour and sheer ambition. It serves as a warning for those who have their sights set on leadership, depicting a dark and contradictory view of how violence, as a means to exert dominance and maintain control, consumes the souls of the leaders. In the play, violence is both a tool of oppression and a form of justice, a point that is made even more poignant by its relevance to modern-day politics. In the contemporary world of politics, corporate influence, particularly in Anglo-American context for the current study, leaders frequently become susceptible to external forces, motivated by ambition and paranoia. Similarly, Macbeth's story serves as a reminder that no one is immune to the seduction of power. It mirrors contemporary issues and challenges in modern-day politics asserting that no matter what the system of governance is, leaders fall prey to the incantations of the unseen powers. Hence, in the study the writer seeks to explore an intersection of history and present-day power relations under corporate influence in an Anglo-American context.

Keywords: Macbeth, Anglo-American Policies, Corporatocracy, Shakespeare, Politics.

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*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"*
(*Macbeth*, V, v, 24-28)

Odd connections between William Shakespeare's renowned tragedy, *Macbeth*, and 21st-century politics continue to baffle modern society as it is a remarkably relevant and insightful play, providing a profound examination of the complex power struggles and the corrupting influence of ambition. When contemporary democracies are scrutinized, where these issues remain a prominent feature of politics, it is quite possible to unearth buried stories about how power has been usurped through different means. In this respect, a skilled historian can list countless examples of usurpers throughout history. The label itself carries a negative connotation. However, it is important to recognize that records of many political usurpers often privilege the preferences of a superior rival, thus making them once again biased documents forged by hegemonies. Biased identifications as such represent the detachment of meaning from reality. Towards the end of the play, after losing his wife and being left alone because he has no offspring, Macbeth the regicide, as another historicised usurper, sobs hysterically at the meaninglessness of life. His female representation left this world permanently because she was unable to bear the suffering she had caused. Nonetheless, Macbeth's ghostly presence continues to make an effort to linger in this realm. His screams are behind sound-proof rooms. Left all alone speaking to ghastly shadows, unhinged and berserk, Macbeth seeks salvation in his own ruin. Despite all the tyranny he had caused trying to do so, can Macbeth be held accountable for the dictatorship he created?

His acts could not be considered evil for an individual whose mental stability is seriously questioned. No one could be inherently bad. What a person decides to be is often built by the environment. Within these complex connections, the line between good and evil is always in flux. Ultimately, the question of good and evil is not so easily defined, as it is shaped by the complex interplay of individual agency and external factors. Usurpers like Macbeth, according to P.L. Robertson (1966), are "practical stolid individuals whose victims provided the suggestion of martyrdom to dramatists and storytellers" (p. 95). Unresponsive in his manners and decisions, Macbeth deeply puzzles the audience and creates an aura of fear. Potential cruelty that might be brought about by his actions is beyond anticipation. Thereby, what or whom he kills unquestionably becomes sanctified

under the terms of his rivals. Lisa Low (1983) in *Ridding Ourselves of Macbeth* states that “Macbeth is not motivelessly malicious like Richard III or Iago. He savours no sadistic pleasure in cruelty. Rather, set within reach of glory, he reaches and falls, and falling he is sick with remorse” (p. 827). Macbeth’s blind ambition, fuelled by promises of glory and fame, might as well be no more than a gentle push by the witches. Their suggestion that he would soon be seated on the throne blinds Macbeth. In favour of new promises, he surrenders what he seems to have gloriously won by eliminating McDonwald. Instead of rejoicing upon his actual accomplishments, Macbeth sets a new goal for both himself and his lady. Sheer ambition can be deemed their only offspring. Moreover, the witches’ wicked touch turns once a valiant soldier and even more a relative into an assassin soaked in blood. J. Lyndon Shanley (1961), in *Macbeth: The Tragedy of Evil* claims that “Shakespeare uses the witches to convey the danger of the suggestion” (p. 307). Though the claim seems plausible, the impossibility of retrieving the intentions of a long-gone author dominates one’s reasoning. Yet again, the act of suggesting is inevitably tempting. It lures its victim into a trap with repressed aspirations. It finds its way through an association of ideas injected by the actual perpetrator. Surely, a misunderstanding might occur as to why one has to take the information the witches revealed to Macbeth into serious consideration. Despite all the supernatural elements in the events, the reality that emerged from those supernatural suggestions puts a great deal of burden on one’s shoulders. Take out the temptations of witches, would the plot still be red? Even though the will of a person is bound to his own soul, it is without a doubt that they might indeed be delusive and treacherous. Nonetheless, this is just another possibility with a stronger implication. Low (1983) adds that Macbeth “stands next to innocence in a world in which evil is a prerequisite for being human” (p. 827). As Alexander Pope’s famous line goes, “To err is human”. No matter how hard one tries to follow the path of the good, the will is susceptible to temptations all around. The basis that makes Macbeth human is his fallibility. He falls for the witches’ false promises, thus his mistakes become fatal for him. In this regard, Macbeth’s tragedy represents the inherent part of the human condition.

