Using Film in the Classroom

Amanda Wlock

Introduction

When man first breathed, he began living a story. When man first grunted and gestured, he began acting a story. When man first spoke, he began telling a story. The history of our species is bound together with stories, and our advancements in speech and technology have always included a progression in how we tell our stories. Before we wrote, the oral tradition was a product of a slow and methodical evolution—we learned to speak, we learned a narrative structure, we learned poetic ways to tell a story. Then we started to record those oral stories. Our ability to write a story down for posterity became another long and methodical evolution of our language and our capacity to disseminate the stories we transcribed. With both mediums working in tandem, we created a cultural narrative for ourselves. This was the way we understood each other and the world around us with all its beauty, horror, and infinite changes. It was inevitable that the vehicle for our cultural narrative would change as well. Despite a relatively short presence in our cultural consciousness and technological capabilities, especially in comparison to the oral tradition, the history of handwritten manuscripts, or the impact of printing press, the production and viewing of film as the primary vehicle for our cultural narrative is astounding. Film's meteoric domination, which has compressed this time frame dramatically, is fraught with issues of authenticity, adaptation, fidelity, and superiority. There always has been a tendency to be fearful of new narrative forms, but perhaps each of them is better seen as another link in the evolutionary chain of our storytelling. With every new narrative form, new messages and ideas can be embedded into our stories, characters can be developed and given new life, and our stories can be updated and remain relevant for posterity.

   The idea that is foundational to this unit is adaptation. A cursory Google search for the definition offers a few basic starting phrases. In biology, adaptation is understood as "a change or the process of change by which an organism or species becomes better suited to its environment." In education, adaptation is synonymous with altering, redesigning, modifying pieces of curriculum to fit students' needs. Google again provides a simple but complicated definition for an adaptation for this unit: "a movie, television drama, or stage play that has been adapted from a written work, typically a novel." The study of film adaptation encompasses these definitions. When Shakespeare wrote his plays, the structure of a play reveals the best environment for his words and stories: the stage. As Shakespeare and his stories come into the 21st century, the new environment is film, which requires that the texts adapt. For a long time in the classroom, Shakespeare's

works have been kept from the environment to which they are best suited. To read a Shakespearean play in class can allow us to understand the story, but does it allow us to *live* the story? Has the story adapted to the best environment to promote student understanding and engagement? Arguably, no. The task, then, is to allow Shakespearean adaptations in the classroom that best fit the students' needs and allows them to live Shakespeare.

Background

Appoquinimink High School is a rapidly growing school in the booming district of Middletown, Delaware. A population surge on top of increasing commerce has helped my formerly rural district become the top-ranked district in the state and changed AHS tremendously over the last few years. This coming school year we expect to exceed our school's population maximum of 1600 students. To serve grades 9-12 we have added more administrative bodies, are continuously working to implement Common Core State Standards, and are expanding our subject pathways and adding new courses. Though AHS tends to house more of the affluent population of Middletown and the surrounding areas, we teach students from a diverse range of racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.

AHS uses 90-minute block schedules with four periods that meet every day; students change classes in January for the spring semester. In my 12th grade classes I teach one section of AP Literature (15 students), one section of English 12 honors that meets every other day for the entire school year (27 students), and four sections of English 12 honors (about 110 students total) over the fall and spring semesters.

The mantra at AHS is "college and career readiness"; we want our students to be well-rounded global citizens prepared for life beyond high school. As we continue to grow and aim for "college and career readiness," we take inspiration from colleges to organize our courses and curricula via subject pathways, which function like college majors. As a 6th-year teacher who has been teaching 12th grade ELA exclusively for almost 3 years, I have been working with my colleges to develop new courses for ELA in general and for the 12th grade particularly. This coming year we are piloting two new courses as alternatives to our standard 12th grade British Literature course. I will teach the American and British Gothic Literature class and this course, along with what I have developed and incorporated in my 12th grade British Literature class, will use films as supplemental material.

Rationale

To discuss films in educational settings, where they are constantly compared to books, invites a witch hunt. Anyone who dares argue for the addition of film in curricula or the possibility of enhancing literature through film risks getting burned by academics, book

lovers, and generally snooty people. It is very much a classist debate—the book is *always* better. If you disagree, or even if you like a film adaptation of a book, then you are clearly uneducated and unsophisticated, because film is simply vapid escapism where the work of imagination is done for you with kitschy visuals, one-dimensional stock characters, and gratuitous explosions. Admittedly, as a literature person and an ELA teacher, I agree with this bromide sometimes. However, I also believe that we do a disservice to our students and their experience of literature if we neglect the possibilities of film. The exponential increase of and dependence on recent technologies and visual culture means that if film can and *should* be utilized in the literature classroom, then a distinction must be made. We must progress beyond the practice of showing a film version of a text as a reward or as an aid to basic comprehension. These uses restrict film to a servile role. In the realm of education, it is imperative to dismantle this rhetoric, put down the torches, and examine film as a companion to literature that can broaden students' minds and make them think as deeply as a book, something that will make them live the story.

