

A TIMELESS TALE OF BETRAYAL, POWER, AMBITION AND GREED

MACBETH

EDUCATION RESOURCE

A TIMELESS TALE OF BETRAYAL, POWER, AMBITION AND GREED

MACBETH

CAST

Macbeth
Mark Hadlow
Lady Macbeth
Lara Macgregor
Banquo / Seyton
Tom Peters
Macduff
Owen Black
Duncan / Doctor
Michael Keir-Morrissey
Malcolm / Third Murderer
Tola Newbery
Ross
Barry de Lore
Lennox / Second Murderer / Siward
Adam Brookfield
Lady Macduff / Gentlewoman
Kim Garrett
Angus / First Murderer / Porter / Lord
Jared Corbin
Fleance / Young Siward /
Macduff's Son / Servant
Tom Worthington
Donalbain / Menteith / Servant
Jack Marshall
First Witch
Raewyn Lippert
Second Witch
Kathleen Burns
Third Witch
Brylee Lockhart

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director Ross Gumbley
Assistant Director Melanie Luckman
Set Designer Harold Moot
Costume Designer Tina Hutchison-Thomas
Lighting Designer Giles Tanner
Sound Designer Henri Kerr
Properties Co-ordinator Christy Lassen
Stage Manager Ashlyn Smith
Operators Sean Hawkins & Darren McKane
Costume Manager Sarah Douglas
Workshop Manager Nigel Kerr
Production Manager Charlotte Lloyd
Education Manager Rachel Sears
Costume Construction Deborah Moor,
Sarah Douglas, Louise Galloway
& Tina Hutchison-Thomas
Wig & Hair Stylist Sarah Greenwood
Set Construction Maurice Kidd, Richard
Daem, Henri Kerr, Richard van den Berg &
Rob Hood
Properties Assistants Lydia Foate &
Danielle Ferreira Beckner
Marketing & Communications
Rob Wiley & Wendy Riley

RUNNING TIME

2 hours 17 minutes
including 20 minute interval

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MACBETH SYNOPSIS

Following their success in battle, Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches as they cross a moor. The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be made thane [a rank of nobility] of Cawdor and eventually King of Scotland. They also prophesy that Banquo's children will be kings. The witches vanish, and Macbeth and Banquo are not sure what to think about the witches' prophecies. Some of King Duncan's men arrive and thank the two generals for their victories in battle, they tell Macbeth that he has been named thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is intrigued by the possibility that the remainder of the witches' prophecy—that he will be crowned king—might be true.

Macbeth visits with King Duncan, and they plan to eat together at Macbeth's castle that night. Macbeth writes ahead to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her all that has happened.

Lady Macbeth is excited by the news, she strongly desires the kingship for her husband and wants him to murder King Duncan in order to ensure the prophecy comes true. When Macbeth arrives home, she overrides all of her husband's

objections and persuades him to kill the king that night.

While Duncan is asleep, Macbeth stabs him, despite his doubts and a terrifying vision of a bloody dagger. When Duncan's death is discovered the next morning Macbeth easily assumes the kingship.

King Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain flee, fearing that whoever killed Duncan will want to kill them also.

Aware of the witches' prophecy that Banquo's children will be kings, Macbeth hires a group of murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. They ambush and slaughter Banquo but they fail to kill Fleance, who escapes into the night.

Macbeth is furious: as long as Fleance is alive, he fears that his position as king is insecure.

That night at a royal feast, Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth. When he sees the ghost, Macbeth is terrified, despite Lady Macbeth trying to calm him Macbeth appears mad and unstable to his subjects and they start to doubt his abilities as king.

Macbeth goes to visit the witches hoping for reassurance. They show him

MACBETH

SYNOPSIS

a sequence of demons and spirits who present him with further prophecies:

He must beware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who opposed Macbeth's accession to the throne.

He is incapable of being harmed by any man born of woman

He will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle.

Macbeth is relieved because he knows that all men are born of women and that forests cannot move. When he learns that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm [King Duncan's son], Macbeth orders that Macduff's home be seized and that Lady Macduff and her children are murdered.

When Macduff finds out about this attack, he is angry and vows revenge. Prince Malcolm has raised an army and Macduff joins him to challenge Macbeth's forces.

Meanwhile Lady Macbeth becomes troubled with fits of sleepwalking in which she obsessively washes blood from her hands. Before Macbeth's opponents arrive, Macbeth receives news that she has killed herself, causing him to sink into a deep despair.

Macbeth is struck with fear when he learns that the opposing army is advancing on Dunsinane camouflaged as Birnam Wood, the wood is indeed coming to Dunsinane, this fulfills half of the witches' prophecy.

On the battlefield, Macbeth meets Macduff, who declares that he was not "of woman born" but was instead "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb [what we now call birth by caesarean section]. Macbeth realises he is doomed and Macduff kills him.

Malcolm, now the King of Scotland, declares his good intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned.