Similarly, in more recent times, leaders or groups of influence who are generally victimized by the suggestions of external actors have sought to change the regime of their countries. As a well-known example, Saddam Hussein’s tragic life resembles that of Macbeth. His rise was secretly supported by the CIA. However, deluded that this rise belonged to him, he rejected to comply with the norms of his masters. Thus, his downfall, orchestrated by the U.S.A., paved the way for a whole new government. According to Richard Sale (2003), “in the past Saddam was seen by U.S. intelligence services as a bulwark of anti-communism and they used him as their instrument for more than 40 years” (2003, April 10). He also adds that “his first contacts with U.S. officials date back to 1959, when he was part of a CIA-authorized six-man squad tasked with assassinating then Iraqi Prime Minister Gen.

Abd al-Karim Qasim” (2003, April 10). Even though after such a long history of cooperation, Saddam Hussein, victimized by his own hubris and consumed by power’s enticing allure, was hanged to death. Regardless of the means used, the regime changes in Iraq led to significant instability and uncertainty. Instead of peaceful protests as a prerequisite for democratic change, more violent means started to emerge not only domestically but also internationally. Countries thousands of kilometres away demanded rights and control over the territory. This, in turn, fractured the native people and balkanised them. New power circles were formed. These can also be named micro coups that occur between even the smallest factions that have resided in the region for centuries. Sadly, Nikolay Marinov and Hein Goemans (2013) note that “while coups have been a staple of twentieth-century politics, their aftermath has eluded systematic scrutiny” (p. 799). After Hussein, insurgency and armed rebellion wreaked havoc in the country. Factions that are externally supported sought to control the country’s resources. The conflict was quite predictable. Even if they end in the nearest future, the repercussions of the conflict in due course are unlikely to ensure long-lasting peace in the territory. As implied, among the outcomes of a coup d’état, the softest is the leadership change. The consequences could be as devastating as a collapse of the state.

Shakespeare's works serve as a museum of artefacts that depict the human predicament in timeless amber images. His historical dramas, in particular, provide in-depth illustrations depicting dynasty conflicts of the age. As pitiful tales of woe, these conflicts do not evolve into a war of ideas and rights. Not only members of the dynasty but also people within their sphere of dominance are exposed to such colossal levels of cruelty that the subsequent suffering and deaths can only aggravate what was already bad. Assassinations, treacheries, corruptions, and dreadful conditions exacerbate the misery that was cast upon the subjects. To be more precise, the misery that spreads as a consequence of the tyranny of the rulers affects both the tyrant and its victims. Closer to death, Macbeth realizes the meaninglessness of life. His nihilistic perspective on life diminishes all endeavours lacking in objective meaning. He develops a delusion out of his nihilism, and that misconception drives him to resort to violence to effect political change, just as in the case of Hussein and Qasim. Shakespeare puts a lot of emphasis on dynastic disputes, retribution, and the enduring fallacy that the murder of even one person may provide the murderer with protection. Living organisms thrive to survive. They seek immortality by any means possible. Therefore, the killings of Macbeth and delusional leaders like these do not end. As noted in *Shakespeare and Hobbes: Macbeth and the Fragility of Political Order* by Nicholas Dungey (2012), “in order to secure, and protect his gains, Macbeth must continue killing” (p. 13). Deluded that his survival can only be guaranteed by the elimination of his rivals, his murders thrive. “Fear of earthly punishment and longing for selfish happiness are uppermost in Macbeth's thoughts to the very last” states Frederick Morgan Padelford

(1901) in *Macbeth the Thane and Macbeth the Regicide* (p.118). “For mine own good / All causes shall give way” (III, iv, 134-135) are the words uttered by a corrupt leader who is once again imprisoned in amber along the row of tragedies.

Alan Sinfield (1985) states that “Power=representation produces the same outcome as power/subversion: an unbreakable circle of power, proceeding from and returning to the monarch” (p. 260). Power creates a consumption cycle for the murders in the play. It consumes and returns the remains to the monarch. Power is such a construct that surpasses the limits of basic understanding. It’s all-encompassing. It needs more than moderate concentration to defamiliarize oneself from its influence. It would be a cathartic mistake to undermine its ferocity. And Macbeth does that mistake trying to take all granted for himself. Macbeth's delusion is his conviction that he can escape the trappings of power. His belief that he is divine and immune from the limitations of earthly life is embodied by the notion that no woman-born could ever constitute a danger to Macbeth. As Barbara L. Parker (1970) states in her *Macbeth: The Great Illusion*, Macbeth’s delusions count as “the bedrock on which the thematic structure of the play rests and from which the underlying principle of duality derives” (p. 487). Regarding the quotation, it might be claimed that a twofold viewpoint is used to depict everything in the play. However, Macbeth’s being simultaneously fair and foul severs the negative connotations that he might be entitled to and leaves the readers in doubt whether, even Macbeth, might as well be good. Such a paradox could not be a product of a delusional mind. Therefore, all that’s left to judge is three whisperers. If not for the witches, would Macbeth have killed Duncan? Marina Favila (2001) asserts in her *“Mortal Thoughts and Magical Thinking in Macbeth”* that “Mortal thoughts haunt Macbeth. Evil spirits tend them; Lady Macbeth inspires them; the hero embraces them” (p. 1). Despite how exquisite the phrases above should sound, magic has no place in reality. Myths are interwoven with reality. That reality demands that Macbeth either be the victim or the victimizer. It is undeniably evident that he assumes the role of the victimizer due to his relentless pursuit of personal ambitions. But what if there were forces beyond sight puppeteering him? What if even Macbeth himself were not aware that he is being victimized making him believe that his triumph in wars paved the way to the throne? Hear Banquo when he says “And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,/ The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray ’s/ In deepest consequence” (I, iii, 122-128). Macbeth realizes that he has been tricked when the messenger brings him the bad news that a grove is coming towards Dunsinane. He remembers the words of the witches as “To doubt th’ equivocation of the fiend/ That lies like truth. “Fear not, till Birnam wood/ Do come to Dunsinane”; and now a wood/ Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!” (V,v,42-45). The witches serve as a catalyst for Macbeth's downfall, a consequence of his inability to resist the allure of power. Despite initial hesitation, Macbeth's ambition overrides his moral uncertainties, leading him to

