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Women and Power in Adaptations of Macbeth: Welles and Kurosawa

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Rationale

Adaptation is a vital topic for my students because they are always already in process of adapting. Adolescents build their own minds, in real time, making choices whose consequences carry them through adulthood. My students arrive in situations, familial, cultural, global, into which they determine their very selves. “Adaptation” can refer to both a cultural process and a biological one: in the same way that a film or a novel shifts shape through a new situation, an individual or a species also reacts, determines, grows to become something new. I want my students informed in this process of growth within themselves as well as within the texts we study. When my students read, they offer “Shakespeare should...” or “what if...”; as an educator I want to collaborate on these projections as my students apply the same speculative processes to their own developments.

New Haven’s Engineering and Science University Magnet School shares Connecticut’s achievement gap. This gap concerns me as it does other New Haven teachers; to address it I want to inspire students in their learning by validating and involving the whole child. I feel I need to be as passionate as they about the dramas where they locate themselves in order to help them claim ownership of these dramas. Because their growth is a process in which I strive to be involved, adaptation as a rigorous study will direct my students’ own stories and subjectivities as well as their trajectories. What they become however is always their own.

My sophomores have always loved reading and performing Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* ; it is about power and choice and consequences, and treachery, and violence, and madness, and the supernatural. These among other elements of the play are no less pertinent to my students than to Holinshed or Shakespeare or Welles or Kurosawa. The historical event is long gone, an absent presence both material and iconic, but the questions it asks of its audience have clearly rolled around in the minds of many artists. These questions grab my students. Shakespeare’s unusually interactive dialogue and his exciting plot lines keep them hooked. They love performing the plays, and they love projecting their own adaptations, and I’d like to further educate their imaginations with both the play and the two filmmakers whose creations of the drama continue to electrify their audiences. Each adaptation was located within an ideological as well as a historical context from whose study I feel my students will be enriched as they construct their own narratives.

The Texts

Because our study has already questioned power, I hear my students' feminist reading of Shakespeare: Lady Macbeth is both demonic and hysterical. It is she who persuades her husband to kill Duncan, and she would rip away the smiling face of her nursing and dash out its brains in order to attain power--and it is through her attempt at Queenship that she wreaks havoc on herself and her society. The witches, too, are agents of evil, sending Macbeth's ambition spinning out of control, just for fun. In fact it is the cessation of female voices, and their replacement by Malcolm in his rightful place as king, that order is restored in the Kingdom. In contrast masculinity, for instance in MacDuff's revenge of the murders of his wife and children, is heroic, forceful, completely human and rightfully empowered. In the US 2017, students have a right if not an imperative to critique such definitions. Both male and female students are frustrated by the gender roles in which they are cast in the play, apply these frustrations to their own lives, may even become discouraged--and it is at this point that I will enliven their critiques. Furthermore, my students often want to project a more real role for masculinity and a corresponding female presence whose power is both righteous and material. I will direct and celebrate these projections.

Shakespeare's is itself an adaptation of the Holinshed, this adapted from various sources. In fact, sources from the 11th Century do not blame Lady Macbeth for Duncan's murder; they merely point out that Duncan had executed some of her relatives and that she did have a son. In sources contemporaneous with Holinshed's as well as his own, Lady Macbeth and witches are blamed for Macbeth's treachery. However, Holinshed also chooses to explain that Scottish women

were of no lesse courage than the men; for all stout maidens and wiues...marched as well in the field as did the men, and so soone as the armie did set forward, they slue the first liuing creature that they found, in whose bloud they not onelie bathed their swords, but also tasted thereof with their mouthes, with no lesse religion and assurance conceived, than if they had already been sure of some notable and fortunate victorie. When they saw their owne bloud run from them in the fight, they waxed neuer a whit astonished with the matter, but rather doubling their courages with more egernesse they assailed their enimies' (Arden, p. 181).

The question begs itself, if women in Scotland in the 11th Century were so empowered, why would Lady Macbeth need to "set upon" her husband in order to fulfill her own ambitions? We never learn of a Scottish Queen.

