Costume Design for Shakespeare's "Macbeth"

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Costume Design for Shakespeare’s “Macbeth”

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Theatre

by

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

The following thesis explains the process used to create the costume design for the production of Macbeth produced at the University of Arkansas Global Campus Theatre in the Spring of 2019. Throughout this thesis, I will explain the process by which the costumes went from initial research ideas to sketches and colored renderings and finally to fully realized three dimensional costumes. The design process included in this thesis includes an analysis of the play, inspirational collage, portrait gallery, research, renderings, production images, and an evaluation of the overall process.
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Chapter One

Introduction & Personal Design Philosophy

Macbeth by William Shakespeare is a story about fear, ambition, and corruption. Noble war hero Macbeth encounters three weird sisters who prophesy that Macbeth will become King of Scotland. This encounter leads to murder, upheaval, and corrupt leadership. The play escalates as the nobles of Scotland fight to put a rightful king on the throne.

Macbeth was produced at the Global Campus Blackbox Theater at the University of Arkansas in the Spring of 2019. Steven Marzolf directed the play with a set designed by Brandon Roye, lighting designed by Eric Armstrong, and sound designed by Michael Riha. I designed costumes for this production with Patricia Martin serving as my mentor, Valerie Lane as Costume Shop Manager, and Tanner McAlpin serving as makeup designer.

This thesis will focus on my costume design process for this production. The process involves the following steps: analysis of the script, research into clothing of the period, collaboration of ideas with fellow designers and the director, creating costume renderings which represent how the costumes will appear on the stage, construction of fully realized costumes and my final assessment of the design. My costume design process allowed me to create costumes that supported the characters and overall theme of the script.

My design work included multiple steps that allowed me to discover the script and the characters within it. My first step was to read the script and form an in-depth analysis, noting overall themes and elements that could inspire my design work. Once I wrote the analysis, I created an inspiration collage which included evocative images that represented the themes and
After I organized the collage, I created a portrait gallery, which is a collection of photo portraits that express the way I think about the characters in a visual way.

After presenting these items to the rest of the design team and director, we settled on the concept and setting that worked with our thoughts about the play. Once I knew the concept, I furthered my research on period and clothing, accessories and jewelry, and finding images of what each character would wear. I then organized the research images into collages for each character. I presented my research collages to my director and design team and received feedback. I then used my research to create preliminary sketches of each character. These sketches combined the research and my interpretations of each character and what I intended each character to look like on stage. I presented these sketches to both my mentor and my director so that I could take notes and suggestions as I prepared my final renderings. I designed the final renderings to express exactly how I wanted the characters to appear on stage. My renderings were then used by the University of Arkansas costume shop to create the costumes, either by pulling the garment from stock of existing clothing, purchasing, or building individual pieces of clothing. Fittings were documented through photos, and the final costumes are documented through photos of the production.

Before I begin discussing all of the steps for my designs for Macbeth, I would like to take a moment to write about my personal design philosophy. My job as a costume designer is to create characters on stage that can exist within the world of the play. The job is not to simply create attractive costumes and clothes. I create these characters through extensive analysis, creating a visual collage and portrait gallery, researching clothing, collaborating with my fellow designers, and rendering what the costumes will look like on stage. I strive to accomplish all of
this while leaving behind my ego and preconceived ideas about what these characters should be. Costumes are an integral to the theatrical process, because they allow the actors to see themselves as the character and walk in their shoes (both literally and figuratively).

In this thesis, I hope to take you on my journey of designing the costumes for William Shakespeare’s Macbeth. In Chapter Two, I will proceed through my analysis of the script. In Chapter Three, I will share my research and collaborative process and discuss my specific design choices. In Chapter Four, I will evaluate the designs and analyze how this production has allowed me to develop and grow as a designer.
Chapter Two

Analysis of Shakespeare’s Macbeth

In order to create costumes that work with the script, it is necessary to understand the script. All members creating a play should understand the basic principles of the play, such as the setting, the characters, and the original intent and themes. As a costume designer, I have to understand each character, so I focus my analysis on the whole of each character including their views of themselves, their ideas about religion and sex, and the relationships between the characters. I also search for the overall themes of the play and discuss how it impacts each character. I read every script a minimum of three times so that I may discover every piece of information that I can obtain. When I read a script the first time, I just try to get a general sense of what the play is about and who the characters are. During the second read-through, I will make notes in the script and highlight important information. When I read the script for the third time, I start to pay attention to every detail in the script which will then go into an analysis. I write all of this information into an organized script analysis, which includes an action chart that maps which characters are in each scene. This chapter summarizes my analysis and outlines what I discovered about the plot and characters of Macbeth. My complete analysis can be found in Appendix 1 on pages 21.