become consumed by the need to maintain his grip on power. However, the corrupting influence of power extends beyond Macbeth alone; it is a pervasive theme throughout the play, jeopardizing the lives of each candidate for the position to hold it.

The strange and supernatural powers of the weird sisters in *Macbeth* serve as a striking example of how the hunger for power can quickly overshadow and overpower all initial hesitation and ethical dilemmas. As the witches manipulate Macbeth's ambition, his fate is sealed and a similar pattern can be observed in many coups around the world. The seductive allure of power often overrides any moral considerations, leading to the illegal displacement of governments and the disruption of democratic processes. Pat McGowan and Thomas H. Johnson (1984) define coups as the "events in which existing regimes are suddenly and illegally displaced by the action of relatively small groups" (p. 634). They clarify these groups as the "members of the military, police, or security forces of the state" but also add that they "play a key role, either on their own or in conjunction with a number of civil servants or politicians" (p. 635). As can be inferred from the quotation, apart from the conventional meaning, coups are not done only employing security forces. Civilians do take part in such operations or they directly manage and control these forces to usurp power. At this stage, power politics step in. However, such a big intervention in the democratic system cannot be carried out solely by the sources within the country. External actors play a crucial role in these operations, too. Without direct support from a global power, existing governments cannot be overthrown. If *Macbeth's* universe is the world and the kings are entities of power, then each candidate might represent a country for his ideals, which is very similar to contemporary international power politics. Characters like Macbeth himself are generally chosen as a candidate for the presidency of the country. Both Macbeth and these are driven by ambition and lust for power, manipulated, and open to suggestions. Eventually, both are doomed to decay morally. As Alan James (1964) directly puts it,

States are restrained or impelled by ideals or by moral or ideological considerations, and that these are given pride of place among the factors influencing their decisions not because of any immediate external benefits which such a course might bring, but solely out of a desire to be loyal to the ideal, the moral imperative, or the ideological precept. (p. 308)

James (1964) discusses how states are influenced by ideals, moral or ideological considerations, and how these factors play a significant role in their decision-making process. However, it can be claimed that there is a strong correlation between the external actors and internal forces of a country in respect of power dynamics. A contrast between morality and ambition is evident in most cases, especially in global politics and literature, which is generally a product of these actors. Domestic powers under the influence of external actors make up the core of international power politics, thereby making it

compulsory to try to delve into the depths of the struggle between power and people who are desperately in pursuit of it. James' (1964) assertion that power politics "is relied upon to carry the idea that a striking general feature of international politics, one which distinguishes them from the usual run of national politics, is the fact that they have, or have a strong tendency towards, a bad moral character" seems unusually accurate (p. 321). Traces of such characters are deeply imprinted in the literary works of most authors as they seek to explore the nuances of power dynamics. The fact that Shakespeare incorporated the ideals of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, in which Machiavelli starkly promotes the idea that leaders could resort to immoral practices if needed, especially in his history plays, is widely accepted. Let alone *Macbeth*, the consequences of disregarding morality in leadership are prevalent in *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, too.

Corruption of Denmark resonates in Scotland. Along the misty shores and battlegrounds of Scotland, Macbeth finds himself deluded about the prospects of his becoming a king in a possible time to come. Beguiled by the witches' enticing prophecies, Macbeth's whole being aches in terror. Fear of losing the crown, even before possessing it, cripples his psyche. Unaware of what lies ahead, enchanted by the false promises of the dreadful witches, kings and 'king-to-be's align on death row to be assassinated one at a time. A dagger hanging in the air ushers Macbeth the regicide. The point of the dagger spills blood. The grip of the tilt heralds power. It epitomises an ephemeral garb worn in 'vaulting ambition'. However, upon landing, what remains is insecurity. A "fatal vision", as Macbeth calls it, bit by bit devours its hosts from within: "I have thee not, and yet I see thee still. / Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible/ To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but/ A dagger of the mind, a false creation,/ Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?" (II, i, 35-39). Macbeth's mind, deluding himself that he is far greater than power, tumbles him down the hole of aloofness. As his detachment from society forces him to act in tyranny, the meaning of his royal and honourable life slips away from his hands.