I am choosing Welles' and Kurosawa's adaptations because they are psychologically immediate, filmically challenging, and ideologically complex. Watching the movie after reading the play is a treat to my classes but has always been difficult for me as an educator. I have been trained in literature, and it is only in taking Dudley Andrew's course on film adaptation that I begin to have the language and the flexibility to study these films as films. The film constitutes its own text as my students, so attuned to sight and sound in so many media, know so much better than I. In fact through each medium of image, sound, and time, they are creating their own languages. These languages fascinate me for their innovations, and I believe that they shape as they are shaped by students' minds. My work is to participate wholly in these creations.

Welles' *Macbeth* was first conceived in Harlem with an all-black cast and set in Haiti. It was here, Welles felt,

that the play's supernatural components, the witches and the ghost, would be most alive. The film itself was produced at Republic, a studio known for B-movies, who with Welles "experimented" with a Shakespearean piece on a tight schedule and a low budget. It opened to and still obtains highly mixed reviews, including criticisms of costume, sets, excision of some of Shakespeare's more poetic lines, and acting—especially Roddy MacDowell but including Welles himself. Welles acted more as a directorial sovereign than many of his cast would have liked, and in his edit more as the self-defeating child than his producers wanted. Critics however, including Bazin, have praised the piece as an expressionistic masterpiece in its use of sound, edit, and image, and those very anachronistic/staged elements which annoyed various reviewers have resuscitated the "charcoal sketch" of the misuses of power Welles so entirely realized.

Kurosawa's work is set in medieval Japan, during a time when the nation was in the throes of a warfare like Scotland's. While medieval Japan was actually not as bloody as Kurosawa portrays, it has been a vehicle resonant with 1950s Japan as a recently embattled nation. Kurosawa's budget, through Toho studios, was sizeable for the time, and his own "Emperor" demands were met, yet the film opened to some xenophobic press. Like Welles', this film excises Shakespeare's dialogue, and externalizes its psychology and cosmology rather than speaking or portraying in its actors. Instead, Kurosawa like Welles uses cuts between a chaotic nature and a highly stylized (Noh) theater to induce terror in its audience and a subsequent meditation that man's ceaseless cycle of violence is utterly useless.

Neither Welles nor Kurosawa constructs a feminist hero: both wives induce their husbands to kill the King, and both pay for their aspirations in their insanities. But I also want to read each text itself as a critique of the gender roles assigned to Lady Macbeth, and even to the witches: as Welles points out, a patriarchal warrior Christianity is just supplanting a more earthbound pagan culture in Scotland at that time. Maybe these Ladies are precisely frustrated by the limitations on their abilities to act in the world. Bound by their roles, they can act only through the vehicle available to them, Macbeth. And each participates in violence and inhabits her subjectivity in complicated ways.

Study of the Texts

Although we will both read the play and watch the films in their entirety, this unit focuses on Lady Macbeth's two strongest scenes in the play, her persuasion of Macbeth to kill Duncan and her later somnambulism.

In order to begin inquiry into Shakespeare's work as adaptation I will start with Holinshed's paragraph about Scottish women. I'd then offer students a brief synopsis of the play's major characters and of its action until Macbeth comes home to his wife. I'd ask students to construct dialogue between the two, and to perform these in class, and as we read recursively compare and contrast their scenes to Shakespeare's. I might offer the Anglo-Saxon "Wanderer" and pieces of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* in order to give students a feel for the history of the piece. In addition, it would be fun to ask students to themselves create pieces mimicking the language they find here, in order to prepare for the challenge of Shakespeare's English

Before we begin reading the Shakespeare I'd carefully explicate a few sonnets aloud with students in order to offer them some fluency with the language. We would also rely heavily on thorough explication of these scenes as we perform. I like the Arden edition for its careful and reader-friendly footnotes. Students become so readily engaged with their performances: Shakespeare offers character and plot development which both

challenge and enthrall them, and these performances do so much for the class as a community. I'd occasionally dwell in the piece as poetry, writing found poetry as we read: students choose lines they love and construct their own pieces around them. We would continue to search for the characters we find in development as well as of the author and to write, direct, and perform predictive scenes as we move through the text.