Despite the complexity of film, we are rarely instructed how to view it as critically as we do literature. Our instruction for a movie is limited to a parent's or friend's directive to "watch this." In literature, our education ranges from close reading, annotation, textual support in writing, character charts, and innumerable activities that focus on finding themes, drawing settings, and mapping plots. Literary analysis gets more time and instruction because books are assumed to be better, or at least harder, than movies. A movie is something we watch for leisure (not serious academic study) and, since the movie does everything for us, we don't have to analyze anything. Indeed, if Dorothy's farm in Kansas is already given to me, how much brain power do I need to spend on looking at, analyzing, and understanding the implications of the setting shown to me? To have this mindset is to do the film's potential a great injustice. In confronting these perceptions and prejudices, we come to understand our own shortcomings. We assume we are film literate because we watch movies for fun and can see everything that is happening on screen. Film's reputation depends on a false sense of its audience's passivity. If I apply my critical skills of analyzing a literary text to a film, I can easily recognize characters and know the narrative arc a film should follow. But to leave the comment here would be to relegate film to a "book illustration"[i] and undermine its complexities.

The cornerstone author for this unit bequeaths onto students and teachers alike an enormous amount of possibility, stress, wordplay, fear, genius, raised eyebrows, inspiration, tears, and laughs. Throw in deception and a dash of blood and we have William Shakespeare. Culture, class, proof of intelligence, and state standards demand that students go toe-to-toe with the Bard. Usually this forced interaction becomes a dog-fighting ring of rolled eyes and muttered cursing. And this can also be the teacher's experience with lesson planning for Shakespeare. Teachers continue to teach Shakespeare's works while scrambling for some way to make them relevant and fun.

Assuming that Shakespeare is indeed relevant and fun, how do teachers convince their students that this is true? What is available to provide students different ways to access, understand, and connect to Shakespeare, to live his stories? This is where film can offer rich possibilities.

First, we try to let Shakespeare's words speak for themselves. It is possible to stick strictly to the text as a vehicle for understanding and appreciation, though that could arguably take longer than a school semester allows. Our study of Shakespeare meticulously via ink on paper is not wrong or unfounded, but it does little to bridge the gap between our students and Shakespeare's words, ideas, and stories. This problem is inherent in the type of text Shakespeare writes and how we approach it. Plays are intended to be heard and seen, not read. In close reading a play we can certainly learn a great deal and discuss Shakespeare's literary prowess, but we still lose something in translation. By using easily accessible film adaptations, we can revive the theatrical elements of the play. Watching professional actors reading the lines with purpose and fluidity may serve our students better by offering them a fuller understanding of character, plot, theme, and action that is an amalgamation of text, staging, lighting, costuming, tonal nuances, and facial expressions.

If we plan to use film as the primary way of investigating a Shakespearean play, the problem becomes how to get students to look critically at a film in a way that mimics a theatrical viewing, with due attention to acting and performance, lighting and color, sound (especially in a play like *Macbeth*, which will be the focus of subsequent lesson and assignment ideas), as well as the added complexities of a film that condenses, cuts, and edits lines and scenes. While it is true that students will notice the elements, the goal is to steer them towards critical observations about the choices actors and directors make to communicate what is happening in a given scene. It may be easy to notice that some characters speak with their backs to other characters, but how does that action fit with the words that are being said, and what does that pairing communicate to the audience? Essentially, this unit will ask students to be, and practice being, hyper-aware and metacognitive about what they are observing and what connections they are making based on that visual/auditory data.

Objectives

This unit has two goals. The first is to develop film literacy, encompassing a knowledge of various film techniques, how they are utilized, and how they affect the presentation of plot, settings, relationships, characters, conflicts, and themes. To familiarize students with the application of these techniques and to guide them through analytical practices, I will offer examples from movies like *Postcards from the Edge, Black Swan*, and *Citizen Kane.* Once students have exercised their analytical muscles, the unit will provide instances where they can continue to hone their observations of Shakespeare in *Macbeth.* The second goal is to develop Shakespearean and theatrical literacy by offering advice

about how to read Shakespeare for the purpose of speaking the lines. To make these activities fruitful and engaging, this unit will also suggest procedures to help students and teachers become more comfortable and confident with acting in general. The ultimate goal is to have students produce their own short films of a scene from *Macbeth* and defend the acting and staging choices in both the films themselves and students' reflections after.

This unit argues for not just the inclusion of film in the literature classroom, but for the *necessity* of film in the literature classroom. I hope to use the unit to explore, argue, and answer the following:

- The inclusion of film and a dedicated study of the medium may help students at the college level with "rhetorical invention," "double-mindedness," and familiarity with more niche studies available in college classes.[ii]
- Watching and interpreting a film is an exercise in sophisticated thinking.
- The ability to watch a film actively and metacognitively enhances the foundations of literature in philosophical and practical ways by augmenting students' analytical and critical thinking skills.
- The use of film adaptations makes literacy and the study of literature more accessible and appropriate for the 21st century student. It allows students to be critical consumers of multiple types of media and allows them to see the interactions between the different texts the encounter daily.

By incorporating active film studies into the literature classroom, we can give our students more exposure to and enhancement of the literary canon. We can help them see and make richer connections that will inspire a relationship with and ownership of the canon. We can help them live the stories.

