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Senior Project: Mac Beth by Erica Schmidt

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Personal Goals

As Theatre and Performance Students, we have spent our education learning about performance history and practices, especially Shakespeare's works. I personally have always been intrigued with Shakespearean dialogue but was never able to fully grasp it. In order to not feel discouraged in learning the interchange, this play contains the original dialogues from Shakespeare which is one of the main reasons I was intrigued by it. Instead of avoiding the challenge, I decided to introduce myself to unfamiliar territory. This particular dialect feels like a whole new language in itself; a centuries-long tradition. Since this is the case, the cast and I have settled on holding private lessons to comprehend Shakespeare's manner of speaking with clarity. In our sessions, we've concluded that taking the time to dedicate to learning, adapting, and most importantly, enjoying this manner of speech can be entertaining especially when it's the well known play "*Macbeth*."

To become a good actor means to make the language come to life to fully understand its meaning for oneself. During high school, Shakespearean dialogue was a topic I tried to avoid as best as I could. The fear of not being able to know how to pronounce new words exactly screams embarrassment. Combining both acting with speech can be tricky at times. When you don't know what you are saying, you're going to drop into your Shakespeare mask. This happens when you are just saying words, standard inflection, without emotion or meaning, just volume. It

doesn't get the message across to the audience. Thanks to the private sessions with the cast about Shakespeare speech, the saving grace to this setback is becoming aware of body language under the key elements mentioned above. Also known as geographising shakespeare; assisting the audience track where you are, regarding blocking and tangible props. Furthermore, it's highly encouraged to take deep breaths to calm down. It helps to pay attention to the script. There is no shame in repeating what I don't understand. This leads to a positive emphasis on the words I may know crucially. A great concept of the dialogues being exaggerated, I can let that feed into my body. Certain words contain certain tones. It's pleasing exploring outside the modern language we are comfortable with once in a while.Without a doubt, comprehending the forms of Shakespeare's writing can guide me to earn the skills of intimate conversation and accurate translation I was hesitant to even try. Indeed, you don't have to be the best actors, just the clearest communicators.

If I can make an audience acknowledge what I'm saying, make them feel included, I would have done an amazing job in what's being described. While performing, the audience will be conducting their own investigation residing in the crafted speech. In short, the ultimate goal is to help them navigate through the speech to have the benefit of appreciating the story.

For the most part, character building is an essential journey every actor is motivated to invest time and dedication. The character I will be performing is Witch #3; she questions the importance of the play she has made with her friends, as well as plays as King Duncan, Fleance, Lenox, and Gentle Woman. What I love about this role is how important the Weird Sisters are to the storyline but yet, this particular witch seems to contradict herself based on the contrasting characters themselves. As an actress, this role has many emotions and perspectives to inspect. Not only, by asking myself the kind of headspace each of my characters are in or exposing the

personality traits truly helps to grasp the content of the story, but it also supplies the quos where a particular aspect of that character is being communicated in the language used. Consequently, it all ties back to language. Even after the performance date, I will continue to expose myself to Shakespeare's work to become acquainted with the language, do some research on certain terms I am unfamiliar with, review its context, and ultimately, set aside my fears and find the pleasure in learning a 400 year old language. Since most of the script is in Shakespearean dialogue, the public will learn to connect the language with the actions to become educated and encouraged to listen to the story furthermore. Listening and watching will eventually allow the viewer to become accustomed to the dialogue they once avoided.

To summarize, my personal goal is to start familiarizing myself with this challenging theatrical communication that is no longer in use. And to further help me through the process, my senior project will be the start of a skillful expedition. I can happily state that I am already on my way to increase my opportunities for future theatrical projects. However, in order to grasp the language, one must first learn the historical context.

Impact Goals

While going through the script, I thought about the sensations I would want printed on the audience using figures of horror while understanding that there is also a real enjoyment, especially for women in the audience that we can live by carelessly. We have gone through most of our lives constrained by gender roles, patriarchy, and other social conflicts, but luckily the theater gives us a chance to project ourselves into these characters and live through it unconstrained.