When we have completed envisioning the play for ourselves, I would like to introduce Welles as auteur as well as actor, probably within the context of the aquarium and the mirror scenes from *Lady from Shanghai*. I have found this film both entertaining in its own light and a terrific showcase of Welles' craft and questions, especially trust, power, and women. I might offer a quick synopsis of his biography in order to engage them in his work more personally—his early childhood is so compelling and evokes such strong sympathies. I'd offer the paradox of Welles as critical of totalitarian states, as he is himself forceful auteur. I'd like to show *Macbeth* once completely for the sheer joy of the experience and then review and study first Lady Macbeth's persuasion of her husband. Students will already have reacted in horror to the babe smashed on the stones, as well as the loss of Macbeth's better impulses; it is with a curiosity about this horror that I will begin the clips.

Macbeth says, "We will proceed no further in this business." This comes after a long scene of prayer with a "Holy Father"—not in Shakespeare—who is a benign agent of the supernatural, in contrast to the wicked witches. Duncan appears, very kindly, and Macbeth cannot take it. He moves into the camera which is placed at a low angle so that he seems authoritative. His wife begins her "Was the hope drunk" speech by moving down a staircase, still with the camera at a low angle, so that she seems to be assuming power. Her posture is very erect, and her voice goes down an octave. She is here as elsewhere in the play dressed in what Welles calls for as a 40s-style dressing gown, calling attention to her and rendering her visually jarring. With this costume Welles could be making a connection to the noir femme fatale, or simply arguing that such women are omnipresent. But Welles' choice is striking here; Lady Macbeth is introduced as a character different from the piece's medieval costumes and medieval or primitive setting, from a different time and with a different feeling. Here I would ask students to comment on her look and ways in which this look affects their reactions to her. Macbeth's lady comes down to his position at the foot of the great staircase and looks deeply into his eyes, hers wide open and lit—she is plying him romantically, as she has before in the film. The expression on his face continues to be sort of tortured, and we feel this torture deeply. It is reminiscent of Welles' infamous charm, and as many critics have pointed out, both the castle set and the fog and even the bubbles on his armor recall the witches boiling cauldron, our introduction to the play's action, in which they create a childlike voodoo doll of him from mud. The environment of the scene is a projection of Macbeth's unconscious torment, in which we participate. Our experience of his lady is quite different.

The camera follows him as he withdraws, and as Lady Macbeth begins her important speech about valor and manliness, "but screw your courage up," she turns to face the camera. We are confronted with her will. She is passionately heaving, recalling her earlier erotic swoon on a fur bed as she read his letter. Power, ambition, and sex seem fused for her here also. It is my feeling that the erotic nature of her will to treachery further vilifies her, but I will leave this up to my students to decide. Throughout this scene, the Macbeths' voices are very loud, as if shouting, but the visual performances are still, so that there is an eerie disjunction between their wills and their behavior.

Nolan delivers her "then you were a man" line effectively, nearly sneering, cold, provoking him as she emasculates him; she is shot from a low angle here from her thighs up, as she again descends the staircase, so that her sexualized power over him is vilified. When she says "be bold," he has no choice so that his

audience is sure to be sympathetic to him. As he leaves to do the deed, the camera follows her following him, and she again swoons so heavily that the audience must feel a bit of her sexuality also, and is startled by an offscreen screech—we are most startled, as she is, by not knowing what is this sound, but she calms herself by reminding herself this is a hawk. Her “what ho!” and “oh!” are also preceded by horrific animal sounds, so that we further feel her terror. When Macbeth reappears to tell her “I have done the deed,” the couple together is startled by more animal sounds which also affect their audience: we startle with them, and especially before we know the source of the sounds feel their dread viscerally. As Macbeth grows “infirm of purpose” in refusing to smear the faces of Duncan’s grooms, Lady Macbeth becomes imperious again and leaves the scene, leaving us to feel only his horror at his hands, and “appalled” with him at the sound of thunder and the sight of his close-up bloody hands. With Lady Macbeth, we have been punished for our excitement, and with this punishment refocus on her husband.