DIRECTION

An interview with Ross Gumbley, the Director of The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth. For videos visit www.CourtTheatre.org.nz/education/resources.

Watch Video: A Brief History – Social, Cultural and Historical Context

DISCUSS:

- 1: What do you think about the choices made in staging this production of Macbeth?
- 2 How does a contemporary audience differ to an Elizabethan audience?

ACTIVITY:

In groups do some research into the reign of King James I of England with each group focusing on one area of his reign

- 1: Witch Craft
- 2: Religion
- 3: The Divine rights of Kings
- 4: The gunpowder plot

Create a presentation to your class sharing your findings about this time period. What does your research tell you about how the play might have been received in its historical context?

Watch Video: What is it about?

DISCUSS:

How well do you think The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth evokes the idea of Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair?

DISCUSS:

In the play soliloquies are used to share with the audiences the deepest desires and internal conflicts of the characters. Imagine we took away all the soliloquies. What difference would this make to the production?

Watch Video: The Cast

DISCUSS:

Imagine Macbeth was being played by an actor who was school aged? How does this impact on your reading of the character?

Watch Video: What is it about?

DISCUSS:

How are Theatre Technologies used in The Court Theatre's production to help the audience understand the context of the play?



CONTEXT:

ACTIVITY:

Working in small groups, using the timeline and your knowledge of the play, find 5 key points from the timeline that are most relevant to the content of the play. Share these with the rest of your class and compare the similarities and differences in your answers.



1040-1057
The reign of Macbeth, King of Scotland - nicknamed 'The Red King'.



1542
Henry VII's Witchcraft Act 1542: first Act to define witchcraft as a crime punishable by death.



1564
William Shakespeare was born to tanner John and Mary Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon.



24 JULY 1567
Mary, Queen of Scots forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son James.



AUGUST 1582
Ruthven Raid: Protestant earls lured James VI into Ruthven Castle & imprisoned him.

1583
Throckmorton Plot: attempt to murder Elizabeth I and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots.

1000s

1500s

1563
The Scottish Witchcraft Act 1563: practice of witchcraft & consulting with witches declared capital offences.



19 JUNE 1566
Charles James Stuart born to Mary, Queen of Scots.



29 JULY 1567
13 month old Charles James Stuart became King James VI of Scotland.



27 NOVEMBER 1582
18 year old William Shakespeare married 26 year old Anne Hathaway.



1585-1592
Shakespeare left his family in Stratford to join a company of actors as playwright & performer.





1586

Babington Plot: attempt to murder Elizabeth I and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots.



1589-1590

Shakespeare believed to have written his very first play, *Henry VI, Part One*.



1597

James VI wrote *Daemonologie*, a book endorsing the practice of witch hunting.



1600-1601

Shakespeare is thought to have composed *Hamlet*, arguably his greatest play.



1605

Gunpowder Plot: Failed assassination attempt on James I by provincial English Catholics.



3 MAY 1606

The 'equivocator', Father Henry Garnett, executed.

1600s

6 JULY 1586

Treaty of Berwick: peace agreement signed between Elizabeth I & James VI.



1590

Great Scottish Witch Hunt: ran for two years & implicated 70 people including James VI's first cousin.



24 MARCH 1603

Elizabeth I died and James VI of Scotland crowned James I of England.



1604

Witchcraft Act 1604: death penalty for anyone who invoked evil spirits or communed with familiar spirits.

1606

Macbeth believed to have been written.



7 AUGUST 1606

Macbeth was first performed for King James I in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace.



TEXTURAL APPROPRIATION:

How Shakespeare Twisted History in Macbeth

The gripping story of Macbeth has been adapted across entertainment mediums throughout the world because of its seemingly evergreen warning of the dangers of political greed. Among the most successful and best known cultural adaptations of Macbeth are Akira Kurosawa's 1957 film Throne of Blood and Tom Stoppard's play Cahoot's Macbeth. One scholar analyses the relationship between Shakespeare the playwright and the political machine of which he was a part.

Shakespeare's Macbeth, a dramatization of the successful overthrow of the usurper or tyrant, is one of the best examples of a tragedy with topical references and political implications.

It is known that Shakespeare always blends drama with social commentary, and that although he sets his plays in distant and exotic places or in remote times, he is always concerned with the here and now of his own native country. He reflects upon the past to illuminate the present, a strategy reduplicated by modern playwrights and stage directors, who borrow Shakespeare's plays to examine their own historical moment.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was probably written in 1605 or 1606, a short time after James VI of Scotland ascended the throne of England as James I. When the play was first performed at the Great Hall of Hampton Court, on August 7th, 1606 by the King's Men, Shakespeare exhibited the genealogical tree of the Stuart family on the stage, according to the historico-mythical notion cultivated by James I who, after having sought for inspiration in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, claimed to be a descendant of Banquo. Famously, in the first scene of Act IV, when the second encounter of Macbeth with the witches takes place, a procession of eight phantasmal kings is conjured up by them in answer to Macbeth's question about Banquo's offspring, a show akin to the Jacobean masque. The last king holds up a mirror in which the line of Banquo is reflected, and Shakespeare, very cunningly, made it a longer line still to reflect the image of James I, seated on his throne on the elevated platform strategically displayed during the performances of plays at

court. This symbolic scene suggests that the line of descendants of Banquo, ergo James I, would stretch out ad infinitum into the future as kings.