The transformation to a powerful version of femininity being inhabited in provocative and interesting ways. Reflecting on this statement as a women playing the role of Witch #3, I am emerging myself into being a part of this long tradition. To clarify, it doesn't start out as a feminist notion, it has become one since. Which brings to the table my personal connection to the role; bring attention to the terrible events that fell on women who have been accused of witchcraft over the centuries, inhabiting a sense of spooky, weird female subjectivity, and celebrating women as outsiders and powerful figures too. The three girls meet up playing the role of the Weird Sisters. Understanding the background of their position in Greek mythology, having been fascinated by the story of *Macbeth* and wanting to perform it with other students, being conscious of the plot, climax, and resolution, from the start we already know the future. Our job is to make sure the story flows as scripted in the definite play. Symbolically connecting us to the idea of supernatural affects. But then what happens when it's exposed to the youth? Is it harmful? Or is it creative?

Once you start growing up and experiencing life itself, that's when one is exposed to good and bad ideas. Naturally, when a heinous act is committed, your first instinct is to escape or hide for the time being. As you grow up you learn to understand consequences, cause-and-effect, and realize that "I" have the freedom of choice. Events may even trigger what causes one to commit evil deeds as shown. Everyone is capable of control, therefore you know what your actions cost. One doesn't necessarily have to look the part to be wicked; actions and mentality are what make the person evil. We as a society have been witnesses of children using merciless force to convey the frustrations they have with the world and their place in it. Seeing this play shows the provocation to these acts of violence and gives a frame of reference, creating an

urgency to stop it before it goes too far. And when all is said and done, the audience will embark on their own research and open discussions.

The Children are "Playing"

According to the 2019 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 13.2% of high school students carried a weapon at least once during the 30 days before they were surveyed; 7.4% reported that they had been threatened or injured with a weapon; and 21.9% reported that they were in a physical fight. There are too many vicious intentions with very little time, let alone subtle signs that indicate our youth crying for help. While for many, this is a difficult subject matter to analyze. It involves death and gore at the hands of very young people; innocence turning grim. By having an easily accessible adaptation to the public, the importance of the production increases its worth such as my Senior Project. The value of the play is for students, parents, adolescents, and elders to watch as these characters slowly morph into unthinkable roles. There have been many reports concerning young people being involved in murderous crimes and taking violent actions as their only solution. But how can one be able to see the signs prematurely? By becoming familiar with certain red flags, one can therefore educate themselves to prevent a dark future. Because of this, we'll touch upon the political and feminine aspects behind the creation of Shakespeare's Macbeth and how it connects with today's modern viewers.

During Shakespeare's era, almost everything had its place in society. The play "*Macbeth*," reflected on topics of feudalism and the Divine Right of Kings. With such a disturbing storyline, full of gore and barbaric power, the awareness of violence gets lost. It begins with three witches sharing a prediction with Macbeth and his presence being in the

highest rank of them all, a king. Hence being his inevitable downfall. Macbeth's fate is sealed, possibly the second he convinces himself that he belongs on the throne. It should be noted that at the time, James VI of Scotland who was now James 1st of England was descended from Duncan so Shakespeare made the appropriate adjustments to the Scottish timeline. In fact, according to Scottish history Duncan was a terrible ruler; leading a disastrous campaign into Northumbria which forced him to retreat dishonorably back to Scotland. The transition to Macbeth led to stability in Scotland. For this reason, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* for political motives.

Halfway through Shakespeare's career, before becoming the King of England, James I was the King of Scotland. He immediately adopts Shakespeare's theater company as his own; titling them "The King's Men" for his love of theater. Back when James I was in Scotland, he was fascinated by the idea of witches; so much so that he came to believe that there were witches in Scotland who were conspiring to do him ill. Particularly, accusing them with a shipwreck incident when his wife returned. The distorted idea of scary versions of witches transformed into perturbation, leading to accusing women of trying to heal the sick with their medicinal methods. Despite their innocence, James I interrogated, tortured, and in some ways killed them with his own hands. As well as influencing his followers to locate suspicious women. This man was what a storyteller would call, the antagonist at the time. Keep in mind the concept of belief in the supernatural will be touched upon later on. Upon James I arrival to England, *Macbeth* is the first play Shakespeare writes, feeling patronized by this new king. Therefore, Shakespeare embarks on his own research about the new king, which leads him to discover about the king's distress on witches. Hence the presence of evil witches in this play (Megna Class 15, Slide 19-21). No one knows if Shakespeare also believed in the beings of witches but what's for certain is his entertainment of the king's fears. With Christianity, certain cultural, traditional, or habits became