Such delusions have equivalents in the contemporary world, too. As the vast majority of the world's states adopted democracy as a governing system, the leaders of countries are generally titled for the positions as a result of a general election. However, when the elected leaders fail to comply with the norms of superior power spheres, they risk losing their positions with the tactics employed through power politics. In this case, they often face rebellions and false propaganda. If these tactics prove to be unuseful in determining the fate of the targeted leader, then assassinations and coups turn out to be options. In such a case, as a result of Egypt's 2013 coup, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi usurped the seat, with the support from the Obama government of the time, from the country's first democratically elected president Mohamed Morsi. The coup cost the life of Morsi and many other fellow Egyptians. Although "disregard for human life negates the very essence of just rule" in Islamic teachings, as Masooda Banoa and Hanane Benadi (2018) declare, al-Sisi tried to manipulate respected

institutions of religion to justify his deeds (p. 715). Delusional and unjust in his characteristics, al-Sisi, too, might be doomed to end like Macbeth. Therefore, leadership, in this respect, turns into a quality that could be seized rather than earned democratically. For instance, in *Macbeth*, one can relate kingship to four different names: Duncan, Macbeth, Malcolm and lastly Fleance. Though there is no explicit proof that Duncan is the rightful owner of the throne, at the beginning of the play, he is portrayed as the victim. He is a king betrayed by his thanes. Loyal thanes all gather to aid him to overcome the imminent threat that flows down from the north. However, one can only be loyal to himself. Upon a collision of interest, loyalty leaves its place to conflict. All wage war against anyone on the collision course. Shedding blood becomes such an ordinary duty of the kings.

Violence through the hands of the state is often welcomed as it is justified by the laws that were already legislated by the head of the state. According to Sinfield (1986), “A claim to a monopoly of legitimate violence is fundamental in the development of the modern State” (p. 63). In line with the claim from the quotation, for a state which is in pursuit of success and development, its subjects must first be taught that even violence could be good. The validity and the standards of the violence are structured, categorised, and represented as the absolute truth. Modern states mostly tend to benefit from such representations. However, history has shown that monarchs sent words of violence to other realms as a token of their grandeur in might. Below are the lines of the captain from the play praising and picturing Macbeth’s slaughtering his opponent:

CAPTAIN

For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor’s minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne’er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th’ chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements. (I, ii, 16-24)

The purpose of such a level of violence is primarily justified by deep concerns about the country’s security. Concerns that a motherland would be annihilated by a rival one trigger violence. It is at this step that tales of martyrdom become sacred documents. Subjects from that moment on can easily be manipulated. They immediately get ready for duty. However, this perspective merely pictures the reality of the lower classes. The minority that rules the rest might not genuinely desire or possess what it takes to carry out that massacre. Hence, the violence of the kings in *Macbeth* has a clear function. Derek Cohen (1992), in his book *Shakespeare's Culture of Violence*, remarks that, unlike his earlier

plays, Macbeth presents a level of brutality that is difficult to find. In the play, Macbeth openly uses physical violence to subjugate his subjects and opponents (p. 128). The infamous king of Shakespeare, Macbeth, utilizes his sword openly to violently suppress his people. In fact, his weakness lies in murdering his people, as ruling with justice is much more difficult for most, especially for Macbeth. He consults with the three witches, who make him see a series of apparitions, one of which says "Beware Macduff; Beware the Thane of Fife" (IV, i, 79-80). This leads Macbeth to believe that Macduff is a threat to his reign. Therefore, he decides to have Macduff's family killed. Macbeth orders the murderers he has hired to immediately carry out the task, "The castle of Macduff I will surprise; / Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' th' sword / His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line" (IV, i, 150-153). The intoxication caused by the sip of never-ending ambition rages towards even all the unfortunate souls. Witches here create a terrorizing discourse. Their repeated incursions into the realm of the living inform the candidates for the head of state.

In the play, the crowning begins with the chants of the three witches who appear and make prophecies about Macbeth's future, planting the seeds of ambition and temptation in his mind. "All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis! / All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor! / All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (I, iii, 49-51). Supernaturally prophecies yet naturally suggestions, these lines manipulate Macbeth to commit murder. Seemingly rewarding Macbeth with titles, witches speed up the succession procedure to which Macbeth already has a right. Even Banquo's cautionary reproach to the witches' deceptive approach does not soothe the fire set out by them. Banquo warns him, "But 'tis strange; / And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence" (I, iii, 124-128). Banquo's rightful scepticism does more than stop Macbeth and puts him on a death list. No one must stand in his way. "We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd / In England and in Ireland, not confessing / Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers / With strange invention" (III, i, 30-33). A strange invention it is indeed. Macbeth's representation of his cousins' truth reveals how far he's travelled from reality. His deep concerns about the allegedly false rumours inciting anger against him force him to execute his denial machine using slander as a defence mechanism. Nevertheless, Macduff, whose family was massacred at the hands of murderers hired by Macbeth, seeks revenge. "Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword / I'll prove the lie thou speak'st" (V, vii, 12-13). Macduff is well aware of the fact that Macbeth usurped the throne by overthrowing the rightful king. His truth ends Macbeth's lies. But the propaganda spread by the witches endures.