In order to study *Throne of Blood* I’d locate the film historically, and also consider the relationship between Kurosawa and Mifune. Mifune was Kurosawa’s vehicle, his star, a role Mifune performed for a long time although the tensions between these two men may seem palpable. Eventually, Mifune chose not to work with Kurosawa. I would introduce this sad issue and ask my students whether they see evidence of it in the pieces and what they make of it. Somehow in this fraught relationship I find that I have identified with Mifune. It is well known that Kurosawa was demanding and perfectionist both on set and off, and wielded his will with Toho as well as with his cast entirely. The exposition from *Seven Samurai* as well as excerpts from the Galbraith or the Mifune documentary would be useful here, or Kurosawa’s *It Is Wonderful to Create*, a feature available on the Criterion DVD. We would finally watch *Throne of Blood*, again once completely and then first in review of the persuasion scene.

It is the morning after the great battle, when the grooms are awakening to lovely sunlight and a sweet-sounding image of peasants peacefully working in the fields. Safety has been established. Washizu walks out of his room, and comes back into a scene in its bareness and cold symmetry reminiscent of Noh theater. Lady Asaji is seated, usually in the foreground of the camera’s composition. Her stillness, her bright costume, the light on her, and her extreme makeup recall the also evil spirit physicalized in the Noh manner. It is interesting to me that Kurosawa projects the female in the Noh style. Washizu is usually either highly active or framed in fog like medieval Japanese watercolors. Certainly women are often seen as culture-keepers, but I feel too that encasing Asaji in the Noh further distances us from her. Her mask is of a woman once-beautiful; and, although Noh is a Buddhist center of the play’s meaning that man’s ambitions are bloody and futile, and although Kurosawa’s Japanese audience would resonate with Noh, the theatre’s stylization and its insistence that we identify not with the play’s characters but with its cosmology, impart on us a coldness and a horror in her ambitious drives. Both she and Welles’ Nolan repel empathy. Lady Asaji’s eyes rarely meet her husband’s: she is occupied in her own designs.

Asaji’s argument is not that her husband should aspire to kingship, but that Washizu is in danger. Miki will tell their Tono, the Lord to whom they owe absolute fealty, about the spirit’s prophecy and the Tono, in the period’s love of bloodshed and treachery, will kill Washizu. She works not on his ambitions, but on his insecurity, and in her stillness and quiet is a master of her game. As Washizu paces in front of the room’s doors, a horse is galloping wildly in the courtyard behind him, reflecting his own wild anxiety, and we only hear her voice, provoking our anxiety, as her suggestions work their way into his head. When the camera finds the source of her voice, in pointing out that the Tono has murdered his own Tono, the scene’s light is on her, again as it was with the forest spirit, as the source of knowledge. The couple is sitting together, now intimately, and as Washizu tells her that there is no ambition in him, her face finally breaks—into a smile: “that is a lie.” In smiling, she reveals the blackened teeth of the Medieval Japanese noblewoman, which may

be expected to Japanese audiences but look horrifying to foreigners. Here I might point out that painting toenails, for instance, could be equally horrifying to cultures beyond the United States, and ask about relationships between women and fashion. Washizu grows hoarse yelling his scruples, and she—quietly--points out that “in this degenerate age” people must either kill or be killed.

The couple is interrupted by Yoshio Tsuchia’s alarming news that soldiers are arriving in the fields; Washizu gathers his men and is relieved that the soldiers are only on a hunting party with the Tono, who will spend the night. Later the Tono reveals that he is plotting to kill Inui, who has betrayed him, and that he wants Washizu to lead the charge.