a giant warning, especially on magic or supernatural contact, but people still practiced it even if they considered themselves Christians. First of all, witches aren't real even if it's obvious. There were only people, men and women, who would have their own little spells for household magic (remedies). But not the typical evil lady hiding in caves from fictional tales. During the Elizabethan era, there was what's called a "moral panic" about witchcraft. Nevertheless, real women were being persecuted all throughout Shakespeare's time and his play probably contributed to that frame, expressing the negative edge of its history. What's compelling enough, is that the European mindset can confirm something being fiction before it's confronted as a philosophical preset. "Women are often criticized for not bonding well with each other. Their weakness is attributed to the lack of unity among themselves. In fact, it is also said that this internal disunity develops their affinity to the patriarchal society that further renders them weak," (The Weird 'Others': An 'Alternative' Understanding of the Witches of Macbeth from Feminist Perspective Reema Chakrabarti1 , PhD & Shah Al Mamun Sarkar2 , PhD). However, the tradition of staging Macbeth over the many centuries since Shakespeare's time in our own, a multitude of female actors have worked in these roles to reclaim the primal womanhood as an outsider. Consequently, such social exclusion pushes these women towards a direction from where they manipulate men and play with their identities in the political realm. To emphasize, women were not allowed to perform any role, let alone a female role; they were performed by men. The genuineness of the female character was lost through the male actor. Luckily enough, many other sources support the concept of women acting as themselves with one another.

"Shakespeare leaves a question of the interpretation of the witch figure open in the play but at the same time he gradually emphasizes the play-witches' dual nature which gradually becomes more visible throughout the whole play" (Scot 169). This book is one of the most useful

and primary sources for the study of witchcraft and magic not only for literary, but also for cultural-anthropological and social-historical studies. Agreeing with this statement, the opportunity to satisfy oneself to discover various concepts of the Three Witches is done by reviewing its history and purpose for its existence. The three sisters are wise and yet, they are called the Weird Sister. To us it means strange or odd, something is not necessarily right. In the oldest version of the play that we have, they're called "Wayward," meaning perverse or strain from moral rectitude. Now, referring to the Old English poem, Beowulf, there's an interesting textual history of the term "weird," meaning fate (Megna Class 14, Slide 12). The fact that the definition is hundreds of years before Shakespeare's play, proves that Shakespeare knew that by playing with the source, its definition will follow along through the actions done by his characters. Furthermore, these three figures resemble a Greek or Roman tradition of the three Fates. The female goddesses were seen weaving the thread of time together; Klotho spinning the present, Lachesis resolving the future, and Atropos guarding the past that cannot be changed (Hudgens 3). Evil never resided among them and yet it was rumored that even the rest of the gods were at the mercy of their predicaments. Truly, the trio were rightfully chosen to be the carriers of fate, for such a talent cannot be bestowed on just anyone. Consequently, Shakespeare adapted their presence as figures of wisdom. Nonetheless, he knows his audience. He is fully aware that their king is intimidated by witches and turns them into grotesque statues. Upon first glance at the Weird Sisters, Banquo states, "*What are these? So withered and so wild in their attire, that look not like th'inhabitants o'th' earth, and yet are on't? Live you, or are you aught that man may question? You should be women,"*(Macbeth, 1.3.40-47). The appearance of the Weird Sisters appall and puzzle the men; their beards prevent Banquo from calling them actual women. Shakespeare is really attracted to androgyny, especially in his Sonnets. It sheds light to

the topics of trans and hermaphroditic roles that interest modern audiences, without losing the genuineness of women previously discussed. Thus, the beginning of the play straddles the gender divide fluently and excitingly. The witches played by women are nothing more than the metaphorical representation of those who are similarly marginalized for their distinct behavior outside the gender. Besides, the language of the play is a valuable analysis that enriches the characters, plot, and essentially, the audience's apprehension to androgyny being a source of horror.