Seen from this particular perspective, *Macbeth* can be read as a demonstration of the legitimate right of succession of James I and as a compliment to the king. However, such traditional reading is only one side of the coin. The play can also be read as a criticism against the Scottish monarch; or as an exposure of a particular uncivilised part of the country, namely the backward and barbaric Scotland; or in terms of comparison and contrast, the question being whether Shakespeare stresses the similarities between England and Scotland or opens up the differences between them; or even as a questioning on what the difference is between Macbeth's rule and that of contemporary Absolutist European monarchs, among them James I. Although Shakespeare's company was the King's favourite [The King's Men], he knew that besides pleasing the monarch, he also had to keep close contact with the great bulk of people who constituted his audiences of the public and private theatres, since the profits of his company depended on them. But as he held the patronage of the king, he may have chosen to reinforce the moral of Absolutism and the "Elizabethan world picture", but simultaneously, in a veiled fashion and with great cunning, he introduced elements into his text that subverted the very order he seemed to ratify.

To question the status quo, Shakespeare manipulated the historical narrative he encountered in [historical accounts by] Holinshed, dealing freely with his source text and introducing a series of

changes which constitute a rich subtext, permitting different readings of the play that make the audience sensitive to certain parallels that can be traced between the time in which the play is set—medieval Scotland—and the time in which it is written—Renaissance England. [Scholar] Jonathan Goldberg argues that although Shakespeare purposively draws a clear-cut picture of a saintly king [Duncan] and a villainous murderer [Macbeth], he also lets the audience envisage a series of ambiguities in the fabric of the narrative. He made Duncan old and venerable, instead of a young, weak-willed man and poor administrator as described in the backgrounded text. Despite the fact that he drew a composite picture of Macbeth in order to blacken his character, moving freely in Holinshed and amalgamating episodes from different narratives, it becomes obvious, since the very beginning of the play, that the bloody picture of the violent hierarchy in Scotland is presented to show that chaos and violence were current there long before the tyrant's intervention.

Furthermore, historical details such as the lack of clarity concerning the laws of succession are omitted [the crown was not hereditary, but semi-elective].

This information would have made the audience alert to the fact that Macbeth had a claim for the throne. Being older than Malcolm, he was next in the line of succession, which explains his revolt when Duncan nominated his son as his successor. The ten years of Macbeth's straightforward and just rule are also omitted. And in order to flatter James I, who claimed to be a descendant of Walter Stuart, he constructs Banquo as a flawless, incorruptible character [although in some speeches, in a very subtle way, he suggests Banquo's inclination to temptation], contradicting Holinshed, who reports the participation of the latter in the assassination plot. The dialogue of Shakespeare's play with its sources lays bare several unresolved contradictions in the text, encourages critical questioning and problematises a series of issues, among them the debate concerning James' legitimacy.

From *Textual Appropriation: Totalitarian Violence in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Tom Stoppard's Cahoot's Macbeth* by Anna Stegh Camati, Uniandrade

ACTIVITY:

Working in groups take a paragraph each from the above article and summarise the main point of the paragraph in one sentence. Share these with your class and discuss how this relates to The Court Theatre's Production.

EXTENSION:

Create a tableaux or sketch a moment in the play that relates to the point in your paragraph. Share these as a class. You could even take a photo and create a wall display summarising this article.



THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES:

Set Design

An interview with Harold Moot who designed the set for The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth.

Tell us about the concept driving your design for Macbeth?

We were really driven by the idea of "fair is foul and foul is fair" from the text. This is why we choose to have a really rough and broken environment alongside a pristine white table cloths and sparkling chandelier.

What effect do you hope your set design will have on the audience?

We want the set to feel cold and broken, and for this to reflect the loss the characters feel in this play. The image the audience see changes as the play progresses, we want that chilling feeling to increase with time.

Why did you choose to use projection in this design?

We wanted the projection to help create the feeling of the paranormal and allow the audience to glimpse into the warped minds of the witches.

DISCUSS:

- 1: What are your reflections on the set design of Macbeth?
- 2: How did it make you feel?
- 3: Did it impact on your reading of the story?



THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES:

Costume Design

An interview with Tina Hutchison-Thomas who designed the costumes for The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth

Can you tell us about your choices when costuming the witches?

Early on in the design process the director and other department designers and myself had decided on a world that was decayed, battle torn and miserable. There would be elements of dirt, dust and decay.