To accomplish these goals, this unit will utilize several classroom strategies: close reading, annotation, and graphic organizers, as well as class and group discussion and theater games in preparation for the culminating assignment. As we are focusing on film literacy and adaptation, the Common Core State Standards that will be the bedrock of this unit are CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7. These standards, respectively, ask that students "Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to address a question or solve a problem" and "Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest."

How to Act Shakespeare

Thousands of scholarly publications on Shakespeare appear yearly, attempting to provide insight into his life and understanding the complexities of his works. Despite this there remain formidable obstacles to accessing Shakespeare's works, obstacles expressed by the silence, quiet moans, and eye rolls of students being told that the class will now study Shakespeare.[iii] Perchance we even feel it as teachers when we see Shakespeare in our curriculum. We cannot escape him in our cultural and educational canons, but how can we do him justice? How can we teach him authentically? It is one thing to read the script in a twelfth-grade textbook, but can we identify, understand, and communicate the subtle poetic complexities of the text to our students? It is yet another thing to say, "Let's read this out loud" and "Here are the different parts you will read," but do live readings truly help students *listen* to what Shakespeare and his characters are trying to communicate? Perhaps not. But reading Shakespeare likely makes us feel less afraid than trying to act him out, which is arguably closer to an authentic experience of Shakespeare in the Elizabethan era. The purpose of this unit, then, is to provide guidelines in how to act Shakespeare and how to help students act Shakespeare. Of course, this in itself is a conundrum without exact answers, even in the opinion of professional directors and actors. And part of this conundrum is that the experience of Shakespeare is largely intuitive and personal. In *Playing Shakespeare*, John Barton attempts to define the way to act Shakespeare while paradoxically acknowledging that no one can tell you how to do it: "There are a few absolute rules about playing Shakespeare but many possibilities. We don't offer ourselves as high priests but as explorers and detectives. We want to test and to question. Particularly we want to show how Shakespeare's own text can help to solve the seeming problems in that text. Of course, much of it is instinct and guesswork."[iv] For Barton, the experience of acting Shakespeare comes with both a few rules and none at all. And this recognition likely makes a teacher think, "So how am I going to get my high school seniors to read, understand, even act Shakespeare if I just say, 'go figure it out'?" In some ways, this is not a terrible idea if we want to give them the experience of being Elizabethan actors. But if we want to work to change our perceptions of Shakespeare and our abilities to access and understand him, then we should do our best to equip our students with some ideas, guidelines, and practices.

In Barton's estimation, the problem of marrying our modern acting styles to the Elizabethan texts dissolves when we discover how Shakespeare and his texts work, how to read his plays for clues and acting advice from the Bard himself. In some cases, Shakespeare's own characters provide blunt advice, as Hamlet does to his actors in Act 3:

> Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness[…] Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for

any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.[v]

Do not over-act, gesticulate subtly and for emphasis, use your instincts to make the words and ideas seem *real*. All of this is good advice for any actor, of any time, of any level—just like our students. However, to give them *Macbeth* and say that they will be acting a scene by following Hamlet's advice still does not close the gap of understanding, desire, or confidence for our students. We need to train them to find, interpret, and use the hidden clues in Shakespeare as well, on top of being able to act comfortably in class.

Classroom Strategies

Drama Games

To prepare students for reading Shakespeare aloud in class or creating more intimate connections with the Bard through adaptation work of their own, my unit includes drama games like those described here. These exercises can go a long way to employ Kagan-like structures to encourage student engagement, promote a positive classroom environment, and allow students to get more comfortable with the idea of acting and doing so in front of their peers.

Drama Terminology Tableaux

In a performative sense, "tableau" is a freeze frame, a still image that captures the essence of a scene without moving or speaking. In the classroom, students are asked to stage a scenario—figure out how they want to position their bodies to demonstrate an action [sequence]—then freeze and hold those poses. A way to start a unit on Shakespeare, as well as introduce students to the idea of a tableau, is to frame this a way to learn theater vocabulary. I suggest this exercise for the beginning of a unit for several reasons. First, it will lay a foundation for doing more dramatic exercises later. Second, as a silent activity with almost no movement, it can be a low-risk activity for students to do in front of their peers as there is little room to judge anyone's acting, pronunciation, movements, and intonation. Third, it is a more engaging method for retaining vocabulary, as it requires both visual and kinesthetic cues to accomplish the task.