Once I read the script multiple times, I found the main theme of Macbeth to be fear. Fear motivates the action of every character in Macbeth. When people experience fear, it triggers the fight or flight reaction. Fear also brings on paranoia which plagues the characters in the world of Macbeth. Fear is the spine of story-telling in Macbeth.
My initial reading of the script is where I learned the basics of the plot and characters, the very basic “who, what, when, where, and why”. Macbeth is a brave Scottish general and war hero who has recently lost a child to death. While at war, Macbeth is predicted to become King by three “wayward sisters” he encounters. He writes his loving wife, Lady Macbeth, to tell her of the news that he received from the sisters. This news excites them both and propels them to invite the noble King Duncan into their home where they plot to murder him. They are successful in the murder of Duncan, and the heirs of the throne flee in fear for their lives. Macbeth becomes King of Scotland, but his reign is full of paranoia and fear that he will be discovered as the true murderer of Duncan. He hires murderers to kill his friend Banquo and Banquo’s son Fleance. When Macbeth hears news that Fleance escaped the murderers, he becomes filled with fear again. He returns to the witches, and they show him haunting apparitions which fuel his fear even more. There are plots to have Macbeth dethroned, and Macduff comes to avenge the death of the people Macbeth has killed. After Macduff successfully kills Macbeth, and Malcolm, son of King Duncan, becomes the rightful King of Scotland.

The location of the times of this play are fairly specific. The play was written in 1606 and takes place in Scotland with one scene in England, around the 11th century. Even though the play mentions specific locations within Scotland and England many times, people often choose to set it other places. We chose to set Macbeth during Balkan conflict which took place in the 1990s. This choice would make the story seem more approachable to a modern audience.

Macbeth is a Scottish soldier celebrated for his bravery and loyalty to King Duncan. However, he is overwhelmed with inner turmoil as he and his wife, Lady Macbeth, have recently lost a child to death. When he and his friend Banquo meet three wayward sisters in the woods,
the sisters taunt them with prophecies that Macbeth will become the King of Scotland. Macbeth is flooded with emotion of fear, ambition, and violence. He writes to his wife, and she is inspired to invite the King to their house and devises a plot to murder Duncan. Macbeth proves himself to be much more vulnerable after he murders Duncan; his fear leads him to send assassins to kill anyone who may fight his new authority as the King of Scotland. His paranoia lead him to commit atrocities that attempt to cover up his wrongdoings, but they only lead to his inevitable defeat. Before the play begins, it is clear that he has won the respect of his peers and superiors. He is a vulnerable character fueled by fear and paranoia who is easily swayed to commit unspeakable acts to protect himself.

Lady Macbeth can easily be understood as a power hungry and ambitious woman who manipulates her husband to kill King Duncan. However, if she is to be looked at in the same circumstances as her husband, she is a deeply tragic character overcome with grief and fear of her future. Lady Macbeth has lost a child, but she is inspired when her husband writes to her telling her of the prophecies he received. She works alongside Macbeth to ensure that his prophecies come true. She inspires him with her words to kill King Duncan, because she truly believes that it is destiny that she and her husband will take the throne. As the play progresses, her ambition and drive turn to overwhelming remorse. She has nightmares and literally tries to wash nonexistent blood from her hands. Her guilt ultimately leads to her suicide; she is left a victim of her own ambition.

Just like Macbeth, Banquo is a brave and noble Scottish general. The witches prophecy that his child, Fleance, will inherit the throne. Banquo represents an alternate point of view to Macbeth; he has ambitious thoughts just like Macbeth, but he does not allow those thoughts to
drive him to murder. After Macbeth has Banquo murdered, Banquo haunts Macbeth. Perhaps it is Banquo’s loyalty to the throne that haunts Macbeth. Banquo’s son Fleance lives on to spread the news of Macbeth’s murderous actions.

The royal family in Macbeth consists of King Duncan and his sons Donalbain and Malcolm. They represent virtuous and benevolent qualities. When Macbeth murders King Duncan, he is destroying everything that is good and pure in Scotland. It is only in the end, when Malcolm becomes the rightful King of Scotland that integrity and righteousness are restored.