When it comes to Shakespearean dialogue, one of the best qualities of his work is the amount of interpretation each actor as individuals may undergo. For instance, Duncan cheerfully displays to Lady Macbeth, "*See, see! Our honour'd hostess. The love that follows us, sometimes is our trouble, Which still we thank as love.*" The translation is as follows, "*Look, it's our honored hostess! I am troubled sometimes by the lengths that my subjects go to out of love for me, but I still thank you for your love,*" (Macbeth, 1.6.13-15). By breaking down the statement before viewing the translation, my evaluation is a little different. The terms love and trouble oppose one another, yet are truth to the concept of life. Though love brings hospitable kindness, the challenges and hardships always follow this positive act to break it apart. "*Which still we thank as love,"* refers to the optimistic mindset Duncan has in thanking the idea of love being inviting and generous to him despite the trouble. Both meanings parallel each other by reading its context clues along with the action that is being told which will eventually create an image in your head. It's a great setup for irony and foreshadowing. The purpose as to why the intensity of the language exists is to draw the attention of the audience to key elements of the play, enhance the scenery, and grant the viewer a sense of the emotions from the characters. It's important to create images through proficient use of words to allow room for cognitive special effects.

Likewise, there are several ways to look out for the basics of intriguing elements. Alliteration is where a series of words which start with the same consonant sound is used: All Witches shout, *"**F**air is **f**oul, and **f**oul is **f**air,"* (Macbeth, 1.1.12). Antithesis is two contrasting ideas that are played off each other. As previously mentioned, Duncan expresses the clashing terms love and trouble. A Metaphor is a figure of speech that describes something by saying that it is another in order to make a comparison. Malcom exclaims, *"The night is long that never finds the day,"* (Macbeth, 4.3.282). He is speaking about the time of day, dawn. Also known as good. Which will soon replace the night, or evil. Onomatopoeia is when the word sounds like the thing it is referring to: the Porter yells, "*Knock, knock, knock,"* (Macbeth, 2.3.3). Finally, a monologue is an extended speech by a single character which may be part of a conversation with one or more of the other characters. In both the original production and adaptation, Macbeth versus himself on what needs to be done, his ambition, and morals in arguments are highly visible. Thus, leading to many monologues reflecting his inner conflicts. Right before the play even starts, Macbeth has already gutted someone vertically; The Captain informs to King Duncan, *"Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chops"*(Macbeth, 1.2.24). The subject of violence will not shy away at any moment. This senior project is more than just performance, it's a bridge between reality and awareness. Erica Schmidt, the author of this published play *Macbeth,* uses the text as a vessel to express the frustration of ill-tempered youth. All the characters, played by females from middle to highschool, are coming together to reintroduce this suspenseful text for nobody but themselves. Their young innocence takes the audience by the hand and brings them to the exit of reality into the story they're telling. Little by little, their "friendly" play becomes tremendously tangible. The aftermath of the adaptation is to nudge our audience to feel the need to talk about what motivates this seemingly random violence.

Erica Schmidt's motivation appeared in the form of real children out of all other ages. The bloody crime case that will unfold in detail, tells the real life of a friendship of three young girls rotten by betrayals. In the sixth grade, Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier, began plotting for months on the ideal time, place, and method to kill their friend, twelve-year-old Payton Leutner. The idea was to sacrifice Leutner to Slender Man; a fictional character created on a website called Creepy Pasta; a internet destination for people to come up with the origins of made up horror figures. Of course with viewer discretion advised. Slender Man is tall, slim with white skin, and no facial features, wearing a tuxedo, often associated with children by its side. Its fictional lore was created by many internet fans who over the years edited hoax videos of sightings, and altered photographs with everyday locations. The most popular being the fictional character holding hands with children in the woods. To the girls, this caught their attention as they learned from it unsupervised. In court, Geyser and Weier claimed that the creature warned them that if they didn't kill anyone, they would face dire consequences; examples being their family getting hurt or them not being allowed to reside among Slenderman. With all the fictional backstories the girls have read about the creature, their desire to live with Slenderman was their priority. Thus leading to coming up with crime scenes. Both planned on stabbing Leutner in a park bathroom but it failed. So for Leutner's birthday, a sleepover was arranged. It was the morning of May 31, 2014, and the trio ran out into the woods to play hide and seek at Weier's request. Moments later, Geyser and Weier pinned Leutner to the ground. "Go ballistic, go crazy," Weier told Geyser, holding a kitchen knife. Nineteen times the blades of the knife punctured through Leutner's body. After the gruesome crime, Leutner was left to die, while the other girls traveled away. With the little strength Leutner had left, she managed to crawl out of the woods on an open patch of grass and miraculously was spotted by a civilian and instantly called the