After introducing[vi] and discussing what "tableau" means, it is helpful to do a sample tableau of something simple, like morning routines. For this, the whole class will participate in the "test-run tableau" to invite total inclusiveness in theatrical exercises. After previewing the activity and the definition of a tableau, the class will brainstorm the various routines a person might do in the morning. Then the teacher will assign each student one of those routines. The students will get thirty seconds to one minute to decide how to present their routine in a tableau. With the whole class standing in a circle, half the class will perform their tableaux, holding their poses for a few seconds, while the

other half watches and tries to guess the different morning routines. Then the groups will switch roles. A teacher will ask what select students represented as a follow up to the activity. Moving into a tableau practice with theater terminology, the teacher will explain to students that they are going to create a tableau for two of the theater terms they just received. The terms for this activity can be found in Appendix B, and the directions for the activity may look like this:

> Directions: Theatrical Terms Tableaux
> <u>NB</u>: Everyone must participate in some way!
> 1. In teams of 3-4 you will choose 2 theater terms from a hat.
> 2. Study the definitions and decide how your team can "tableau" the word.
> 3. Your teams will have 3 minutes to discuss and practice staging your tableau.
> 4. When it is your team's turn, hold your tableau for 5 seconds while the class examines your performance to determine your term.
> 5. After 5 seconds, the class will guess what term your team's tableau represented; then you will stage your 2nd tableau.
> 6. The class will try to guess your 2nd tableau term.

Though this activity fits appropriately at the beginning of a drama unit, it can be used throughout. An extension to this exercise will ask the whole class, after finishing an act from a Shakespearean play, to identify pivotal moments throughout an act, then present the whole act as a series of tableaux for review.[vii]

Film Techniques Practice

The purpose of incorporating film studies practices into this unit is twofold: it allows us to examine more analytically choices made in staging Shakespearean adaptations; and it establishes targeted practices and terminology introductions for techniques students will need to utilize in their culminating *Macbeth* project. This unit will specifically focus on mise-en-scène, framing, sound, and the fourth wall. Knowledge of these specific techniques has not been a necessity in their viewing experiences because these techniques are not meant to be noticed by the regular moviegoer. While they make up the minute composition of a scene and provide information about characters, plot, themes, and foreshadowing before we may hear any dialogue, our explicit experience with noticing these techniques is purposefully lacking. We may "notice" them, but we are so invested in not actively noticing that we may miss these smaller details that speak volumes. This is analogous to reading. When we read simply to read, we do not actively notice smaller techniques of tone shift and figurative language, but we do digest that information in the back of our minds, contributing to our overall experience of reading that story. In close reading, however, we do look for those smaller details to examine how they work in the larger context of the story. It is in these smaller details that we can specifically talk about appropriate characterization or pinpointed examples of foreshadowing.

To prepare students for examining mise-en-scène in Shakespeare, there are several different movies that can be used to practice close reading for mise-en-scène and how it functions in the movie to help the audience understand characterization, plot, themes, foreshadowing, etc. For the classroom, teachers will provide definitions and show select movie clips for students to close read.[viii] A few examples are provided below for movie clips that may work well for teaching each technique and having students analyze them.

Mise-en-Scène

From the French "put in place" or "made into a scene," this phrase encompasses everything that makes up a scene you might watch in a movie. In any given movie scene there are actors, paths, and spots the actors the actors must move to and from and stand in (the blocking), costumes, lighting, music, set details and props, and so on; all of this falls under the blanket term of mise-en-scène. Use the opening scene from *Black Swan*[ix] and the mother-daughter sing-off from *Postcards from the Edge*.[x] Teachers will ask students to consider how analysis of the mise-en-scène offers information about the plot, characters, their relationships, and conflict.

Framing

We go to films to see characters live a story; we want to see actions and relationships. We are not in a movie theater to think about the camera as it films actors. However, the camerawork heightens our viewing experience by framing the story and characters in a way that gives us a particular emotional and intellectual experience while watching. Within the confines of the literal edges of the physical screen, "The expressive qualities of framing include the angle of the camera to the object, the aspect ratio of the projected image, the relationship between camera and object, and the association of camera with character."[xi] Below is a list of suggested stills from *Citizen Kane* that can be searched through Google[xii] that will provide examples to discuss the ways the characters' framing allows us to examine deeper suggestions of characterization, conflict, and theme:
- Citizen Kane framed by doors
- Young Citizen Kane in window
- Citizen Kane fireplace
- Citizen Kane and Thatcher
- Citizen Kane rally

Sound

The conversation about the soundscape in a movie is at once simple and complex. Sound may naturally match what is happening on screen and, because of this, it may seem silly to analyze the sound. However, sound can deliberately create contention by not meeting our expectations for the scene. While there are many levels of sound terminology to

decipher, the teacher will focus on the two basic, umbrella categories of diegetic and nondiegetic: "Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world is diegetic. If it originates outside the film (as most background music) then it is non-diegetic."xiii Examples from *Jaws* and *Psycho* will provide distinguishable differences between diegetic and nondiegetic sound and show how the use of those two creates emotion within a scene and feelings for certain characters.xiv

The Fourth Wall

The fourth wall in both theater and film is the imaginary space between the actors and the audience that separates the viewer from the fiction they are watching. It is uncomfortable and alienating for the actor to break the fourth wall by looking directly at audience, so it is done sparingly. Teachers can begin with a fun example of how movies use the broken fourth wall comedically,xv then delve into the psychological effects of a character breaking the fourth wall with clips from *The Silence of the Lambs*.xvi

DVD Cover/Movie Poster Practice

As an extension of the filming techniques examination above, students can also be given more frames to hone their analytical reading of visual mediums. This may be an ideal place to transition students from random movie examples to specifically Shakespearean texts. For example, these DVD/poster images will all come from adaptations of *Macbeth* and will lead us into, later, an examination of the "Unsex me" soliloquy by Lady Macbeth in Act I. In this vain, this activity is best done before reading the play itself.