Macduff is a Scottish noble who is a true patriot loyal to the Scottish throne. He proves himself to be impulsive. Hearing of the King’s death, Macduff leaves for England to fight with Malcolm to win back the throne. He leaves his family behind in Scotland where they are brutally murdered by Macbeth’s murderers. When Ross tells Macduff of the death of all his family members he is filled with grief. Being the impulsive character that he is, he rallies troops to take Macbeth down. Macduff is the only character who can kill Macbeth as he was born by cesarean section rather than naturally by a woman. He inevitably kills Macbeth and hails Malcolm the King of Scotland.

The wayward sisters instill in Macbeth both fear and ambition which force him into action. Without the prophecies given by the sisters, Macbeth may never have been inspired to commit murder. The sisters are at once terrifying and intriguing. They practice witchcraft and cast spells that introduce all of the bad that happens in the show. Macbeth looks to sisters for answers in hopes that they will calm his fear. Instead, the sisters show him apparitions that fill him with more paranoia. It is not know if the witches have any physical power over Macbeth, but they very much have the power of persuasion.
The Scottish nobles consist of Ross, Angus, and Lennox. Each one of the nobles must remain loyal to the throne, but the main use of them in the play is to deliver information. Ross is close to the Macduff family and delivers the news that Lady Macduff has been murdered. Lennox is a conspirator who tells Malcolm the truth of what is going on in Scotland even though it is dangerous for him.

Analyzing the script and all of the characters allowed me to understand how the theme of *Macbeth* relates to each character in the script. After reading the script multiple times, I understood how each character functions in this world. For example, Lady Macbeth is so overcome with fear for her actions that it leads her to suicide. Using the information from my analysis, I was able to develop my design approach and concept for *Macbeth* which are documented in the next chapter.
Chapter Three

Statement of Design Concept, Approach, and Process

My goal as a costume designer is to create designs that will allow an actor to completely become a character. This is how I approached my costume design for Macbeth. I set out to create characters that didn’t look like actors wearing costumes but humans wearing clothing that reflect who they are and choices they have made.

After completing my analysis, my next step was to create an emotional image collage. This collage acts as a jumping off point for discussion between the director, the rest of the design team. I created the collage by looking for images that reflect and represent the thoughts and feelings I had while reading the play. I searched for imagery that represented fear, war, family, and violence, all themes I found prevalent in Macbeth. I then printed these photos in black and white, burned them and tore the edges, arranged them on a black cardstock, and splattered red paint over them to look like blood. Arranging the collage like this allowed me to communicate how vicious I viewed the characters in the script to be. The collage helped me convey my thoughts and feelings to the design team. Images from this collage can be found in Appendix 2 on page 29.

Another important step of my design process was to create a portrait gallery. The portrait gallery represents how I envision each character in the play. When creating the portrait gallery, I searched for images that matched all of the known characteristics about each of the characters such as their, age, health, emotional state, socioeconomic status, and anything else that can speak visually about the character. This portrait gallery serves as a helpful tool that aids the
conversation between the director and myself about the direction the characters should take, both in terms of casting and costume choices.

Before our first design meeting, I was invited to have coffee with the director, lighting designer, and scenic designer about the direction the director intended to take this play. It was at this meeting that the director first discussed the possible setting for the play and our initial thoughts about Macbeth. The director was interested in setting Macbeth during the Bosnian War which took place between 1992 to 1995, because of the bleak and gruesome nature of this war. This meeting was casual, and I did not prepare any visual materials to show, but it served as a great jumping off point for the choices I made for my emotional collage and portrait gallery.

At our first formal design meeting, the director, lighting designer, scenic designer, and I sat down to talk about our thoughts and ideas about the play. Steven Marzolf, the director, spoke about how he was interested in exploring the theme of fear in the play. He also discussed how he would like to set the play in the Bosnian War which took place from 1992 through 1995. He felt that this war reflected the tragedy of the story of Macbeth, because this war was so violent and destructive to the people involved. The director was also interested in hearing the ideas and feedback from the rest of the design team. I was interested in how theatrical we could go with the costumes since we were setting this play in a modern time period. For example, I wanted to know if the expectation was to have every character in the exact fatigues worn in the Bosnian conflict. The director was open to exploring theatricality within the world of the time period, meaning that not every costume had to be an exact replica of something from the Bosnian War. We were especially interested in how the weird sisters would fit into the world of play, and how they would relate to the way all of the other characters appeared. In my portrait gallery, I
included pictures of Stevie Nicks and David Bowie, because the director had previously stated that he would like to explore the androgyny of the weird sisters. I felt that the people I included in my portrait gallery possessed features that were alluring yet sexless, which I believe is what the director wanted for the characters.