authorities to rush her into the emergency room. Doctors reported that the knife nearly missed her heart by one millimeter. After the two girls were found by the police, they collectively explained their reason that Slenderman forced them to commit. According to Wisconsin law, in attempted murder cases, a person over ten years of age can be trialed as an adult. Initially, the girls pleaded not guilty, due to mental illness, to avoid prison. Geyser, who stabbed Leutner, was sentenced to forty years in a mental institution; diagnosed with schizophrenia and psychotic spectrum disorder. While Weier was sentenced to twenty-five years in a mental institution. Psychologists believe Weier suffered from a shared delusional disorder due to Geyser's undiagnosed schizophrenia at the time, preventing her from becoming self aware of her dark thoughts. Weier's father said he didn't see any signs of mental illness leading up to the stabbing, and that's the evil reality previously referred to. The Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge Michael Bohren, who made the final demands of the case reminded the public, "It was a planned murder by kids. We can't forget the goal was to kill,"(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel). The chilling statement is similar to Lady M's advice to Macbeth, *"Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't,"* (Macbeth, 1.5.76-78). These girls took advantage of the bond they had with Leutner. Their actions broke the trust friendships should be built on; by using that as their disguise. Unfortunately, Leutner never saw it coming. Who would have thought that our youth today would indulge in a carefully premeditated scene. Identically, we must draw attention to the decline of mental health because it plays a huge role in the mind's ability to comprehend the consequences of vices, and distinguish the difference of what's real and fake.

What's now known as the Slenderman Stabbing case hit close to home; at the time it took place, it was the same year I first entered high school. I was now involved with a tougher, and more grown crowd full of unpredictable outcomes. The key was to understand that these

practices to point out early or late signs take time; there's always a solution to avoid the grim reaper. In an interview with the ABC news program "20/20" in 2019, Leutner proudly showed her lack of fear for Geyser and Weier eventual releases. She stated, "If they ever come near me they're going right back in —When they get out I don't think it's going to change my life at all." I can clearly recognize the motivation director and playwright, Erica Schmidt, was aiming for; sharing light to misunderstood children, providing the audience a chance to see wicked, unfamiliar behavior done on stage, and the background of the durability of survivor, Payton Leutner, gained as she lives day by day.

Today, the discussion we ask one another means we are one step closer to consultation, healing, and starting anew. "They may have been hurt by others. Some think that making people fear them through violence or threats of violence will solve their problems or earn them respect. This isn't true. Some violence occurs as a response to prolonged hurt, trauma, bullying, or victimization. People may use violence to get something, while others may act out of self-protection or desperation," (American Psychological Association). Additionally, in their recent report, some signs of potential violence are as follows: increased loss of temper, frequent physical fighting, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased risk-taking behavior, declining school performance, acute episode of major mental illness, planning how to commit acts of violence, announcing threats or plans for hurting others, and obtaining or carrying a weapon. It should be noted that these signs have the possibility of being newly developed or active tendencies that often predict short-term risks of violence than historical factors of longer term risks. It is understandably difficult to locate the people who intentionally hurt others which causes the victim to hurt others as well; causing a rippling effect. Of course this must be stopped. No one should ever cause harm and expose terrible ideas into children's minds, not even adults.

But in the world we live in, the harsh truth is the reality, and our desire to remove evil, a fantasy. We as human beings learn most of our morals from visual representation. We tend to remember these visual portrayals better than on paper. For example, as a kid watching Superman, one learns that he's a hero not from him saying that he is, but from his humane acts and how the character develops a concept of moral behavior throughout the show. On the other hand, one can tell who is the villain doing evil acts causing havoc. Being able to tell the difference between the two is essential because then you'll recognize what general goodness and wickedness is, regardless if it's fictional. Considering that a majority of the time these superhero shows are for children, being taught at such a young age is even more beneficial in the long run. You will find that seeing these villains get punished for their heinous crimes is very gratifying in the end. It also proves that your actions have consequences. Art portraying evil helps us to counteract or prevent real-life evil by teaching the laws of general human rights and to preserve life creatively. Live performances provide a sense of realism. It begs the audience to wonder "maybe these things really can happen," or "I've experienced something like this before." Say someone who doesn't know the signs of an abusive relationship and is in one observes a performance about the topic. Whomever the victim is will have a deeper connection towards the play. Therefore learning about what to do next to seek help then spread awareness. It captures the soul. Realism involves tangible people illustrating evil which reminds us that we are living during their realistic conflicts. This is important.