To begin, explain to students that they are going to examine the use of mise-en-scène, framing, and the fourth wall to analyze how movie posters and DVD covers are constructed to clue viewers in about the story and the characters. As they view the movie posters for four different versions of *Macbeth*, instruct students to write down their observations. Teachers also can have students do this in pairs with one sheet of paper as a Writing Rally Robin or as a verbal Rally Robin.xvii Teachers can also opt to display the images on a smart board and have select students show the class what they have observed by explaining their thoughts as they circle and write on the image on the smart board. Alternatively, they may have the poster images pre-printed and displayed in the classroom or hallway, asking students in groups to write their observations and analyses directly on the displayed images. Once they have done this, they can gallery walk to other groups to compare their work.

For this exercise, provide students with selected movie posters or DVD covers of various *Macbeth* adaptations. For this, and for subsequent practices, I suggest images and clips from the following *Macbeth* versions: Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971), the Royal

Shakespeare Company's staged version of *Macbeth* (1979), Rupert Goold's *Macbeth* (2010), and Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015).

Select Scene Comparisons

This multi-part activity will ask students to first examine the text of the "Unsex me" soliloquy by Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* Act I, considering their own reading of the text for emphasis, punctuation, rhythm, and speed. Later, they will compare three different adaptations of this scene, listening for how the respective actresses use emphasis, punctuation, rhythm, and speed to discuss how the reading of the texts provides characterization. Students will then examine the whole scene using their knowledge of film techniques to analyze the image. The ideal timing for this activity would be after students have read Act I through scene 5, or right before they begin to read Act I scene 5.

Teachers should provide students with a copy of the "Unsex me" soliloquy from Act I scene 5 of *Macbeth*. Teachers can read the text or have a student read it aloud. Discuss first what is happening in this scene. What is Lady Macbeth asking for? Why? Help students pick apart and understand the construction of the Elizabethan language. For example, when Lady Macbeth says, "the raven himself is hoarse who croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements," what exactly is she saying and how do you know? Teachers will model and guide students through their analyses.

Once students have a working understanding of the words themselves and what Lady Macbeth is trying to communicate, have them discuss how they would say these lines themselves on stage. Teachers will first model a line by explaining to students how they might read this line in a performance and why (e.g. "when I read this line, the mood suggests to me that Lady Macbeth may not be too confident in what she is saying, so perhaps I would say this line slowly, with pauses here and here, to indicate that I, as the character, don't know what option might be the best for me to accomplish my goal and I have to weigh a few possibilities"). Then have students work either in pairs or individually to mark their pauses, when they would take a breath, and how quickly or slowly they would read certain lines. Teachers will provide a key for suggested marks: a breath will be a caret (^); delivery speed will be represented by dots, with a quick reading looking like ……….. under the specific line and a slower reading looking like . . . . . ; pauses will utilize a slash (/). As students complete this task, the teacher will ask for any volunteers to share their ideas. Teachers should make sure, whether on paper or in a conversation as students share their responses with the class, that students provide a defense for why they have made their choices. After some class discussion and sharing, teachers will share some information about how punctuation works in Shakespeare (see Appendix C for detailed notes), inviting students to compare their imagined readings to typical Shakespeare punctuation usage.

Next, teachers will ask students to view three different performances of this soliloquy and explain that students will view the performances multiple times, each for a different meaning. For the first viewing, students should listen for how the different actresses have interpreted the tone(s) of the soliloquy based on their punctuation, delivery speed, and emphasis. The teacher can ask students to complete this practice on a new copy of the soliloquy or on the one that they have been using to mark the differences using various colored pens and markers, using the same symbols from their own analysis to examine side-by-side comparisons of the performances. Teachers will ask students to share and discuss their conclusions.

On subsequent viewings, students will further analyze the staging of the soliloquy for mise-en-scène, framing, sound, and use of the fourth wall to interrogate how the filming supports the way the actress was interpreted the soliloquy (i.e. if the actress interprets the scene as one of Lady Macbeth going out of control with rage and jealousy, how do the film techniques further support that mood?).

Version	Youtube link	DVD time signature
Royal Shakespeare Company	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xHlngY6Bgk&index=16&t=220s&list=PLYYg0Mu_wYckBXLmFzlDgVZbwHwb3sfb6	
Polanski		25:15-27:15
Goold[xviii]	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x0T_1tLpi4&index=15&list=PLYYg0Mu_wYckBXLmFzlDgVZbwHwb3sfb6	21:37-23:22

Culminating Activity—Adapting Shakespeare's *Macbeth*[xix]

The following is a group project that requires students to stage their own version of a condensed scene from *Macbeth*, representing a culmination of their understanding of Shakespeare and cinematic literacy. By delving deeper into what makes a film—all the decisions, fine details, and acting—my hope in offering this activity is that students will consider very consciously where and how they move, the aesthetic of their set, and the purposeful movements of their cameras. This intimate adaptation of text to film, the creative and problem-solving process it requires, may be exactly what helps Shakespeare speak to our students. They must get into his mind, into his text, and create their own visual meaning of it. This activity and this whole unit echo what James M. Welsh and Peter Lev testify in *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation*: "We believe that it is only through these adaptation exercises that students may come to understand the nature of the texts they are studying."[xx]

The Assignment

The task for your group is to create a modern adaptation of scenes from *Macbeth* and stage them in a distinctive way. For example, if your group is re-enacting the battle scene from Act V, you may choose to stage it in a cowboys-versus-aliens style. Your final product will be filmed and we will watch it together in class. Your lines must be MEMORIZED! Knowing your lines by heart will allow you to focus on and make concise decisions about your blocking and character and help your overall performance and scene to flow naturally. To make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute and perform, assign roles within your group.