I also needed to know the director’s intentions for cast size to know if there would be actors playing multiple roles. The goal for the director was to cast 12 to 13 actors to play all of the roles in the play. This meant that most of the actors would be changing back in forth from character throughout the show. The casting choices made in these early stages effect the way I approach the show.

After this first design meeting, I began my costume research for each character. An integral part of beginning this research process for me was arranging the characters into groups. In Macbeth, I found that there were the following groups: the Macbeths, the Macduffs, the Lords, the royal family, the Servants, and the Wayward Sisters. I conducted my research by finding images for each of these groups and seeing how the grouping worked together in the world of the play. I arranged the images into a collage board for each character. Selected research boards can be found in Appendix 3 on page 30.

For this particular show, however, I did not immediately start by looking at clothing and fashion styles. I knew that due to the setting chosen by the director, I needed to educate myself on the Bosnian conflict. I spent multiple hours reading articles online and watching YouTube videos explaining the conflict. I identified the players from the conflict so that I could draw ties to the characters in Macbeth. This process also allowed me to get a general idea of the fatigues worn during the time as there were photos available within each article. I furthered my research
by collecting images of clothing worn during the 1990s and in the Yugoslav Peninsula specifically. This military research was how I approached the clothing worn by the Lords, the servants, and any other military characters in the show.

After I had most of the historic and military research completed, I was still struggling with how Macbeth and Lady Macbeth functioned in the world of play. While researching figures from the 1990s such as Ivana Trump and Princess Diana, I had an epiphany. My idea was that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth would be dressed in the styles that were worn by Ivana Trump; these styles were gaudy, bright, and expensive. To juxtapose them, the rest of the cast would be dressed in military fatigues and much less opulent clothing. This would represent that the Macbeths had lost touch with reality, especially the reality of the bleak world beyond their castle.

I initially hoped to model Macbeth’s fatigues after Ratko Mladić, a Bosnian war criminal. While reading about Mladić online, I found many parallels between him and Macbeth. For example they were both celebrated military men who committed multiple war crimes. That is where I began my research for Macbeth. I also knew that Macbeth would need formal military dress, because he attends a funeral, a banquet, and a coronation. I pulled research images of what that might look like, since there wasn’t much formal wear worn during the Bosnian War. I wanted to communicate how unfitting Macbeth is as King through his costume, so I planned for Macbeth to wear King Duncan’s crown and cape lopsided. This would make it look as though the crown and cape are too big for him. Macbeth continues to grow increasingly paranoid after the coronation scene, so he would continue to lose pieces of his costume to show that he is becoming more vulnerable. This would happen until his death in act five.
Lady Macbeth goes through a lot of changes throughout the play, so I wanted that change to be reflected in her costumes. We first see Lady Macbeth at the funeral for her child, so I wanted her to be dressed in all black throughout act one. It is not until she receives the letter from Macbeth that she wears color again. She is filled with ambition after reading the letter, so I wanted her to wear red. The red also reflects the color of the blood that stains her hands after the murder of King Duncan. She and Macbeth start acting as the King and Queen of Scotland, so I chose to have her wear a dress that was modeled after Princess Diana of Wales. I chose this dress, because it looked like a military uniform, and it would compliment what Macbeth would be wearing. Once Lady Macbeth begins to deal with the weight of her guilt, she begins to sleepwalk and have hallucinations. Having her wear a long white nightgown and robe heightened her vulnerability, and I also hoped it would help the audience empathize with her pain.

For the royal family, which includes King Duncan, Malcolm, and Donalbain, I found pictures of English monarchs of the past. The director spoke about King Duncan acting as “the mouthpiece of God”, so I also included images of the Pope and artistic interpretations of Jesus Christ. The traditional dress of English monarchs such as King Edward VII was exactly how I imagined King Duncan to appear onstage. To find inspiration for his children, I went back to my military research and pulled images of people who looked powerful and noble.

To find inspiration for the Wayward sisters, I went onto the website Pinterest and began looking up images of covens and witches. Many of the photos I found looked too much like a cartoon witch with warts and a pointed black hat. I hoped the Wayward Sisters would seem more grounded and real to the audience. I came across images of traditional Yugoslav women while on Pinterest, and their place in the show became clear to me. The images I found of these
women included elements of androgyny and modern Wicca. Since I wanted these characters to make sense within the setting of the play, it became clear to me that this would be a great jumping off point for my research. I chose images that reflected the same shape and pieces of clothing worn by traditional Yugoslav women. I then found elements that could heighten the theatricality of the costume to have it be more eerie. These elements included dreaded hair, torn, grungy fabric, rough textures, and long jewelry.