Although warned about the dangers several times, Macbeth fails to break free from the discourse that the witches created for him. One can encounter such discourses within contemporary Turkish politics, too. George S. Harris (2011) states that "to this day, Turkish politicians still appear to

believe (witness the Ergenekon case) that the military could step in again, not only to deal with widespread disorder, but even for such nebulous causes as violations of Ataturk's secular policies" (p. 212). Their belief in such a discourse representing the reality of the state as their own gave a cause for violence justifying the legitimacy of what they do. For Türkiye, the last century and subsequent decades have been marked by several violent coups. Deluded generals like Macbeth have indeed left visible scars on the very soul of the country as they primarily tried to rip off the cultural elements of various ethnicities that have lived in the region for centuries. Especially a series of coups that was more like a witch hunt that terrorized the victims was conducted by the country's own military. Because some included suppression through violence, their success rate was higher. Military coups that took place in 1960 and 1980 were more extensive and successful in this respect. In addition, the ones that took place in 1971 and 1997 were referred to as post-modern, since they were characterised by political pressures and economic crises rather than military interventions. As stated earlier, conventionally, coups are commonly linked with the military. However, civilians, too, could organize and lead them. What made military coups so common was that they could reach and utilise the resources that governments had provided them with great speed and ease.

On the other hand, present-day coups are more likely to be linked with civilians or someone with great potential to influence others. They might involve manipulation in elections, suppression by economic superiority, or various types of coercion to take over the control of governments. Harris (2011), while explaining how Turkish coups affected the people, emphasises that "the military establishment for many years has shared the allegiance of the populace at large as the public considered the institution an impartial, nonpartisan, trustworthy element of the state, and one dedicated to protecting citizens" (p. 203). According to Marinov and Goemans (2013), the coups that occurred in 1960 in Turkey, in 1974 in Portugal and in 2007 in Bangladesh were supported by the public as they fully trusted the military's impartiality and loyalty to the country (p. 803). However, as the trust towards the members of the military deteriorated, they sought new partners within the society. These involved an amalgamation of both military and civilian actors. A recent example of this was the 2016 coup attempt in Türkiye. A faction in the military and their supporters in political groups attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government. Because of the overwhelming support from the people to the ruling government, the plotters were unable to take control of the strategic institutions in the country. Moreover, the people who flooded the streets of the country stopped the advance of the units. Thousands were arrested and hundreds were even killed on both sides. Defectors fled mostly to Europe and the U.S. They are still being harboured, which also strengthens the probability that these countries are actually the owners of these plotters as commonly believed by the public. Their remnants in the country continue to take orders from their leaders abroad, just like Macbeth's cousins spreading

propaganda in England and Ireland. Even though the coup plotters were unable to succeed, the scars that the attempt left on Turkish history and political stability seem to endure for a very long time.

Every healthy democracy or any type of governance invests heavily in political stability. However, this does not guarantee that they will ever never experience coups or some other form of political intrusion. No country is completely immune in this respect. While the factors that create conditions which are ripe for coups might differ, even in a politically stable country, groups could intervene in the democratic processes. Such an intervention is only possible because aspiring politicians in contemporary governance types often succumb to power. To elaborate on these groups, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson's (2008) intriguing work *Persistence of Power, Elites, and Institutions* provides bold explanations. They coin the term "*captured democracy*" claiming that the elite takes over the control of de jure political power to influence and shape economic policies and institutions to their benefit (p. 267). Two concepts here require clarification. De jure political power represents the country's legitimate, official, and global norms. Whereas, as the opposite of it, de facto political power creates a zone where rouge operations could direct the country's political progress. What is meant here is that once the democracies are captured, the underlying system remains intact following the interests of the de facto power. Leaders are a consumable means to steer the policies wherever they implicitly order them to lead. Economic institutions, in this case, persist over time. They continue to shape and steer the country's economy and power. They have a great say in a country's regime, whether it be a monarchy or a democracy. Whichever suits their interests best becomes the privileged type of governance. As a matter of fact, de facto governments are already a product of these groups. They generally usurp the governance through a coup d'état or some kind of a revolution, recent examples of which are 'spring' rebellions. Democracy, in such a case, is merely a facade. Powerful minority holds the unorganized majority within their palms. Citizens find themselves crippled, stripped of agency which could enable them to freely decide on critical processes.

Terrorism, though predominantly represented as an act of rebellion, is not a new phenomenon used to repress people. For centuries, rebels and states as well have used violence and fear to gain political, religious, or ideological advantage over the suppressed majority. Yet, the term "terrorism" has taken the front rows as a modern construct, coined during the French Revolution. Since then, the utilisation of terrorism as a state apparatus has gained increasing popularity, particularly in the context of globalism and the emergence of powerful nation-states. It turned out to be a major global concern, with a mounting number of actors employing it to further their political interests. This can range from extremist groups using violence to achieve their ideological objectives, to governments using it as a tool to maintain power or influence. As we continue to grapple with the challenges posed by terrorism, it is important to understand the historical roots of this phenomenon and explore the various ways in