So what would make these weird sisters unearthly? Something that looks like they should not be in this place. An anomaly- something not usually seen in nature- pure white. We wanted them to look unnatural and unnerving. The details and imagery flowed from that point.

How do the costumes help communicate the characters in the play?

The creation of our world needed to look like an old military that has long since run out of money, and energy. Each character has a unique look, things they have taken from their surroundings - wool, fur, leather. This world is cold and broken and the characters reflect this. There is a modern Eastern European feel, mixed with subtle Scottish accents to remain faithful with the origins of the script.

Which costume works the hardest to help tell the story?

Lady Macbeth has a significant journey- at the top we see her in soft wools, charcoal and dark hues and as she moves through the play, and becomes Queen, she progresses into a more 'hard edged' look. Her costume colour palette changes to reflect the mood of the play. As Lady Macbeth begins to become unhinged she moves into the pale unearthly colour like the witches.

DISCUSS:

Choose your favourite costume in the play. Why did that costume appeal to you?

ACTIVITY:

The Witches can be portrayed in a multitude of ways. Think about the choices made by the production team on The Court Theatre's production. In groups discuss the different choices that could be made?

1. Do some research into how the witches were portrayed in other productions of Macbeth.
2. As a group decide how you will portray the witches (how old are they, what do they represent etc.)
3. Design the witches' costumes and write a character outline for the witches.
4. Present these to the rest of your class and see how different the various options are.



THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES:

Sound Design

An interview with Henri Kerr who designed the sound for The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth

How does the sound and music in Macbeth help to tell the story?

Sound has an amazing ability to create moods and influence how you feel, whether it be conscious or not. With that in mind I wanted to create sounds that would complement some of the feelings and themes of Macbeth. When coupled with dialogue and the visual elements of the production it creates context which will create the desired atmosphere. I think the sound doesn't necessarily directly help tell the story, but more that it helps create the world and adds to the story telling.

What choices did you make to ensure that the sound supports the portrayal of the paranormal in the play?

There were no specific choices made in the writing process to make sounds that helped portray the paranormal. It was more about creating a tense and scary atmosphere in general. So using overdriven drones, manipulating the stereo image, delay and reverb all added to that atmosphere. Again context is important. When the music is played over the scenes with Banquo's ghost and the three witches it complements what is happening on stage and hopefully adds a creepy edge.

You are a musician, how does composing music/sound for a play differ to composing music in other contexts?

When creating music for a play there is a clear goal. You want to use the music to work with the production and add to the experience for the people watching and listening, and in some cases, give the actors something more to work with. During the writing process you keep the script and set in mind so your musical decisions are influenced by the two. When I'm making music in the bands I play with the goal is different. It's more about personal enjoyment and spontaneity.

ACTIVITY:

Working in groups and using the plot summary included in this pack choose 5 moments in the story that you feel are important to the plot or mark moments of character development. Choose five songs that you feel would add to the telling of the story and emotions at these moments.

Present these moments back to your class and note the different choices made by different groups. What discoveries can you make about the play by listening to classmates suggestions?

EXTENSION:

Choose your favourite song/moment combination from your list of five. Find this moment in the play and stage and rehearse this scene with the song playing in the background. Perform this for the rest of the class and offer feedback on how the song impacted on your reading of the scene.

THE WITCHES: MAGIC & PARANORMAL

*When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*

[Act 1, scene 1]

The play opens with the witches: the audience are introduced to these strange characters first. The witches refer to themselves as a unit of three and list three weather elements 'thunder, lightning' and 'rain'. The number three recurs in religion (holy trinity), magic, and superstitions regularly – and this would have been relevant to Shakespeare's audiences.

DISCUSS:

Do you think this is still relevant today? Were you affected by the witches at the start of The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth? What do you think was effective about their entrance?

DISCUSS:

When casting The Court Theatre's production of Macbeth the director made a conscious choice to cast physical performers in the roles of the witches. What did you notice these actors doing that helped convey the paranormal aspects of their characters? Did you spot them always returning to the shape of a triangle? What did this make you think of as an audience member?

The Witches

ACTIVITY:

Working in groups of five, stage Act 1 Scene 3, performing it with the intention of trying to:

1. Scare Macbeth and Banquo
2. Reassure Macbeth and Banquo
3. Tempt Macbeth and Banquo

Which version did you find the most believable? Which is closest to the choice you saw portrayed in The Court Theatre's production? Do you think that was the right choice?

What choices did you make [how did you use the drama elements] to show you were scaring, reassuring, tempting? Why did they work?



PORTRAYING CHARACTERS:

ACTIVITY:

Working in groups, pairs or individually choose a character from the play. Write their name in the centre of a piece of paper and surround them with four or five character traits or important information about them in the story. On the next level out from these traits list the ways these elements are communicated by the actors and costuming in The Court Theatre's production. Think about including examples of:

1. A piece of dialogue
2. Costume
3. Use of body
4. Use of movement
5. Use of voice
6. Use of space
7. Use of other theatre technologies like lighting/sound etc.