I arranged all of this research into individual research boards for each of the groupings I created. At our second design meeting, I presented the research to the director and other members of the design team. Overall, I was pleased with the response I received about my work. One aspect of the research that I had trouble communicating was the role that I saw the weird sisters playing in the show. I knew that I would have to continue to find ways to visually represent how I imagined them to look.

After this meeting, I took all of the feedback that I had received and began making alterations to the collages. I chose to step backward and revise my collages, because it only makes moving forward easier. As I mentioned before, one of the groups of characters that I needed to continue to work on were the Wayward Sisters. I knew in my mind’s eye what I wanted these characters to represent. I hoped to have them resemble the traditional clothing of the Yugoslav Peninsula while also having eerie qualities that made them alluring yet repulsive. To be able to communicate my idea effectively with the director, I decided to dress three dressmaking forms in clothing that looked like my research ideas combined. I took photos of the forms and arranged them on a board to be presented. Images of these dress forms can be found in Appendix 4 on page 33.
After some minor alterations to my research boards, I felt that I was ready to begin sketching each character individually. While this is the step I tend to dislike the most in my design process, it is one of the most important. In this step, I take all of the research that I have collected and use it to create each character. Each character is a collection of elements that I have found in multiple images, and it is my job to communicate those elements to the director and design team. So, I sketched each character onto paper according to the groups I had previously identified. Selected sketches can be found in Appendix 5 on page 34.

At the third design meeting, I presented my sketches along with my research and photos of the forms to my director and fellow designers. These sketches were received well and approved by the director. I was now ready to add color to these sketches to create my final renderings once the show had been cast. Selected final renderings can be found in Appendix 6 on page 36.

The majority of costume pieces were pulled from stock or purchased online or locally with my $3,000 budget. My costume sketches and renderings served as a guide for myself and our costume shop to turn my renderings into a three-dimensional reality.

Certain costume pieces were built by the costume shop, specifically Lady Macbeth’s white nightgown, her white banquet suit, King Duncan’s cape, and one of the witches complete costume. Through mock-ups and fittings with the actors, drapers, and myself we were able to create these pieces. My main responsibility with the built items was purchasing the fabrics and making decisions about trims and specific details. Images from fittings of these garments can be found in Appendix 7 on page 41.
An important aspect of the look of the Wayward Sisters is that they have long grey hair that has been styled into dreads. Since the actors are not expected to dye or dread their hair for shows, I purchased three wigs and styled them. I also hoped the faces of the Wayward Sisters would have some sort of element that distinguished them from the rest of the characters. The makeup designer, Tanner McAlpin, and I also discussed many ways in which to make the faces of the actors look unique. We had to keep in mind the fact that the actors would also be playing other roles, so everything had to be easily applied and removed.

In this production of *Macbeth*, it was important for me to create characters who came alive on stage, rather than actors who were wearing costumes. I developed costumes that communicated who each character was as an individual and as a member of a larger group through my process of creating an inspiration collage and portrait gallery, collaborating and conversing with my fellow designers and director, researching, rendering, and fittings. In the following chapter I will assess and evaluate the final production, both in terms of the job I did as the costume designer and the final look of the costumes.
Chapter Four

Assessment and Evaluation of the Design Process and Final Product

Theatre provides the opportunity for artists to continually learn and grow from each experience. Each time I design costumes for a show, I take a moment to assess my successes and failures so I can continue to improve as an artist. Looking back at the design and production process for Macbeth, I feel that my designs were successful and translated well from paper to stage. Production photos can be found in Appendix 8 on page 43.

Before I analyze my work, it is necessary to recall what my intentions were at the beginning of the process. In Chapter One, I wrote “My job as a costume designer is to create characters on stage that can exist within the world of the play. The job is not to simply create attractive costumes and clothes. I create these characters through extensive analysis, creating a visual collage and portrait gallery, researching clothing, collaborating with my fellow designers, and rendering what the costumes will look like on stage. I strive to accomplish all of this while leaving behind my ego and preconceived ideas about what these characters should be.” I believe that I accomplished this goal throughout my work on this production.

The process for designing costumes for Macbeth went smoothly. My initial research about the Bosnian conflict helped to guide me through the design process. The director and design team were open to questions and comments, and I felt that I could bring up any concerns that I had. The design meetings fostered collaborative and creative discussions that aided in creating the world of Macbeth.