which it is used as a tool in contemporary politics. Robert Appelbaum (2015) claims, in his article *Shakespeare and Terrorism*, that the use of violence to further a political agenda can occur in any place and time where a particular type of strategy is employed. This strategy may involve acts like abduction, assassination, sabotage, mass murder, or other forms of disruptive and destructive behaviour, and it is used deliberately to achieve a political objective. When individuals or groups who are dissatisfied with the existing political order resort to such tactics, they are seeking to change the balance of power in society through their actions (Appelbaum, 2015, p. 26). Unable to reach a capacity by which these individuals or groups could easily topple their opponents, they seek to end rivalry by erasing the numbers from the equation. Finding reasons for murder is an indispensable part of power struggles. For instance, Joan Hartwig (1973), in the article *Macbeth, the Murderers, and the Diminishing Parallel*, finds a new reason for Macbeth's murder of King Duncan. He thinks "He respects and admires his king and can only come up with 'ambition' as a cause for murder" (Hartwig, 1973, p.4). Hartwig argues that Macbeth does not have a clear motive for killing Duncan and that his stated reasons, such as ambition, are not enough to explain his actions. Instead, Hartwig suggests that Macbeth may have respected and admired Duncan, which makes his decision to murder him even more perplexing. Hartwig sees this as evidence of a "diminishing parallel" between Macbeth and the murderers hired by Lady Macbeth later in the play as Macbeth's motivations become increasingly unclear. Eugene R. Huber (1983) also maintains that "ambition drives Macbeth to duplicity and murder. Though outside forces act upon the vulnerable Macbeth, it is his deliberate choice of evil which sets in motion a violent, inexorable, and bloody chain of events" (p. 20). Quite interestingly, the story has various religious connotations, too. In theological terms, the anguish experienced by Macbeth is essentially the same as the anguish endured by Satan in Milton's work. However, the key distinction lies in Shakespeare's portrayal of Macbeth as a character immersed in the complexities of human existence (Cox, 2013, p. 239). The downfall of Macbeth occurs because he deliberately chooses to commit a sinful act, fully aware of its wrongness (Shanley, 1961, p. 307). As can be inferred from the quotations, Macbeth's ambition to gain power and status through his murders can be viewed as a form of terrorism. By choosing to commit violence, Macbeth is deliberately manipulating the balance of power in order to further his agenda. A representation of such terrorism as an act of aggression intended to create fear and chaos in order to achieve a political objective can also be witnessed predominantly in American policies.

Such tendencies are abundant in the Middle East. Even though state and terrorism could not be imagined together, news concerning state terrorism generally originates from this region. Bettina Koch (2015) asserts "the fact that state terrorism as such is not sanctioned or even acknowledged by international law" (p. 3). However, certain instruments and tactics used while thwarting internationally accepted terrorist organizations could be deemed to have terrorizing effects on them. Drone strikes,

for instance, have been increasingly used against targets worldwide. With the U.S. leading the sector and the ownership of the most advanced drones, the intimidation it has on terrorist organizations is beyond question. Moreover, the American military is not the only force that resorts to such tactics. Koch (2015) remarks that “arguing in a strictly positive sense that the drone strikes are legal is as problematic as proving the negative” (p. 166). Although some like the soldier in the play might find Macbeths “brave” (I, ii, 18), the scope of terror caused by their action still needs debating. As a recent example, PYD and YPG are accepted by Turkiye, a powerful member of NATO, as a terrorist organization which controls the northern parts of divided Syria. However, her allies see these groups, specifically armed and trained by the U.S. claiming that they will be used to eradicate ISIS, as brave soldiers that are meant to stop the massacre of the extremists that dwell in the area. These factions are emboldened by the support of the superpowers. However, their presence has still not secured peace in the region. Only the oil trucks that transport the country’s underground resources to allied corporates are secured. In this respect, Macbeth’s violence as a terror can be claimed to empower his grip on the power and resources of the country. It is quite comprehensible that terrorism not only leads to chaos but also creates the perfect environment for those with ill intentions to operate without interruption. The violence and terror caused by these individuals and groups disintegrate the social fabric, allowing powerful entities to exploit the disorder and pursue their own agenda. This ambition and desire for control can spark a transformation from innocence to depravity, as demonstrated in both Macbeth and Malcolm. Malcolm's own tortured words speak to his confusion and the corruption of his character, as he reflects on his lack of desirable traits and admits that, if given the power, he could disrupt the world's peace and unity:

But I have none. The king-becoming graces –
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude -
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth. (IV, iii, 91-99)

Malcolm does not shed blood on stage, nor is it suggested that he has done so in the past. In fact, Malcolm is depicted as a virtuous character who ultimately becomes the rightful king of Scotland, succeeding Macbeth after his downfall. The quote referenced in the original text, where Malcolm

speaks of "the division of each several crime, acting it many ways," (IV, iii, 98) suggests that he is aware of the evil that surrounds him and may have been forced to resort to acts of violence and bloodshed. While Malcolm ultimately succeeds in overthrowing Macbeth, he does so with the help of the English army, which suggests the similarity in the case of PYD and YPG. While he ultimately becomes the rightful king of Scotland, his earlier actions and words suggest a level of manipulation and dishonesty, as well as a potential lack of true leadership qualities. Similarly, these terrorist organizations' history of allegiance with Turkiye's most hated enemy PKK cast a shadow on their so-called bravery. Therefore, it is worth considering whether either Malcolm or the aforementioned groups are truly worthy leaders or simply another usurper whose strings are being pulled by others.