ACTIVITY:

In groups imagine that you are going to create a video game inspired by the play Macbeth but you can't use Macbeth as the central character. Using the list of the characters below discuss the pros and cons of using each one as the protagonist of your video game. Once you have come to a final decision brainstorm the content and journey of your video game. Present your ideas to your class and explain the reasons behind your choices.

1. Macduff
2. The Witches
3. Malcolm



REHEARSAL ROOM
DIARIES:

Assistant Director Melanie Luckman reflects on the rehearsal process in a weekly diary.

Week 1

Day 1 design presentation - The whole cast & company get to hear Ross' vision and see the designs. He's created a really specific, modern world which is very bold but it seems to come from really analysing the script - it makes sense with the play's themes and Macbeth's journey so it feels really integrated rather than just a design concept being forced onto the play. Exciting! We also had a session with Dr Kim Morgan about how the First Folio is written for performance as opposed to all the modern texts which are designed for reading. Wow, it's really opened my eyes to so many clues in the script that I never knew were there. This Folio script is going to be my constant companion during this process I think!

Rest of the week - sit in with Ross on rehearsals. I'm keeping the First Folio and my other versions of the script handy so I can correct pronunciations and answer questions about meanings of lines. Some intensive work with Lara and Mark (Lady M & M). Wow they've done so much work already. Mark has most of his lines down. Lots of talking about their character arcs and what kind of couple they are - conclusion - one of Shakespeare's

REHEARSAL ROOM
DIARIES:

most stable loving couples (until it all goes wrong). Get them on their feet and they're so brave - willing to try things out, not afraid to fail. Exciting discoveries coming already!

Start blocking and getting a feel for the play. One challenge is creating believable soldiers. Group scenes are complicated and hard. Don't want people to look like they're just standing around! Currently - they look like they're standing around. They need army boots.

Week 2

Lots more blocking. I'm keeping a good eye on the language while Ross is creating the picture. We really do work well as a team. I also start taking some one on one rehearsals with some of the actors to look at some scenes in more depth. Some actors are more comfortable with the language than others and some have more complex roles than others so anything I can do to help get rid of their fear the better. Sometimes it's looking at the iambic pentameter, sometimes simply translating the lines into real English, sometimes helping them to "get out of the way of the words" - i.e. the language is way more rich than we're used to, so often you don't need to do much "acting".

REHEARSAL ROOM DIARIES:

to get the meaning across except saying the words clearly and strongly. It's a bit different from all the "emotional" acting we're so used to these days, but it really works and makes the play come alive! Also did a partial put-together this week of the first few acts... It was rough! I guess it's good to know what we don't know! This play is massive....

Week 3

This play keeps getting more and more massive....

We're getting to the nitty gritty. There are some complicated scenes that are taking much longer than expected to work - like the banquet scene. There's so much in it and Mark has to flip from one thing to the next which is really hard when you're not actually a crazy-ass king-murderer. So much going on in one scene. People are working really hard to make sense of



REHEARSAL ROOM DIARIES:

it. I had a one on one session with Mark to look at a couple of his monologues - Such an amazing actor - we just defined a couple of points for him to hit during the speeches and wow they came alive. Ross was impressed too! Oh and hey! The soldiers are starting to feel like soldiers and group scenes are suddenly coming to life! They have boots!

Week 4

I'm only here for the first couple of days but that's full on. Trying to cram in as much one on one time with actors as I can but it's not enough. It's never enough!

Everything is slowly coming together. Some scenes are still causing problems but you can't solve everything at once. The banquet scene however is looking amazing! Very hard to say goodbye to this process without seeing it to the end but I've got another job to go to and I'll come back and see some dress rehearsals and I'm so excited to see Opening Night!



THEMES:

In the following pages we have identified four themes that we think run throughout Macbeth and four quotes for each theme. Use the quotes as a starting point for the exercises perhaps you can find more to add to this collection.

Ambition

Macbeth to Banquo [Act 1, scene 3]

*Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?*

Macbeth to the audience [Act 1, scene 4]

*The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:*

Macbeth to the audience [Act 1, scene 5]

*I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.*

Lady Macbeth [about Macbeth] [Act 1, scene 7]

*thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it.*

ACTIVITY:

Working in groups of three, with one person playing Lady Macbeth and the other two taking on the roles of 'good' and 'bad' angels create a scene which shows how Lady Macbeth comes to the conclusion that killing King Duncan is a good idea. Lady M is in the centre and the good and bad angel take it in turns to offer reasons/warnings/advice around how she could respond to Macbeth's news of the witches prophecies. After 2 minutes the student playing Lady Macbeth has to decide what choice they would make.

Share as a class the differing opinions of the Lady Macbeth's in your class and compare this to the action taken in the play.