The costume shop did an excellent job transforming my drawings into three dimensional garments. Valerie Lane guided the costume shop to quickly and accurately complete the notes
that I made during the fittings with the actors. Three drapers asked necessary questions and made sure that they were creating the garments as I had envisioned them. I was very pleased with every built garment, with the exception of King Duncan’s red cape. In choosing fabrics, I fear that I chose fabrics that reminded audience members of Christmas. The draper and I tried to combat this issue by adding chains and ribbon to give it more color, but I’m not sure that I was successful. If I could go back and design this costume again, I would choose a deeper red fabric and a fur that is not solid white. In the future, I will pay closer attention to how color choices may reflect an idea that I do not wish to be present in my designs.

I was pleased with the final outcome of the design, as was the director Steven Marzolf. I was especially happy with the overall aesthetic of the show, as every character’s costume looked more like clothing than a costume. I felt that each costume reflected the characters as individual people while also showing how they fit as part of a larger group.

Designing costumes for a Shakespeare play, especially one such as Macbeth, was an excellent experience for me. It allowed me to work on a script that tells a timeless story about fear, ambition, and revenge with my fellow collaborators in an educational space. The process of analyzing the script, creating the portrait gallery and the inspiration collage, researching my ideas, rendering, and finally working with a costume shop was a fantastic way to design a production. As I move forward into my professional career, I will continue to exercise the process. My goal with this production was to create costumes that aided in telling a compelling story that seemed more real than produced. Overall, I feel that I achieved my goal.
Works Cited

Appendices

Appendix 1: Script Analysis

I. Where are they?
   A. Act 1
      1. In a forest with the 3 witches. There is “thunder and lightning”
      2. At a military camp
      3. Near the battlefield
      4. At the King’s palace
      5. At Macbeth’s castle in Inverness
      6. Macbeth’s castle
      7. Inside Macbeth’s castle
   B. Act 2
      1. Halls of Macbeth’s castle
      2. Halls of Macbeth’s castle
      3. Halls of Macbeth’s castle
      4. Outside the castle
   C. Act 3
      1. In the new royal palace of Macbeth at Forres
      2. Elsewhere in the palace
      3. Dusk at the palace
      4. Dining Hall of the palace with a feast
      5. Thundery forest with the witches
      6. Somewhere in Scotland
   D. Act 4
      1. In a cave with the witches
      2. Macduff’s castle
      3. Outside King Edward’s palace
   E. Act 5
      1. The King’s palace
      2. Outside the castle
      3. The hall of Dunsinane
      4. The country near Birnam Wood
      5. Inside the castle
      6. Outside the castle
      7. On the Battlefield
      8. The castle and the battlefield

II. How do the characters describe the place they are in? Is there any significance to the place they are in?
   A. Duncan says about Macbeth’s castle, “This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air nimble and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses.”
   B. On the night King Duncan is murdered, Lennox says, “Our chimneys were blown down and as they say, lamenting heard in the air, strange the screams of death, and prophesying with accents terrible.” (2.3.52-55)
   C. The play is set in Scotland, which is important to note, because the King would nominate the person who succeeds his throne in Scotland.

III. When are they?
A. In what day, month, century, season, time of day, etc...?
   1. The play is set in the 11th century in Scotland. Macbeth reigns from 1040-1057.

B. Do the characters have anything specific to say about when they are?
   1. 

C. Is there any special significance to when they are?
   1. Yes. There is war going on in Scotland. Macbeth is a national war hero which makes him a favorite to King Duncan.