Conclusion

We as peers, neighbors, and as a society need to have an awareness towards the sad truth to be proper advocates on the matter at hand. I like to believe that Payton surviving her attack

was a miracle destined by fate. As a result, she travels to various institutions to share her story with a smile next to it. Unfortunately, violence in the media is sometimes left undealt with and is witnessed by the youth. This is an unpleasant truth. However, we can't say the same thing about certain kings who, driven by fear and superstitions, had no learning consequence for the measures he took. Believing in the supernatural is the connection between Shakespeare's play and the Slenderman killing Erica Schmidt makes her version out of. Early in the play, Macbeth receives the prophecies of him ruling one day from the three witches. It sounded like a perfect life but the catch was dire and bloody. The fact that he believes that supernatural powers exist in the world, drove him to plan and commit violence to anyone. Reading Shakespeare's play is a warning; believing in supernatural effects can lead you to do random violence. Likewise, with the criminal case, the girls believed in the creepypasta version of slenderman to then execute violence. And as we know, it led to repercussions, but we managed to acknowledge the suitable help the two girls needed. And thanks to the amazing adaptation by Erica Schmidt, it is worth performing and observing because it teaches the youth and adults to avoid these kinds of inhumane thoughts and fake origins that end in repercussions. There are always creative ways to view the different perspectives of a child's mind through art in an easily digestible manner. Consequently, in time the community will be educated by their own free will in the theatrical subject of language, themes, and tie them with current events, keeping in mind that the mission isn't to romanticize the comparison between the stories. The survey above speaks for itself; this isn't an old nor new subject; just glad more prevention is being done.

My Reflection

The final bow is the one you will cherish the most. Having to register the time, organization, and optimistic attitude I, along with my fellow Senior peers displayed in our Senior Project, brings the wonder on how much we can contribute in our theatrical future from here on now. These are the memories no one can take away from us. *Mac beth* is a modern English drama that is surprisingly malleable; in a sense that the story can be applied to our deepest fears, social statistics, imagination, and truth. Personally, I never would have thought that a story written by an author we all try to avoid, William Shakespeare, could one day be a great example of reflection in today's current youth headlines. I will be analyzing certain scenes of the play that will touch bases on my main character and their personas and how it connects to the adolescent grim mentality.

In one of our earliest rehearsals, we discussed the importance of naming each of our main characters, being the school girls, because only then we will naturally become attached to what could be real-life children. As opposed to forcing ourselves in. We established that every girl on stage attends the same religious, Catholic Middle School, and are part of the after school Theatre Club founded by the three girls playing as the Weird Sisters. This technique gave us the chance to bring our girls to life and closely watch their point of view and reason behind their actions. I chose to play Witch #3 and named the school girl behind it as Eve; the first woman on earth and the first human to interact with the devil. I selected "Eve" because Witch #3 is the first to say the name "Macbeth." Now, the saying goes that if you mention his name in a theatrical location, supernatural activity can occur. Despite the warning and like Eve, I disobeyed and moved on. Am I cursed now or am I protected from the paranormal idea? Probably not, since the weird sisters also use witchcraft upon their deeds and predict the future for their own protection, not

others. Granted, since the dialogue in the play is all Shakespearean, the language for every character is the same EXCEPT the last line as we will discuss furthermore. What helped me to distinguish the various roles I play is by providing them their own characteristics through their physical stance. More specifically body movements. For instance, Witch #3 is the main character for Eve and a frisky one at that, therefore I deliberately move my arms and legs around more freely. For Gentlewoman, I previously learned that servants are one of the most clever, well put characters in a play who are more aware of their surroundings than the rest. Gentlewoman's center of gravity is on her chest which consequently makes her walk with both arms up to her side, and sways back and forth. Until she takes note of Lady M's sleepwalking. So I shift her center of gravity to the belly to have both hands clenched together to express concern. Next, Lenox is a serious man because he's a member of the King's council. For him I place my arms behind my back to express the fact that he is taking his position seriously no matter who rules the country. Last but not least, Fleance. His center of gravity lies on his feet, being the son of Banquo. I picture him being the youngest of the children in age and height. Afterall, he looks up to his father. Thus, I play with my feet by moving them around, skip, run, or try to look taller next to others (like kids do when they try to reach a cookie jar). But don't underestimate his presence. For as Macbeth grew corrupt and wished death upon his closest friend and his son, escaping from his murderers only caused Macbeth to lust for more blood. Fleance and Witch #3 share the same mind, they both angered Macbeth with their presence and words. This is crucial.