However, from another perspective, one might reckon that manipulation extends beyond individual characters and groups. It permeates various aspects of society, including the economic and political realms. The book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins (2016) exposes how the elite in the U.S.A. takes over the control of gigantic amounts of money disguising themselves as foreign aid organizations. Primarily, they employ economic hit men and women to cheat countries using fraudulent financial reports, manipulating elections, and controlling trillion dollars-worth international contracts. Perkins, as an ex-EHM, confesses what they do as "we are an elite group of men and women who utilize international financial organizations to foment conditions that make other nations subservient to the corporatocracy running our biggest corporations, our government, and our banks" (p. xvii). Leaders of rival nations are loaned to fulfil their nations' need for development. The money most often goes to infrastructure and superstructure projects that are already funded by the corporations directed by EHMs. Perkins boldly adds that "most of the money never leaves the United States; it is simply transferred from banking offices in Washington to engineering offices in New York, Houston, or San Francisco" (p. xvii). Luring the countries that are already economically stricken with fake promises of development, these assassins leave the host country in debt and politically vulnerable. Once the political and economic instability is secured, then the country becomes open to intrusion. Power becomes centralized and concentrated in the hands of the elite. Thus, the processes that govern policymaking in favour of the public interest are distorted and bent according to the norms of the ruling individuals or the rich elite. Disinformation spreads to alienate the general public. No unwanted voices are desired. Finally, democracy is captured and turned into a corporatocracy.

Edward Bernays (1928) states in his seminal book *Propaganda* that "we are governed, our minds are moulded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of" (p. 9). It gives one the shivers to even try to imagine that such practices do really exist. However, with a gentle push from globalisation, such groups grew in power. As countries' web of trade expanded, so did their transfer of investment and technology. The increasing interconnectedness led to an

exploitation of the global economy. While the selected few got richer and more powerful, the rest were exposed to subjugation. Globalisation worked primarily for a sole purpose: profits and economic growth. Nonetheless, its goal was never to equally share these. Like a tyrant king, these companies usurped power and centralized it capturing democracies and turning them into meaningless structures. One of the biggest challenges of this process is that the facts are against them. Corporate power all over the world resorts to the same simple solution: denial. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Melanie Wachtell Stinnett (2017) in their *Captured: The Corporate Infiltration of American Democracy* define it as a “denial machine” (p. 150). This machine runs “so persistently, so smoothly, and with such craft that plain truth is distorted, obscured, and sometimes demonized” (p. 150). They argue that this system was solely “built over the past several decades to deceive the public about the scientific facts at the heart of major political debates” (p. 150). Hear Banquo when he says “What, can the devil speak true?” (I, iii, 109). People with second thoughts can never speak true. Macbeth continues “The thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me/ In borrowed robes?” (I, iii, 110-111). “Borrowed” as Macbeth terms it, these representations are tools of denial. In light of this perspective, one can claim that globalisation has heightened geopolitical tension by intensifying competition between Eastern and Western civilizations and spreading representations to influence the masses, just like the one in *Macbeth*. External actors turn once a valiant and noble soldier into an assassin and a weapon turned against his own nation. Anglo-American spheres of power are claimed to be increasingly following such policies that could or would affect the health of the democratic processes. However, as the power runs the denial machine, no one can surely determine facts from representations. It requires critical thinking skills which, for the last century and on, have indiscriminately been stripped from the unorganized majority.

When Macbeth, as the head of the state, the person who holds the extreme power, declares a person, even someone of the same kin, a murderer as in the following lines, “We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed/ In England and in Ireland, not confessing/ Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers/ With strange invention” (III, i, 30-33), can anyone declare the otherwise? Then, who moulds Macbeth? How did he become an automaton that is programmed to do evil at all costs? How did he become such a tyrant? Are leaders destined to become dictators?

ANGUS

Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;

But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him. (I,iii,112-119)

As can be inferred from the lines of Angus, doubt in play has a detrimental effect on shaping the destinies of kings and thanes. Before turning into a cold-blooded tyrant, Macbeth's behaviours had scents of humanity. As he was gradually devoured by blind ambition, neither his mind nor his body showed any traces of good leadership. His hesitation against the suggestions of the evil that lurks around him slowly faded away. "If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me / Without my stir" (I, iii, 145-146). As an expression of doubt, he reluctantly frets if fate would bestow him with what he truly and deeply desires. "I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself / And falls on the other" (I, vii, 25-28). He inherently believes that his forthcoming doom is a bloody gift of his evil deeds. "I am afraid to think what I have done; / Look won' again I dare not" (II, ii, 49-50). With blood on his hands and a guilty conscience, sanity slips from his hands. His humanity sets off to an unknown land. "I have almost forgot the taste of fears; / The time has been, my senses would have cool'd / To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair / Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir / As life were in't" (V, v, 9-13). Finally, the consequences of his former decisions alter his fate and turn his soul into a stone. Out of fear and doubt, his desensitization ultimately makes him a tyrant, revealing his situation's psychological and moral complexity. David Owen's (2007) *The Hubris Syndrome: Bush, Blair and the Intoxication of Power* refers to a possibility of a set of characteristics which are almost identical to that of intoxicated leaders mentioned in the title like Macbeth. People in positions of authority in general are inclined to become excessively arrogant, overconfident, and self-assured exhibiting a sense of invincibility and an inflated belief in their own capabilities. Owen (2007) claims that

Power is a heady drug which not every political leader has the necessary rooted character to counteract: a combination of common sense, humour, decency, scepticism and even cynicism that treats power for what it is - a privileged opportunity to influence, and sometimes to determine, the turn of events. (p. x)

Such an erosion of humanity amidst an overwhelming aspiration for power could potentially be repelled if doubt were handled with self-reflection through the qualities that were mentioned in the quotation. He adds that "hubristic syndrome in the last century can be found among democrats as well as dictators" (p. 7). Among the most well-known are Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Richard Nixon, George W. Bush, Stalin, Hitler, and Mao. As can be seen, regardless of their political affliction, leaders on a global scale suffered intoxication of power. Wielding influence and power for a long time can have a profound impact on the tendencies of the leaders. Nevertheless, it might not be inappropriate upon first consideration to claim that succumbing to the suggestions of self-delusions does seem preposterous. It is religiously usual to believe that human beings are born sinful, and sent

on exile to repent for the crimes he's committed. However, as social beings, humans do not self-actualize in isolation. Their connection with the Other has a say in what they choose to experience in this world. Therefore, from the perspective of power politics, external actors often meddle with an already-installed governance system, and disrupt the ongoing stability.