IV. Who are they?
   A. Macbeth
      1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
         a) Macbeth is a wealthy Scottish general who lives in a castle in Inverness Scotland. He is the husband of Lady Macbeth. He is a general under the rule of King Duncan.
      2. Role in life?
         a) He is a Scottish general who is also thane of Glamis. He is a noble military leader in the beginning of the play, but turns into a murderer who wrecked with guilt.
      3. What do others say about them?
         a) “For brave Macbeth-well he deserves that name- disdaining fortune, with his brandish steel, which smoked with bloody execution.” Captain (1.2.15-18)
         b) Lady Macbeth says, “Was the hope drunk where you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since? And wakes it now, to look so green and pale at what it did so freely? From this time such I account thy love. Art thou afeard to be the same in own act and valor as thou art in desire?” (1.7.35-41)
         c) Macduff calls him his enemy and a tyrant. “Thn yield thee, coward, and live to show and gaze of the time: we’ll have thee as our rarer monsters are, painted upon a pole, and underwrite, here may you see the tyrant” (5.8.23-27)
         d) “Ill drain him dry as hay. Sleep shall neither night nor day hand upon his penthouse lid. He shall live a man forbid. Weary sev’nights, nine times nine, shall he dwindle, peak, and pine. Though his bark cannot be lost, Yet it shall be tempest tossed.” (1.3.15-27)
      4. What do they say about themselves?
         a) Macbeth is insecure in the fact that he has no son to be heir to the throne as Banquo does. He describes a “fruitless throne” (3.1.62)
      5. What role does religion play in their lives?
         a) Free will and fate are important “religious” aspects to Macbeth. It seems that Macbeth does believe in fate so much that when he hears of his fate from the three witches, he takes it upon himself to make that happen.
      6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
         a) In the beginning of the play, Macbeth is often described as being “brave and noble.” Once he hears about his fate, he decides to murder the King which isn't an ethical thing to do. When he becomes King, he continues to have those around him be murdered. He is also kept awake by the guilt he feels for doing these actions. His guilt and paranoia are a sign that he knows what he has done is wrong.
B. Lady Macbeth
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) Lady Macbeth is the wife of Macbeth. She is a noble woman and lives comfortably in the castle.
2. Role in life?
   a) She is the wife of Macbeth. She does not have any work duties, but she is the partner in crime to Macbeth.
3. What do others say about them?
   a) There isn't much interaction with Lady Macbeth and the other characters (except with Macbeth.
   b) When Duncan arrives to their castle in Act 1, they greet each other with honor and respect.
4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) “Who can be described as ambitious, devoted, and manipulative?
   b) “Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe topful of direst cruelty. (1.5.38-40)
   c) “I shame to wear a heart so white” (1.7.63) She is so ashamed of her husbands actions that she deiced to take the murder upon herself.
5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) Like Macbeth, Lady Macbeth seems to believe in fate. She also believes in taking fate into your own hands, perhaps more than Macbeth himself.
6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) Lady Macbeth in some ways could be seen as a wonderful partner to Macbeth in that she makes his ambitions come true with the plot to murder Duncan. She is heartbroken at the loss of her child and will do anything for Macbeth (in the beginning of the play). She realizes her actions by the end and takes her own life.

C. Witches (Weird Sisters)
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) The witches are always together in a group of three. They encounter Banquo and Macbeth and predict the futures of the men. They are of a much lower socio-economic level than Macbeth.
2. Role in life?
   a) They are witches who prophecy the future and taunt Macbeth. They perform spells and show apparitions to Macbeth when he reaches out to them to look for guidance.
3. What do others say about them?
   a) “How far is ‘t called to Forres? 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 seem to understand me, by each ar once her choppy finger laying upon her skinny lips. You should be women, and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are.” (1.3.41-47)
4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) “The weird sisters, hand in hand, posters of the sea and land” (1.3.32-33)
   b) “Ill drain him dry as hay. Sleep shall neither night nor day hand upon his penthouse lid. He shall live a man forbid. Weary sev’nights, nine times nine, shall he dwindle, peak, and pine. Though his bark cannot be lost, Yet it shall be
tempest tossed.” (1.3.15-27) I use this quote to show that they know the power they have over Macbeth

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) They are witches who make predictions of the future and cast actual spells. Their witchcraft is the religion that is relevant to them.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) The witches are sisters. They work together and are never seen individually. Their actions may be unethical, because they know telling Macbeth he will be King will lead to his ambition overcoming him.

D. Banquo
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) Banquo is Macbeth’s rival, because the witches have said that he will be the father of Kings. He is a father who has a seemingly loving relationship with his sons.

2. Role in life?
   a) He is a fellow captain to Macbeth. After his death, he becomes a ghost that haunts Macbeth.

3. What do others say about them?
   a) The witches see him as more than an equal to Macbeth since he will have sons as Kings.
   b) “Banquo, thy soul’s flight, if it find heaven, must find it out tonight.”
   c) “Noble Banquo, that hast no less deserved, nor must be known no less to have done so, let me enfold thee and hold thee to my heart.” Duncan (1.4.314-318)
   d) “True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant, and in his commendations I am fed.” Duncan (1.4.338)

4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) He admits to also thinking about the prophecies of the three sisters
   b) He has desires that his sons will be Kings “And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tells us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betray’s in deepest consequences.”