VIOLENCE

Sergeant to Duncan [Act 1, scene 2]

*I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorise another Golgotha,
I cannot tell.*

Lennox describing the guards [Act 2, scene 3]

*Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were an badged with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:*

Ross [Act 2, scene 4]

*Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:*

Banquo [upon being attacked] [Act 3, scene 3]

*O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge.*

Reporting Action

Often in Shakespeare's plays we hear about action that has happened, perhaps reported by a messenger or by a letter read out loud. This is especially true of the violence and murder in Macbeth; we see Macbeth and Lady Macbeth with blood on their hands after the murder of King Duncan and Macduff's reaction when he discovers the body.

DISCUSS:

How would the telling of this story change if it was being told on film? Perhaps watch a film version of Macbeth and discuss as a class how the telling of violent acts changed in film compared to theatre. Which did you prefer?



GUILT

Macbeth to Lady Macbeth after Duncan's murder
[Act 2, scene 2]
*But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.*

Lady Macbeth noting that Macbeth is starting to
affected by guilt [Act 3, scene 2]
*Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.*

Lady Macbeth to Macbeth [Act 3, scene 2]
*Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what's done is done.*

Macbeth to Lady Macbeth [Act 3, scene 2]
*Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.*

ACTIVITY:

Imagine that at the end of the play instead of dying Macbeth ends up in prison. Imagine you are Macbeth and that out of guilt you decide to write a letter to the family members of those you've killed (Banquo's wife, Duncan's sons etc.). What would you say?



MADNESS

Macbeth [hallucinating a dagger] [Act 2, scene 1]
*Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch
thee.*

*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-oppressed brain?*

Macbeth to Lady Macbeth [Act 2, scene 2]
*Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep'*

Lady Macbeth to Macbeth [Act 2, scene 2]
*You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things.*

Macbeth to Lady Macbeth [Act 3, scene 2]
O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

The way we perceive madness today compared to in Shakespeare's time is very different. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have to communicate to the audience that they are affected by their actions and that this creates internal turmoil for them.

DISCUSS:

How did the actor playing Lady Macbeth communicate her character changing throughout the play? Was it believable? How did she make it believable? / Why was it not believable?

The text indicates that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have lost a child before the play begins, would it make a difference if the director highlighted this to the audience clearly at the start of the play? Would the audience have more empathy for the characters and the choices they make?



LANGUAGE

ACTIVITY:

Work in pairs, sitting in chairs facing each other. Use Macbeth's speech from Act 4 scene 1 [below].

1. Person A read the monologue and swap chairs with person B at each punctuation mark [not commas]. Person B just listens.
2. Swap over, person B read the monologue and swap chairs with person A at each punctuation mark [not commas]. Person A just listens.
3. Share which parts of the speech stand out as important when reading it this way. What meaning or lines jump out at you?

*Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it; from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights!*



SOLILOQUIES & MONOLOGUES

Soliloquies are often used in Shakespeare's work to allow the audience to learn about a character's decisions or motivations, they often give the audience information or insights that other characters in the play do not get. During a soliloquy the character is often debating an issue or decision. In Macbeth Act 1, Scene 7 Macbeth has a soliloquy where he is deliberating over his decision to kill King Duncan.

ACTIVITY:

Using the text from the scene [below] work in pairs.

1. Go through the speech and highlight which lines are FOR killing the king and which lines are AGAINST killing the king.
2. Have a go reading the speech with one person reading the FOR lines and one person reading the AGAINST lines.
3. Add action which helps to demonstrate the internal argument. For example the two actors stand at the very back of the stage and walk forward when they speak, we can then clearly see which actor is closer to the audience at the end.
4. Share these performances with your class.
5. Do different pairs have different ideas about which lines are FOR and which are AGAINST? How did the staging choices impact on your understanding of the soliloquy?

*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.*

DISCUSS:

Did you find there were more arguments AGAINST? Why do you think Shakespeare did this? Why does Macbeth still choose to kill the king?

Do you remember this speech from The Court Theatre's production? How did the one actor communicate the internal conflict in this soliloquy?

ACTIVITY:

Take the quote from the soliloquy

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

If this line is a tag line for a poster what could the image be? Use the internet, your bodies, or a sketch to share your image ideas with your class.

STAGING THE PLAY: MAKING CHOICES

The Witches

In The Court Theatre's Production of Macbeth the witches are dressed all in white: with white faces, eyes and hair. This decision by the costume designer and director to present the witches in white was a clear choice. Although we might automatically think of witches as wearing black the colour white in this production is aiming to make the audience feel the fear and paranoia that Macbeth feels after encountering them.

DISCUSS:

Do you think this choice works? What were your reactions to the witches when they entered the stage?

Making the wood move – The witches tell Macbeth that he is safe until 'Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane', Macbeth assumes that woods cannot move and therefore doesn't take this threat seriously. In the final climax of the play the approaching forces come disguised as trees out of the wood, making it appear to Macbeth and his soldiers that the wood is indeed moving. In The Court Theatre's production the creative team wanted to continue the use of the colour white (worn by the witches) and have the approaching soldiers disguised in snow ghillie suits and snow falling from the sky. This means that as we approach the end of the play the entire set begins to turn white bringing all the characters closer in appearance to the witches.