Back in their chamber, Washizu paces and laughs. Mifune’s laugh is always deep, but Washizu’s laughter is a signal of defeat. He wants to tell Asaji that her hopes are groundless because the Tono has clearly placed so much confidence in him. She is in the camera’s foreground, lit as before, and completely seated and still, slightly elevated on the mat, informing him that at the fore of the fight he is vulnerable to assault from all sides. There is a very long take of his feet, pacing and continuing to demur, and her—still brightly lit—in the foreground, saying “I cannot agree.” An orchestral music begins to play, foretelling his doom; the music is light but in its previous absence highly affecting. Kurosawa loved juxtaposing music of this lightness, even occasionally sweetness, with deadly or tragic moments; here I will ask students what they make of this technique and ways in which they could incorporate it into their own work.

The guards check in, and again Yoshio Tsuchia brings the camera into the chamber where the castle’s previous lord Fujimaki, a traitor, killed himself. Tsuchia establishes our feel for this violent space by pointing out that the smell of the blood, which is expressed through a slow stunning pan, will not come out. The stain constitutes a harsh contrast to the serene wood patterns we expect on this set. Its composition is a pattern reminiscent of the film’s fog and clouds, reminding us of its Buddhist message. We are startled by a screech, and a faint tense music, again almost alarming because of its previous absence. When we see the couple in this chamber, we again hear Asaji’s voice, driving Washizu to pace further. She is telling him that she “cannot forget” the spirit’s prophesy, that he needs to “open his eyes and look,” that the prophesies are coming true. Washizu walks to her, and his shadow grows in the act, filling much of the screen, as his manipulated resolve is realized. She plans her sleeping potion, still quietly, and as a bird screams she rises and asks “will you risk the world?” Noh flutes accompany her as she walks to his mat and tells him to “aspire.” She kneels on the mat, still in full light, followed by him, looking maddened, and as we see her white back disappearing into a dark space—beyond the chamber—we hear her kimono swishing. The swishing continues during the long take on the darkened space into which she reappears like a ghost with a pot containing drugged sake. She is frightening. The camera dissolves to the guards, who are drugged, and cuts to Washizu in front of the bloodstain, looking at this point completely mad. We are put on edge by the sound of Asaji’s kimono and a Noh flute, and she finally appears holding a spear which he grabs in silence. He utters a mad laugh in closeup and disappears into the night. In a long take the camera moves to her, the Noh flute and then drums asserting themselves as she looks around. She moves behind a low screen, in front of the bloodstain, to perform a bizarre, gleeful, though still controlled, dance. The screen separates us from her experience. Washizu reappears, sits down, trancelike, and will not return the bloody spear he holds. The spear’s blood is visible, gory. After Asaji rushes out to place the spear into the grooms’ hands she notices the blood on her own hands, returns to the chamber, fixes her eyes on her motionless husband—all in silence. Then as we hear kimono swishing she opens the gates and screams “Intruders!” to set the rest of the scene in motion.

In the Shakespeare, as well as in the Holinshed and sources contemporary with the historical Macbeth, his reign became tyrannical and his people began to object to his abuse of power, making him more nervous and

therefore more tyrannical. It is up to conjecture how this affected the historical Lady Macbeth. She has been no stranger to violence, has wanted to own it and now inhabits its consequences. In the Shakespeare as in both films she seems to spend her time either comforting him or reaching out to his rebuffs, or cleaning up his messes as when she makes excuses about Banquo's ghost. We see less of her in all three pieces—except that Welles makes her present for the murder of MacDuff's family, in which she is most sinister. However, in all three pieces, her authority over him and as a Queen has failed. Her habitation of the situation she has tried to orchestrate has isolated her, and her drive to act in the world has now turned on her own mind. She is mad, psychically as well as materially crippled, yet very much alive to both her own questions and the audience's reactions.

I'd now want to show clips of Welles' Lady Macbeth's somnambulance, introducing both scenes with the observation that here both directors relinquished control: Welles allowed Nolan to speak her lines in real time, not voice-acted, and Kurosawa dismissed Yamada by telling her he "couldn't direct women" so that she practiced her handwashing at home alone. It is my feeling that here the characters, like the actresses, in their madness attain autonomy. Each woman develops a private space, almost sacred; here, unlike her husband, she finally determines her own karma.