Before the real performance actually begins, "Eve" along with her friend portraying Witch#2, are seen setting off our backpacks in our little area that we call "the witches corner" while the Director speaks to the audience. Although our Director knew we were going to be behind her, paying no mind to us was crucial; for it set in stone the concept that this is the

moment when as stated early on that all of these girls are performing Macbeth for themselves and not for anyone but we invite the audience to witness our after school theater club; Metatheatre. The sound of dogs barking and cars roaming from a distance can be heard; our location is the woods, filled with abandoned furniture and broken branches. Eve as Witch #3 enters the space and observes the environment. After the rest of the weird sisters approach the space, we are given two minutes of solidarity before the stage gets full. We ask each other if this is the location where we will shed blood by committing the unthinkable in the end. It is confirmed that our premeditated plan will take place. Our target could be anyone we deemed worthy of execution.

As the story continues, Witch #3 transforms into King Duncan to be the first to die. Once again, would this death be considered the consequences for stating the name "Macbeth?" I don't think so. Unlike the original text, the first death isn't real but mere play (playing dead). Lady M appears on stage reading a text message her "husband" has informed her about the weird sisters predicting his reign. Immediately she takes action thus performing her very own celebration by reciting a very memorable monologue dealing with her abandonment of femininity and justifies her mental plans to the audience. But behind the scenes, this is in fact an invitation to the witches. Lady M declares, *"That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, stop up th'access and passage to remorse, that no compunctious visitings of nature shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between th'effect and it"* (Macbeth, 1.5.48-54). Silently, we approach behind her and carefully try to cut a piece of her hair to seal the deal that with her permission we as the school girls are allowed to kill anyone but her, for she has honored our presence in an elegant and formal manner. Being one of the Weird Sisters, it read to me as Lady M. asking us to do away with her

morality so that she doesn't waiver at all; allowing her to make sure she goes through doing what she believes Macbeth probably won't end up completing. In a sense, it's her consent and petition to us as the witches to guide her to her fate (even though she's clueless about their ultimate demise) providing us the upperhand to continue to weave the timeline properly. But as we are students in the adapted play, the story becoming more realistic than the last scene will mean Lady M's defeat. On the contrary to when Macbeth states "*witchcraft celebrates*," he is addressing our presence but in a careless manner. So he has lost favor in our sight and has earned a possible position to be our victim. Now, we have an ally on our side and are one step closer to the most exciting scene of the entire play. After I finished celebrating, Witch #3 quickly adjusted the yarn crown and hurried to the back of the couch for my ultimate playful death. I noticed that the young girl acting as Macbeth is taking her role seriously, so what's the harm in ruining her moment. Apparently quite a lot. Eve (Witch #3) will soon learn that karma never fails. Instantly, I jumped out of the couch doing a little dance to mess with Macbeth. We both laugh for a second until I fall on the ground, crying out like an owl. Time stopped for a minute. I, myself, as the actor performing *Mac beth*, was in awe as I laid on the ground. This was one of the most beautiful moments throughout the play because as I lay down, I got the amazing opportunity to stare into the sky. This was the only chance I got to say goodbye to my role as King Duncan. As I looked up into the heavens, I pictured Duncan ascending beside all those innocent souls who've lost their life, and weren't as fortunate as I was to stare into the colorful sky among us. I gave my condolences and prayers. This was a reminder on what my intended purpose for proposing this play was about. For every performance, the sky was different. Day 1, sunny with clear blue skies. Day 2, gray clouds. And on our final day, the sky was blue with white fluffy clouds. Glad I had

this chance. Afterwards, I rolled off into the back of the stage as a way to morph into the playful Witch #3. Remember, I am viewing these girl's perspectives.