The Acts and Scenes

Act I.i & iii—the witches and prophecies
Act I.vi & vii—Duncan arrives; Macbeths fight
Act II.i & ii & iii—Duncan's murder and discovery
Act III.ii & iii & iv—Banquo's murder and the ghostly banquet
Act IV.i—apparitions and new prophecies
Act V.i & vii & viii—sleepwalking and the final battle

Roles and Responsibilities

Director: Though both you and your group members will suggest different adaptation styles, you will make final decisions about style and staging. You will decide who is the best actor for each role, how the actors will move, what their actions will look like, etc. (but keep an open dialogue with your actors—they might have insights as well!). As you consider your adaptation, don't be afraid to ask whether your segment will be traditionally cast or whether you want to play around with gender roles (making Macbeth a girl instead, or following Shakespeare in using only males—whatever the makeup of your group requires).

Costume Designer and Prop Master: It is your task to costume the adaptation your group and director have decided on. How can you use what you and your group already have at home to create your scene? Plays are not complete without props! Your task is to be inventive and creative, and not to spend money! For example, you can use umbrellas in the attack of Birnam Wood on Dunsinane, or pool noodles in your battle scene. If you would like to use music in your version, make sure you have a way to play it. Ask your group mates if they have items you might not. As always, make sure your props and costumes follow the Code of Conduct and are school-appropriate.

Actors: Your task is to bring your lines and adapted vision to life. Be very conscious of your movements and staging so that you can clearly communicate what is happening in your scene, for your character, between characters, and so on. Your director will give you blocking, but you must also feel free to make your own suggestions for blocking based on

your understanding of your character. Make sure to remain flexible with your director in case you need to be double-cast.

The Reflection

Individually, everyone in your group will write a reflective paper on the process your groups experienced and the performance itself. Think of this as a defense of the choices you made. Your paper will be due after the viewing so that you can comment on the final product. Your paper will follow the regular conventions of Times New Roman, 12-point font and double-spaced; it is likely that your paper will be around two pages. Your reflection should include:

     1. A description of your role in the group. What did you like and not like about your role? What would you have done differently or tried instead? What struggles did you face and overcome? What did you learn about yourself?

     2. What you suggested, contributed, etc. to make your scene(s) come alive.
          A. Defend the style of your adaptation.
          B. If you were the director, defend your casting and blocking.
          C. If you were an actor, defend your characterization, gestures, facial expression, and intonation.
          D. If you were the costume designer/prop manager, defend your mise-en-scène (the props, the setting, the costumes and makeup).

     3. Describe your experience working with Shakespeare in this theatrical manner (as opposed to reading it or studying it in class).

     4. Evaluate your and your group's final performance. What did it feel like to act or see your actors and your aesthetic come together? What did you expect, and what surprised you? What might you have changed or kept?

     5. Share any other thoughts, ideas, anecdotes, or commentary you would like.

The Grading Scale (Performance)

	Excellent (3)	Good (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Overall creativity			
Uniqueness of the adaptation			
Use of props			
Use of costumes			
Understanding of			

scene based on performance			
Group collaboration and contribution of all members			

Product
Overall: _____ /18*3 = _____ / 54
Performance Rubric = 54 points
Reflection = 26 points
Whole project = 80 points

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Appendix A

The activities and assignment in this unit seek to address and incorporate the following
Common Core State Standards:

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says
explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text
leaves matters uncertain.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2
Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development
over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to
produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3
Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements
of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the
characters are introduced and developed).
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including
figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on

meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.7
Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3
Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5
Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Similarly, my planned unit's activities, discussions, and assignment will be driven by students' interrogation of the following lesson essential questions (LEQ)s:

• How can I use implicit and explicit textual support for my inferences? RL1
• What is the effect of connotative meanings of words? RL4
• How does the author's order of events and manipulation of time contribute to the overall meaning of the text? RL3, RL5
• How do characters' introductions in a text affect the overall meaning of the text? RL3
• How do settings in a text influence the characters and action? RL3
• How do different versions of the same text affect the meaning of that text? RL7
• How do characters evolve over the course of the text? RL 3
• How can I interpret a text in multiple ways? RL7
• How do authors effectively develop theme? RL 2
• How can I analyze the development and interaction of two or more themes over the course of a text? RL 2
• How does an author's choice of diction impact characterization in a text? RL 3
• How can a reader determine the author's purpose through textual evidence, including tone? RL 3