Welles' Lady Macbeth appears while her doctor and nurse, to the fore of the screen, discuss her situation. She is stepping lightly in the distance, full-figured, lit, and alone at the very top and back of the screen. As her nurse says, "her senses are shut," she startles us with a scream, naturally drawing our attention to her. We are drawn to her as she again descends the staircase forcefully rubbing her hands, speaking to herself, "here's a spot." The "tski"ing asides of the voyeuristic doctor and nurse further draw our attention to her, and their unkindness could set us up to be more sympathetic. Her voice in delivering her madness alternates abruptly between the powerful one she has used in commanding her husband, and a small, bewildered child, as when she says "where is she now?" Her body swoons and convulses and sobs as she moves from shadow into light, and her husband appears as she calls him, erotically, "to bed." He is still helpless, bearing witness and attaining no authority during her monologue. He does not utter a word. She continues, erotically, to wile him to bed—he continues helpless—and she startles us and him with another scream, and runs away alone. Her screams, and to a lesser extent, the abruptness of her transitions in voice and reference during this monologue both confuse and startle us almost physiologically so that we, now, experience her madness with her. The camera blacks out with her, and she later appears only in her astonishing plummet to death.

Asaji, having miscarried, also announces herself with a scream as Washizu sleeps in readiness for battle. Her scream terrifies us and we, like her husband, naturally seek the source of the sound. This sound does not immediately appear; Kurosawa draws out our discomfort. With Washizu, we traverse the castle, running into two groups of women who run from the scream. Although these groups, in succession, bow to their Lord, he has clearly interrupted a female space. As he enters a brightly lit room, he meets—with her back to him as the other women have been—her elderly maidservant, kneeling before a vivid kimono on a rack. The kimono is brilliantly lit, askew, and covered in a floral pattern. The pattern is cloudlike, feminine, natural, lovely, stemming from Kurosawa's love of the pastoral. The maidservant—almost unwillingly—leaves Washizu to his wife. He tears away the kimono, as he has opened the door to the forest spirit, to reveal her also brilliantly lit, to the Japanese eye beautiful, kneeling over a deep black water bowl and washing. Although she remains kneeling during this scene, her hands as she washes at the empty bowl are fantastically animated, violently trembling, somehow at times clawlike but always graceful. Her voice is tiny and plaintive. She delivers her lines about the blood not coming out as her husband glares on in horror, and her eyes never meet his. She is entranced, as she was during so much of the persuasion scene, yet here her attention refuses to focus on him even as he screams her name, overturns the bowl, locates his face in her line of vision. As he is startled away

by a commotion outside from his men, her maidservant returns to her. We do not see Asaji again.

My questions to my students at this point are, Who has what power here? Why? What do you think of that? Has the Lady attained karmic absolution? Why or why not? What do you think the historical lady Macbeth experienced as her husband became more tyrannical and does this pertain to any modern situations?

I'd ask my students to adapt these scenes themselves, with either short dialogues or storyboards. I'd provoke students with radical adaptations of Shakespeare, such as *Thousand Acres* .

Finally, I'd ask students to consider themselves as texts, as adaptations and adaptors of the dramas in which they are in various ways found. I'd like them to create drawings of a drama about gender and power in whose arc they locate themselves.

Strategies

My students have a lot of practice in writing dialogue. It offers them elasticity of voice and a plumbing of possibilities for character development I have not found in other exercises. For the predictive scenes I ask them to write and perform here I may first ask them to make character cards—index cards with one side an image of the character and the other a description of his/her attributes and motivations—in order to get them into their roles. The dialogue carries itself—I use New Haven's Narrative Writing Rubric as a guide—and the class performs and writes reflections about what arises.