From beginning to end, the Weird Sisters monitor each character's motives and close to breaking character. I was given the important role to place both crowns on Macbeth and Lady M's head. Witch #3 could've cut the play short; my hands were close to their heads. But this wasn't the time or else all of our planning would've been a waste and flavorless. After the coronation scene, the weird sisters sit on the couch and stare at the conversation Macbeth, Lady M, and Banquo are having. Who will be our ultimate prey? All three of them seem uncomfortable and aware that they're being watched by us yet, they never directed our attention. The further we go into the play, the more tangible and serious everyone commits to their roles. Following the innocent Banquo's death, everyone's sanity becomes weaker by the second. Banquo's spirit appears in a pure white blanket, prompting that this is a horrific play performed by young children. For that reason, the tone of the play rapidly shifts during the rain scene. This is our baptism. As an actor, I am ready to commit to the role of what we will encounter soon.

In the course of the cauldron scene, I remove my need to be perfect. Children are no longer guiltless, they are mindful and in control. If I see a puddle, I jump on it. If I see an empty space, I run towards it to fill it with my presence. And now that we have our target, it is Macbeth who's the prey and I the predator, despite there being a young living soul underneath the crown. At the end of the day, someone "needed" to take the fall.

While working on the beheading choreography, the actors playing as the weird sisters were asked, "How did your character feel about the murder? How different and difficult (if it was) for you as an actor to achieve this?" All of us agreed to illustrate the murdering the way cats play with their prey before consuming it. I try to think of exhilarating things like roller

coasters, thriller films, or metal music. As a result, my heart rate increased. While the first two Witches (children) are stabbing Macbeth (child) successfully, he manages to dodge mine by quick reflexes and to get back at me for the Duncan murder scene where I was fooling around while he is trying to take it seriously. That angered Witch #3 so as Macbeth tries running away I block his path but get punched twice. This was my karma. My "meal" (cat analogy) is getting away. With one kick to the stomach, Macbeth is down. I get my chance to slowly rip Macbeth's chest into an X, to mark my spot on the girl. The Weird Sisters lean back, watching the child crawl away exhaustively, pale, and cold. We are given our final 5 minutes of solidarity, before we exit the woods. It took all of our energy to remove the girl's head. Witchcraft does indeed celebrate, for we grabbed our phone to take pictures with the head, as a connection to our social modern world. These children have seen it all. I recall performing the final scene the very first time; I started to cry. In all honesty, I couldn't wrap my head in believing that scenarios like these exist and are possibly happening on the daily. It is heartbreaking. For this purpose, like the rest of the abandoned materials in our woods, the corpse of the child will blend in with the ground in due time. "*We really did go on three-*" (Witch #1). The chillingly online tweet from a teen girl, who finished stabbing her best friend to death and discarded her body in the woods.

Playing *Mac beth* felt very much like a ritual. The irony and similarities that are discussed in the history of both versions of *Macbeth* speak volume. Both involve religion; the idea of how the girls are a part of a religious society, could either be doing this for their God to try to eliminate the worst attempting to do good but clearly not. Or somehow going against religion, like hypocrites. There's definitely something to be said about how being raised in a religious place can affect someone's psyche. It's always there, it's always part of your thought process. Whether or not they're doing this for their god, they learned ritual behavior from their

religion. What if the girl's crime is us giving ourselves to god but killing Macbeth is a step further in sacrifice of giving our friend to God? There was for sure a snake in our ear, pushing us in this direction of becoming corrupt and corrupting others. In the Slenderman killings, there seemed to be an obsession with the idea of eliminating evil. How being tied to something could lead people to do crazy things without even realizing the consequences. "*O, full of* ***scorpions*** *is my mind, dear wife,*" (Macbeth, 3.2.41). The moment Macbeth uses a metaphor after his guilt is stinging his morale. Therefore, he is aware of his actions.

As Theatre and Performance students, we have spent our education learning about performance history and practices. The retelling story of Macbeth was a zany attempt (seemingly controversial and uncomfortable but alluring and charming) of plotting out child murder. The performances of us actors translate Shakespearean English in our own fun and unique way. In the long term, I hope to impact the students in my college to skillfully adapt to the language to encourage classic productions to become modern adaptations in future projects. My only hope is that our community will look upon our performance and gather their ideas towards discussions that need to be addressed, given the take on our current events. I am proud to say that my Senior Project will permanently remain in the records of Suny Purchase, and I will forever be a member of the historical standpoint that I, a woman, performed in a Shakespeare production. Like King Duncan mentioned, "Only I have left to say, more is thy due than more than all can pay." Thank you to all my mentors and peers. And with that remark, I bid you Adieu!

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