



University of Macau

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

An Interpretation of Systemic Violence in *His Bloody Project*—

Documents relating to the case of Roderick Macrae

Submitted by

Linda, Sheng Yuan

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Thesis supervisor:

Prof. Chiu, Man Yin

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed



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Abstract of An Interpretation of Systemic Violence in *His Bloody Project*—Documents relating to the case of Roderick Macrae

Submitted by Linda, Sheng Yuan, mb640863 for the degree of Master of Arts in
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His Bloody Project—Documents relating to the case of Roderick Macrae is a newly published crime novel written by Scottish writer Graeme Macrae Burnet. The story was set in a remote village in the Scottish Highlands of the 19th century. A brutal triple murder committed by Roderick Macrae broke the peace and tranquility of Culduie. Compared with classical crime works in which a certain detective strives to solve the mystery, *His Bloody Project* has uncovered the criminal, Roderick Macrae, from the outset of the novel and sets no suspense for investigation. As a consequence, the novel covers more about crime than a typical crime novel.

In the novel, Roderick's family is severely bullied and exploited by his neighbor, Lachlan Mackenzie, which leads to the outburst of the gruesome killing. In this thesis, Slavoj Žižek's concept of violence will be applied to interpret three kinds of violence. Subjective violence is the most obvious form which conforms to the brutal triple murder. Symbolic violence is a worse kind reflected in languages. Systemic violence marks as catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of economic and political systems. Roderick's violence is visible whereas a worse kind of violence is invisibly embedded in the social system. The aim of this thesis is to explain the

invisible violence, systemic violence, and probe into the comprehensiveness of Lachlan Broad's oppressions and exploitations. Finally, the thesis will reveal the injustice and exploitation brought by systemic violence which smoothly upholds the normality in a degenerate crofting system.

KEY WORDS crime; systemic violence; exploitation



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