For homework reading, I rely heavily on dialectical notebooks, where the left half of the page contains quotes from the text and the right responds. The left-side quotes ground us in the text and the right-hand side, whose development I watch closely, projects students' fluency and ability to make choices about what they read.

In reading plays, especially Shakespeare, I use my students' own performances of the pieces. I find this invests them in the characters, and builds us as a community of thinkers. I just pause often asking them, "what does this mean?" or, "what is going on here?" They love their "ahas" and connections and anticipations in these discussions.

Found poetry is taking several words or lines from a piece of literature which just strike students' imaginations or get them thinking. I like to use sticky notes for the writing of these lines because they are tactile and rough-draft feeling. Students arrange these lines on a page—I like large chart paper--and fill them in using their own words. In this space students can create new imagery or sound, or explain the connections between the words they have used, or draw new insights. The completed poem is a final draft of what is begun on the chart paper, simply according to where students feel the piece is taking them. Because this is not a creative writing class, I grade students simply according to effort. I find this exercise gives students an appreciation of the original writer's process as well as a kind of new ownership of the piece.

During class I often jigsaw—break the class into groups each of which develops a topic for presentation to the whole class. I may assign each to a character, or a plot point, or a question about the text, and at the end of presentations of their conclusions the class reflects collectively.

So much has been written about teaching the writing process. In order to provoke students to own their work I construct myself as an active listener; I offer students choices of topics and processes; and I find ways for their voices to feel heard, whether by suggesting we gather our dialogues or drawings as a book or by suggesting social media as means of conveying insights and innovations.

The summative assessment I would use for this unit would consist of opposite-hand drawing and analysis. Because when we draw with out opposite hands we are calling on a half of the brain we use less, and simply because holding a pencil with the opposite hand recalls the awkwardness with which we first learned to write, clinicians use these drawings in order to elicit the unconscious, and I find the unconscious ideologically laden. If students are uncomfortable drawing, they would use right-left hands to write a dialogue. Their grade would not be about the art, but about the analysis which follows: a two-sided notebook whose left side points out details of the work in question and right asks questions or offers insights. Because mine is not an art class, I would tell students they are being graded on effort. Students have fun with this exercise precisely because it is so awkward.

Classroom Activities

WEEK 1

Introduce students to “The Wanderer” and excerpt from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* . Write found poetry and discuss. Explicate for homework. Then read and explicate five of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

WEEK 2

Offer students a synopsis of characters and a scenario: three witches gather and greet Macbeth the thane and his friend Banquo riding back to King Duncan after winning a great battle. The witches greet Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and then King. When Macbeth meets a messenger who tells him he is actually Thane of Cawdor, he begins to consider murdering King Duncan and tells his wife in a letter. At their home, King Duncan comes for a visit. Macbeth says to his wife, “We will go no farther in this matter.” Write the dialogue which ensues. Perform.

WEEKS 3-5

Read with dialectical notebook and perform the play. Write a compare/contrast essay about persuasion scene.

WEEKS 5-7

Continue reading with dialectical notebooks and performing. Write an essay describing the motivations and development of one character.

WEEK 8

The scene is set for Lady Macbeth’s decompensation: write the scene following “her sense is shut.” Direct and perform. Then read and perform the Shakespeare, explicating, and write found poetry from this scene. Write a compare and contrast essay about one of our classmates’ scenes and the Shakespeare.

WEEK 9

Finish performing and explicating the play. Write an essay: What kills Macbeth and why?

WEEK 10

Introduce Welles as a character. Watch clips from *Lady from Shanghai* with dialectical notebook.

WEEK 11

Watch *Macbeth* in its entirety, occasionally pausing for notes on the left hand of the dialectical notebook. For homework fill in the right side of the notebook. Discuss Welles' controversial directorial choices.

WEEK 12

Watch clips from *Macbeth*, the persuasion and the handwashing scenes. Discuss Lady Macbeth's power here and write a paper about it.

WEEK 13

Watch clip from *Seven Samurai* with dialectical notebook as before and discuss warring samurai/tono period in Japan as well as contemporary issues. Paper about violence in the piece.