DISCUSS:

There is one other character in the play who undergoes a colour transformation like this, did you spot them? (hint: it is a female character). As a group discuss the use of the colour white to communicate fear and paranoia. Do you think this was a good choice?

Energy of War

One of the problems facing the production team and cast at the beginning of the rehearsals is how to create the energy and feeling of real war with only 15 actors. Sound is one of the ways they choose to try and achieve this.

ACTIVITY:

Working as a whole class and using only your body and voice can you create a soundscape that really depicts the energy of war? Tips: Choose a time period (will there be guns?) and find small things people can do that build to create a large body of sound. Try recording your sound and playing it over the top of two actors reading the final scene between Macbeth and Macduff.



ONE WOMAN OR TWO

Because this play was written over 400 years ago it is out of copyright which means we can edit the text and choices the playwright made without consulting anyone. If Shakespeare was still alive we wouldn't be able to do this.

The Court Theatre's production plays around with the time period and the setting of the play and amongst other things makes some changes to the way the character of Lady Macduff is portrayed. Lady Macduff appears on stage in this production multiple times, compared to once in the text, she has also been assigned more lines in The Court Theatre's production.

DISCUSS:

1. Why do you think the director made the choice to give more stage time and lines to Lady Macduff?
2. Does the addition of another female character on stage impact on the audience's impressions of Lady Macbeth?
3. Does the stage time given to Lady Macduff impact on the audience's understanding of Macduff's grief?

Take a look below and read a conversation with Kim Garrett, who plays Lady Macduff in The Court Theatre's production.

Why do you think the director made the choice to increase the stage time given to Lady Macduff?

It really was to highlight the family unit, to aide Macduff's line through the story and to really show the importance of family for him. It was hard to find other ways of doing this. We're portraying that he doesn't go anywhere without them so then when he does go to England and leaves them it is a really big deal.

How do you think a more prominent Lady Macduff impacts on the audiences reading of Lady Macbeth?

I think it makes a difference. I hope that having two women adds some perspective for the audience. You see them both in a very similar position at the start, they both have their men making huge calls with them and then their men start to do things and make decisions without them. This has a huge impact on the women and you see their responses to these decisions. I don't know if it really makes one look better than the other, but it shows the possible journeys open to both of them. Lady Macduff gets really angry when she finds out Macduff has gone to lead the revolution. I wonder what Lady Macduff would do if she had lived. Would she have taken her son down to England to fetch her husband and sort things out?

Both women want to do so much for their husbands and it doubles the tragedy because we see two strong women at the start and they both lose.

The female journey's in the play are fascinating.

What do you think about Lady Macbeth's journey? Is it only the events in the play that cause her madness and suicide or do you think she is impacted by the death of her child before the play? Do you think the journey to madness starts earlier?

There is the potential for madness in everyone. Lady Macbeth accesses it more easily and seems to draw her strength from outward forces, the paranormal, and the heavens which seems to make her more susceptible to madness. Most people probably wouldn't let ourselves go there so quickly and would censor ourselves. Lady Macbeth, however, almost relishes in opening herself up to this possibly and reaches out to the possible options. Whereas Lady Macduff is more grounded and looks inwards for solutions rather than out to the heavens. Perhaps this is why Lady Macbeth

loses herself in the end because she is so fractured and outward looking for the next solution or step.

They draw their strength from different places and they show very interesting different journeys.

Do you think the increased stage time given to Lady Macduff impacts on our understanding of Macduff's grief?

Absolutely, 93% of language is visible and 7% verbal. When you see the non-verbal communication of the family during their first

scene we are able to show the family unit functioning on such a high level. We see him cover and protect her when the men are being brash and put his arm around her to keep her warm. It isn't verbal but it communicates a lot of information about the family; we get to see his morals, values and beliefs without him having to say a word about it. Therefore, when we get to the end and he has his speech where he talks about his pretty children and his grief for his wife we understand him more and how deep this grief runs.



Sovereignty, Legitimacy and Individual Responsibility in Shakespeare's Macbeth

By Keren Oertly Ryan

The tension of the political landscape in which Shakespeare delivered Macbeth to Hampton Court on August 07, 1606 translates with a real and vivid immediacy in a contemporary context. Shakespeare's tragedy, staged less than a year after the Gunpowder Plot of November 1605 was thwarted by James I and his government, would have spoken forcefully to a shaken and uncertain population. Over 400 years later, this exploration of the structures of power and the implications of challenges to the existing order resonates with our current political landscape.