Corporatocracy manifests itself in patterns of intoxication and manipulation. Political and governmental systems are generally cornered by powerful corporations which either implicitly or explicitly suggest that policies and decisions that leaders will take for their people's future should match these corporations' benefits promising future development. The resemblance of Macbeth's case draws a clear-cut framework of how leaders in positions of authority could find themselves swayed by these false promises. Wealthy corporations with leverage and adequate resources distort the priorities and the well-being of the people. Witches' suggestions entrench Macbeth. Just as Owen (2007) defines, he develops hubris. Eventually, consumed by his hubris, he becomes susceptible to persuasion tactics employed by external actors. These actors share the very similar nature of witches in the play. They are not a part of society. They do not exist in a common reality. They belong nowhere. They most often vanish in thin air. As enigmatic figures, their ethereal nature enables them to navigate through various power structures. Their control over states and governments worldwide is felt but can't be proved. Unseen by the masses of ordinary people, they manoeuvre through the intricate webs of global economics. Their influence often eclipses the power of elected people. Their vast resources, strategic alliances, and intricate networks enable them to shape the direction of economies, industries, and societies on a global scale. Their truth reigns. To restate Sinfield (1985), representations can create a far more pressurizing effect on people than subversion by physical violence. Truth, once substituted with representations, forms unbreakable circles. Human agency trapped inside this circle piles up new meanings for itself. About such a political tactic loaded with disinformation, Henry A. Giroux (2013) argues that "institutions, discourses, and other modes of representation, that undermine the capacity of individuals to bear witness to a different and critical sense of remembering, agency, ethics, and collective resistance" (p. 263). Imagining the existence and impact of such potent entities even on a conceptual level shakes the very foundation of each governance type, whether one calls it a democracy or a monarchy. All efforts to foster so-called democracy from now on would become essential to safeguard against the influence of these ethereal forces since the system's fuel is humans. Without their contribution to political procedures, the truth cannot be bent. Its worth cannot be modified. Its universality cannot be broken. For instance, in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman (1988) share an interesting anecdote comparing two murder cases and the U.S. media's handling of the truth about these in distant parts of the world. In both cases, some priests were murdered. However, the one that was murdered by the Polish police

in Poland, named Jerzy Popieluszko gained much more attention from the U.S. media. As the second murder took place in Latin America, which the authors call “client states”, it deserved much less attention than the former. Chomsky and Herman (1988) claimed that

Popieluszko murdered in an enemy state will be worthy victim, whereas priests murdered in our client states in Latin America will be unworthy. The former may be expected to elicit a propaganda outburst by the mass media; the latter will not generate sustained coverage. (pp. 37-38)

Bias in the treatment of two murder cases is directly linked with the country’s political interests. The worth of truth is often moderated to align its potency with the priorities of the elite which also moderates the leaders. Biased media generally and intentionally produces and reinforces worthy news to manipulate the masses and leaders. Amplifying certain events and suppressing others, the critical thinking skills of the subjects are slowly being taken over. Repeated enough, a new truth is born with the help of lobbying and campaign financing through these corporations. Thus, the boundaries between the public and corporate interests become blurred. The notion of a truly democratic system is negated by the pervasive influence of corporatocracy. Dominant representations constructed by the powerful corporations and by the leaders that they manipulate erase alternative perspectives. A “manufactured consent”, as Chomsky and Herman call it, deepens its influence leaving no room for free human agency. Then, what of those leaders who are revered by some and despised by others? Are they really as free as they claim to be? After all, they are subject to the whims of public opinion and the expectations of their constituents.

Bias in the treatment of murder cases, as discussed above, is just one aspect of a broader issue involving the manipulation of truth and the erosion of critical thinking skills mostly dominated by Anglo-American spheres of power in society. This manipulation extends beyond the media's biased representation of events and encompasses the influence of corporatocracy in shaping public opinion and political decision-making, which suggests that even these countries could be victims to manipulation of power. In *Macbeth*, the delusional regicides can be seen as a reflection of this modern phenomenon, particularly in relation to coups and the influence of corporatocracy in politics. Throughout history, there have been instances of individuals or groups attempting to overthrow governments under the guise of higher ideals or moral imperatives. However, it can be argued that their true motives often revolved around gaining control over resources and influencing outcomes to serve their own interests. Such manipulation can lead leaders to become increasingly detached from reality, as they are exploited and manipulated by an invisible power. Ultimately, the delusions portrayed in *Macbeth* mirror the potential dangers inherent in any type of governance system, where power freely jumps from one to another to mount a surplus of cash.

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