WEEK 14

Watch *Throne of Blood* with dialectical as before. Explain Noh theater and bring in medieval Japanese watercolors. Paper about the cycle of violence in the film and the film's argument.

WEEK 15

Watch clips from *Throne of Blood*, again the persuasion and the handwashing scenes. Discuss Asaji's power within and beyond the film and write a paper about it.

WEEK 16

Opposite hand self portraits within a scene which describes your own relationship with the gender roles to which you feel ascribed. Write an explanation and present.

Annotated Bibliography

Callow, Simon. *Orson Welles* Volume 2. New York: Penguin, 2007.

This is an extensive and excellent biography and filmic study of Welles' work. The chapter on *Macbeth* is useful for production narratives as well as filmic study.

Davies, Anthony. *Filming Shakespeare's Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

The chapters on *Macbeth* and *Throne of Blood* are wonderful—Davies is so insightful.

Galbraith, Stuart IV. *The Emperor and the Wolf*. New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2001.

Really this is a book about the relationship between Kurosawa and Mifune, and its dissolution. It's filled with biographical details about both men and includes explanations and analyses of all of their films.

Garmonsway, G.N., tr. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co. Inc., 1994.

This is a wonderful book for students of Old English—it contains very little about *Macbeth* but I have it here to give students a feel for Medieval UK. The writers are simply scribes who take down every year's news, but their voices are very human and unembellished.

Jorgens, Jack. *Shakespeare on Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977.

This book contains useful chapters about both *Macbeth* and *Throne of Blood*— filmic explanations and analyses which help with film language and the meanings of both pieces.

Lady From Shanghai. Dir. Orson Welles. Perf. Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth. Columbia Classics, 2002

This is a wonderful piece. I expect students to love it.

Leaming, Barbara. *Orson Welles*. New York: Penguin, 1986.

I read this book for fun—Welles was an outrageous and I feel highly sympathetic character.

Macbeth. Dir. Orson Welles. Perf. Orson Welles, Jeanette Nolan, Dan O'Herlihy, Roddy McDowall. DVD Lees 2004.

This is a restored version of the film, but it does not contain the commentary that a criterion edition would.

McDonald, Keiko. "Noh into Film: Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*." *Journal of Film and Video* 39, No. 1 (1987): 36-41.

This was a fascinating piece about the history of Noh theater and its meanings. It does a lot to elucidate both the film and Asaji's performance.

Mifune. Dir. Stephen Okazaki. Narr. Keanu Reeves. DVD Strand 2017.

This is a good documentary about Mifune. It contains some anecdotes about the filming of *Throne of Blood* and a great deal of biography about both Mifune and his relationship with Kurosawa.

Naremore, James. *The Magic World of Orson Welles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

The section on *Macbeth* includes commentary on Welles' politics and the ways in which he is both liberal and dictatorial and I found it very interesting.

Prince, Stephen. *The Warrior's Camera*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

An expert on Kurosawa, Prince addresses Kurosawa's excision of Shakespeare's words from *Throne of Blood* and its cultural signification.

Seven Samurai. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Perf. Toshiro Mifune and Takashi Shimura. DVD Criterion 2016.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth* . London: Routledge, 1989.

I like the Arden edition for its translations and commentaries and contains the pertinent pieces from Holinshed as well as other sources contemporaneous with Shakespeare.

Throne of Blood. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Perf. Toshiro Mifune and Isuzu Yamada. DVD Criterion 2014.

The criterion edition includes a great pamphlet with pieces by Donald Ritchie among others as well as audio commentary by Michael Jeck and the small documentary, *Akira Kurosawa: It Is Wonderful to Create*.

Tribble, Evelyn (2005). "When Every Noise Appalls Me": Sound and Fear in *Macbeth* and Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, *Shakespeare* , 1:1-2, 75-90, DOI: 10.1080/17450910500135743

This is a fantastic article about the sometimes overlooked aspect of sound in film and physical reactions to sound. Tribble's explanation of both pieces is really compelling.

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