Appendix B

Macbeth Theatrical and Literary Terms

SOLILOQUY	a speech given by a character alone on stage
ASIDE	a line spoken by an actor to the audience but not intended for others on the stage
EXEUNT	used as a stage direction in a printed play to indicate that a group of characters leave the stage; especially at the end of a scene
ANON	Soon, presently
DRAMATIC IRONY	occurs when another character(s) and/or the audience know more than one or more characters on stage about what is happening
FORESHADOWING	a warning or indication of (a future event)
PARADOX	A statement, which while seemingly contradictory or absurd, may actually be well-founded or true. (Ex. "In my end is my beginning")
EQUIVOCATION	A statement that lends itself to multiple interpretations, often with the deliberate intent to deceive
TRAGEDY	A serious form of drama dealing with the downfall of a heroic or noble character
TRAGIC HERO	A literary character who makes an error of judgment or has a fatal flaw combined with fate and external forces
HUBRIS	The fatal flaw of excessive pride that leads the characters to set themselves above others and above the laws and conventions of society to which they belong
HAMARTIA	A noble man's "tragic flaw", his single imperfection, which brings about his downfall. Often the flaw is associated with pride or ambition
COMIC RELIEF	The inclusion of a humorous character or scene in an otherwise serious work. The purpose is to break the tension that prolonged seriousness causes and to serve as a contrast to it
FOIL	A secondary character who contrasts with the major character. The contrast

	highlights important traits of the major character
APPARITION	A ghost or ghostlike image of a person or animal
PARRACIDE	The killing of a parent or near relative
REGICIDE	The deliberate killing of a monarch
DRAMATIS PERSONAE	The cast of characters in a play

Appendix C

Tips on Shakespearean Pronunciation and Reading

Punctuation	From John Russell Brown, *Discovering Shakespeare* (p. 85)
Full Stops	Indicates the end or closing of a thought. Sometimes a sentence will continue for many lines before coming to a full stop. Period: indicates the end of a sentence and of a thought (just as in contemporary English). Exclamation point: reflects a moment of much emotion--anger, ecstasy, inspiration, surprise, pain, etc. Should be delivered in a big way. Question mark: indicates the end of a thought but makes sure the question asks a question.[xxi]
Commas	Not really a pause—very important in identifying parenthetical clauses as well as lists of things.[xxii]
Parentheses	Sets a word or phrase inside a sentence apart from the rest (a thought within a thought). The information adds more detail to clarify the larger thought. This requires the biggest change in vocal tone. Oftentimes a parenthetical statement will exist in Shakespeare without the punctuation marks (either commas or parentheses), but you can hear the vocal shift when speaking the text out loud.[xxiii]
Semi-Colons	Again, this is not the end of the thought. Unlike a colon or dash, the tone change with a semi-colon is more of a side-thought, and we can add a silent "and" in our speaking of the line.[xxiv]
Colons and Dashes	Tells us that it is not the end of the thought, therefore we should not come to a complete stop when speaking. It is literally "connected" to what comes next, so there should be a noticeable change of tone. Sometimes we can think of a colon or dash as meaning "because."[xxv]
Line breaks	As with poetry, the end of the line does not always mean the

	end of the thought. Students should be careful to notice where the punctuation is and what it signals. For example, in the folio transcript of Lady Macbeth's "Unsex me" soliloquy from Act I scene 5, students will encounter these lines: The raven himself is *hoarse* That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan Under my battlements. Come, you spirits 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.** The bolded words and punctuation give students direction in how to read aloud. Where "hoarse" is italicized, teachers should help students to understand that the lack on punctuation here helps them know that they need to read through the line, even if it continues onto a new line. This should read, as if it were not in verse, "The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements." Otherwise, awkward pauses at the end of each line will confuse the flow and therefore the meaning of the whole line.
Single-Syllable words	When a line of verse consists of many or all single syllable words, it is an indication to slow down and make sure each word is given weight—it usually means the line is meant to be emphatic.[xxvi]
Alliteration	The repetition of two or more consonant sounds. There is a subtle build with every repetition, and different sounds have different emotional effects (Bs and Ds have a different feel than Ts and Ks for instance). Alliteration most often occurs at the beginning of each word (tongue twisters are the most common form: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers); but there are a lot of repeated consonant sounds within words in Shakespeare's verse.[xxvii] Teachers can have students examine Macbeth's "Two Truths" soliloquy from Act I scene 3 as an example of how alliteration alerts us to characterization. The text provides numerous alliterative "S" sounds, much like a hissing snake. This would be appropriate for this moment in that Macbeth is sneakily considering Duncan's murder though he has just fought and won a war for Duncan and has been honored by Duncan with new titles.

Appendix D

Learning Focused Overview: Unit Three

Course: English 12
Topic: Drama
Days: 15-17 Days
Grade(s): 12
Subject Area(s): English Language Arts

Key Learning:
Writers of drama use narrative elements to develop and structure texts to convey purpose and meaning.

Essential Unit Question:
How can a reader interpret and analyze the elements of drama in order to develop a meaningful response?