Current definitions of terrorism identify a terrorist act as the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government or the civilian population to further political or social objectives; it also encompasses the state of fear and submission produced by acts of terror. The early reign of James I was characterised by a number of conspiracies that we might currently define as acts of terror, including the Bye Plot, Main Plot, and later the Gunpowder Plot. All sought to achieve political objectives through violent means. In each case, dissenting voices were met with violent subjugation to forcefully reiterate the Crown's imperatives and re-establish the primacy of the existing order.

Shakespeare addressed the attending climate of fear and uncertainty from a specific vantage. Shakespeare enjoyed the patronage of James I, and Macbeth most closely reflects both the playwright's close relationship with the sovereign and James I's academic pursuits in developing an English version of the theory of divine right. In this light, it is clear that Shakespeare's artistic production is inextricably linked to his political identity, and can

be seen as both responsive to and reinforcing of the structures that support his craft. In writing Macbeth, Shakespeare's position appears to be reassuring, certain, and absolute in its endorsement of James I's regency.

How does this context influence a contemporary reading of Macbeth? The interrogation of power structures is a persistent theme in our society, and the responsibilities of governance and the activities of citizenship are differently understood. In the present day, the sovereign head of state might take a fundamentally different form than the monarch which existed as the norm in the seventeenth century. Likewise, the enactment of sovereignty and the way this is understood to appropriately function by a population is a matter of considerable dispute, as exemplified throughout New Zealand history from the Treaty of Waitangi to the recent signing of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement. We see regular challenges to political orders on a global scale, and the differentiation between legitimate resistance and terrorism is becoming increasingly ambiguous in an increasingly volatile political arena.

Shakespeare's Macbeth invites us to reflect on crucial questions around sovereignty, legitimacy and individual responsibility that still possess all the vitality and relevance that they held in Shakespeare's time.

ACTIVITY:

In groups of 4-5 decide on a contemporary context that you think Macbeth relates to, create a pitch to your class that explains the context you wish to explore through the story of Macbeth and how you will achieve this.

TEACHERS NOTES

ON OTHER VERSIONS OF THE STORY

Below are three examples of very different adaptations of the story of Macbeth you can use these as comparison to The Court Theatre's production or as research topics on their own account.

National Theatre Live:

With Kenneth Branagh and Alex Kingston

<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/productions/ntlout4-macbeth>

Watch the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXbkFk8DiU>

- Traverse staging, the floor covered with dirt, one end full of candles and a large hanging cross, the other end a wooden wall with doors for the witches and a balcony above. Two entrances/exits mid-way along the seating either side.
- Costumes inspired by medieval times with flowing dresses in simple designs and fabric, tartan plaids, 'armour' was padded jackets. The witches looked like they had come out of a bog, dirty and blackened faces which highlighted really white teeth and eye balls. Regal red used when Macbeth becomes king.
- The opening scene is a battle scene in the rain. The production had an emphasis on violence. Sometimes blood was used [the killing of Duncan] sometimes not. A lot of choreographed fight scenes. Characters/costumes got dirty during the play.
- An older Macbeth with a younger wife, but a believable couple.
- The production was fast paced with transitions from scene to scene very fast at times.
- Sound played a large part in the production. It worked so well with the action that you forgot that it would be playing in support of a live performance. It felt more like watching a movie with a soundtrack and provided excellent support for the action.

Read a Review:

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2013/jul/06/macbeth-branagh-manchester-review>

BBC Shakespeare Retold Series

- The setting was in a high class restaurant but it was bleak and sterile. You got no sense of a definite city [however, it's Glasgow], more like a closed off world with no windows, grey a predominant colour.
- No religious imagery.
- The action mostly took place in the restaurant, the kitchen and Macbeth's flat above the restaurant. Some action took place in the alleyway or another pub but there was often a sense of confinement or darkness.
- The witches were 3 bin men. The opening shot is of a large dump with them in their truck, the only truck visible amidst a sea of rubbish.
- The restaurant served food that used every part of an animal. "Respect" for the animal that was being butchered up equivalent to honouring the natural order of things that is often a theme in Shakespeare.
- Blood is a recurrent image that shows Macbeth's decline into fear, paranoia and guilt. Food boiling in it, it being in the milk he drinks, his wife showering in it etc...
- The film moves at a rapid pace.

Read more:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/macbeth/james_mcavoy.shtml

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxD2M_49s_Y

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfbk53adR_Y

Latest movie version of Macbeth 2015

With Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard.

- Beautiful, slow, lengthy shots. All about atmosphere.
- Depicts an authentic middle ages environment. Primitive living conditions, cold, dirty, gritty.
- Emphasis on violence. Long battle scenes with a mixture of shots and slow motion for effect.
- Lots of candles. Lady Macbeth surrounded by them in a small wooden church. Fire is the source of light throughout the film. The sky is always overcast and brooding.
- Landscape, architecture, weather, texture, light/dark, close ups, fog and smoke – create the tension.
- The pace of the film is very contemplative.

Official trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q3EnDtbG8w>

Review:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/macbeth/review/>

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