Concept: Author's Craft	Concept: Structure	Concept: Author's Purpose	Concept: Multiple Interpretations
Lesson Essential Questions: - How does an author's choice of diction impact characterization in a text? RL3 - How does the setting of a story affect or reveal the action and characters within it? RL3 - How do themes develop throughout a play? RL2	Lesson Essential Questions: - How do different language structures reveal information about a speaker's situation? RL5, L3 - What are the conventions of a Shakespearean play's structure? RL5 - How do author's specific structural choices impact interpretation of texts? RL5	Lesson Essential Questions: - How does the use of figurative language and connotative meanings contribute to author's purpose? RL4, L5 - How can a reader determine the author's purpose through textual evidence, including tone? RL3	Lesson Essential Questions: - How does another version of a drama reveal a separate interpretation? RL7 - How do various authors interpret and manipulate source drama in their own versions? RL7
Vocabulary:	**Vocabulary:** Blank Verse Iambic Pentameter Prose	**Vocabulary:** Paradox	**Vocabulary:** Mise-en-scène Framing Diegetic/nondiegetic sound

			Fourth wall

i Quote by Geoffrey Wagner used in Cutchins, Raw, and Welsh, *The Pedagogy of Adaptation*, xii.

ii Thomas Leitch, "How to Teach Film Adaptation, and Why," in Cutchins, Raw, and Welsh, *The Pedagogy of Adaptation*, 5.

iii A humorous video worth sharing with students is a satirical PSA about "Shakespism" located at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_33rTUP2Pc (0:00-1:48).

iv Barton, *Playing Shakespeare*, 7.

v *Hamlet*, III.ii.1-8, 17-23. Retrieved from http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/hamlet.3.2.html.

vi A handy way to introduce this concept would be to highlight a recent internet phenomenon that the students are undoubtedly aware of: the "mannequin challenge." Brian Feldman's article at Nymag.com sums up the "Mannquin Challenge" succinctly: "The idea is simple. Everyone freezes in place, forming a complex tableau of adolescent life, and then someone takes a video of it. If you prefer, set it to music" (http://nymag.com/selectall/2016/11/what-is-the-mannequin-challenge-freezing-in-place-is-trendy.html).

vii An extensive collection of other theater games can be found in Clive Barker, *Theatre Games: A New Approach to Drama Training* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977).

viii Teachers can opt to have students take notes on these examples, fill out a chart, have students write on desks, or complete this practice in group or partner work. This would be an ideal space for teachers to employ Kagan strategies.

ix *Black Swan* opening: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OPDQ9JOfAQ

x *Postcards from the Edge*. "You don't know me": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYvQBYutgn8 and "I'm still here": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgOWOV3a5tQ.

xi "Part 3: Cinematography." Film Analysis. Accessed December 19, 2016. http://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu/cinematography/.

xii Another helpful site for a list can be found at "Citizen Kane: Review of Film Techniques." Citizen Kane: Review of Film Techniques. Accessed January 20, 2017. http://www.tc.umn.edu/~ryahnke/filmteach/My-Archive-of-Film-Notes/x-kane2.htm.

xiii "Part 5: Sound." Film Analysis. Accessed December 19, 2016. http://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu/part-5-sound/.

xiv Diegetic and Non-diegetic sound: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_4hOY-9nKA.

xv "Top 10 Movies that Break the Fourth Wall." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTaN6wyMwCY.

xvi Meeting Hannibal: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QU8jKn7sMwU; Dr. Crawford: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8znAorKguo; Buffalo Bill dances: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqfY6KyEHvU&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DvqfY6KyEHvU&has_verified=1.

xvii A Rally Robin is a Kagan strategy that requires students to volley responses to questions between pairs or within groups. Directions for this and other strategies can be found online at websites like http://www.psd.ms/portals/Donna/Disciplinary/docs/DAEP/Kagan%20Structures%20Packet.pdf.

xviii Kurzel's 2015 *Macbeth* can also be added to this practice.

xix "We believe that it is only through these adaptation exercises that students may come to understand the nature of the texts they are studying. Our own experiences in the classroom suggest that making the kinds of decisions and creating the sorts of interpretations filmmakers do when they approach a text to adapt it are often precisely what students need to understand those same texts. Actually filming and editing their adaptations, which are wonderful learning experiences, are not necessary to help students understand the process and problems associated with adaptation. They will be forced to make many of the same decisions screenwriters, directors, and producers make when asked to simply produce a script, a treatment, and a fairly detailed storyboard" (James M. Welsh and Peter Lev, "Introduction," *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation* [Lanham: Scarecrow, 2007], p. xvi).

xx *Ibid.*

xxi Downloaded file from "New Perspectives Theatre Company | Programs - Shakespeare Made Simple." http://newperspectivestheatre.org/programs/shakespeare/index.html. Accessed December 18, 2016.

xxii *Ibid.*

xxiii *Ibid.*

xxiv *Ibid.*

xxv *Ibid.*

xxvi Downloaded file from "New Perspectives Theatre Company | Programs - Shakespeare Made Simple." http://newperspectivestheatre.org/programs/shakespeare/index.html. Accessed December 18, 2016.

xxvii *Ibid.*