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) He, like, Macbeth also believes in the phophecies of the witches.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) Like Macbeth, Banquo is ambitious. He thinks about the witches and their prophecies. The main difference is that Banquo does not let his ambition lead him to being disloyal to the King.

E. Duncan
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) Duncan is the King of Scotland. He is the father of Malcolm and Donalbain. He becomes the victim of murder committed by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

2. Role in life?

3. What do others say about them?
   a) “The service and the loyalty I owe, in doing it, pays itself. Your highness’ part is to receive our duties; and our duties are to your throne and state children and servants, which do but what they should, by doing every thing safe toward your love and honor” Macbeth (1.4.307-312)
b) “All our service in every point twice done and then done double were poor and single business to contend against those honours deep and broad wherewith your majesty loads our house: for those of old, and the late dignities heap'd up to them, we rest your hermits.

c) “Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been so clear in his great office, that his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued” (1.7.17-19)

4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) He's insightful: he says “There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face.”
   b) He is also firm: He says “No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive/ Our bosom interests. Go pronounce his present death. And with his former title greet Macbeth.”

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) He is the ruler of Scotland. From what other characters say about him, we know that he is a virtuous ruler. He is so trusting in Macbeth at first the he almost seems naive.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) Duncan has a generous and fatherly sense about him. He is seemingly a great King who behaves ethically. He is trusting, and believes (perhaps naively) that Macbeth will make a great Thane of Cawdor.

F. Malcolm
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) Malcolm is the older son of King Duncan and heir to the throne. He is the brother of Donalbain.

2. Role in life?
   a) He is the appointed Prince of Cumberland.
   b) He flees Scotland once he learns that it will be dangerous to stay there. He gets the support of the King of England and gets the troop together under Siward.

3. What do others say about them?
   a) He earns the alliances that he gets with other people.
   b) He pretends to be worse than Macbeth only to prove (in Act 4) that he is perfectly good King material

4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) He has a heart. In scene 4, he wants to mourn his father. Macduff on the other hand is only out to avenge the death of his family members.

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) When he is appointed King, he uses the phrase, “by the grace of Grace.” This proves that he does have some religious (spiritual) sense.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) In the end of the play, Malcolm is presented as the future king. He uses the phrase “by the grace of Grace” which lets us know that he places importance in the service of doing good.
   b) We also see the good in Malcolm when he interacts with Macduff in Act Four. He tests the allegiance of Macduff in order to do good.

G. Donalbain
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) Donalbain is the younger son of King Duncan.

2. Role in life?
a) When he learns that it is dangerous to stay in Scotland, he flees to Ireland for safety.

3. What do others say about them?
   a) He is described as a “bloody cousin” by Macbeth. Macbeth is accusing him of things he has not done.

4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) He is smart and strong-willed. He urges his brother, Malcolm to go to different places as they would be safer in two different places.
   b) Donalbain does not speak as much as his brother. He often does not speak even if he is in the scene.

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) He is from the royal Scottish family. The other two members of this family show great values. Although Donalbain does not say much, we can assume that he is also spiritual as are the rest of his family members.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) After his father is murdered, he escapes to Ireland. He and his brother are close, but they choose to go separate ways for safety. He does not rebel or turn on his family members.

H. Macduff
1. Relationships and socio-economic levels.
   a) He is the Thane of Fife. He is wealthy and is married to Lady Macduff.

2. Role in life?
   a) He is a Thane and protector of the royal family. He avenges the death of King Duncan and brings Malcolm back to Scotland to become King.

3. What do others say about them?
   a) Banquo refers to him as “Dear Duff”
   b) When Malcolm test Macduff in Act 4, he learns that Macduff is worthy of his trust.

4. What do they say about themselves?
   a) When Macduff hears of the murders, he reacts with grief. “But I must also feel it as a man” (4.3.223) He is emotional and sensitive.

5. What role does religion play in their lives?
   a) Macduff is a moral character in this play. When Lady Macbeth dies, he is more shaken and upset than Macbeth who seems indifferent.
   b) He values his family, but chooses to leave them to avenge the King and kill Macbeth.

6. What are the prevailing attitudes toward sex, family, marriage, and ethical conduct? Do they rebel against these?
   a) He is sort of the hero of this play in some ways, because he is the character who initially suspects the wrongdoings of Macbeth. He eventually kills Macbeth. He does this, because he is avenging the death of his family.

V. What Happened before the play began?
A. Before Macbeth begins, the Scots have started a civil war against King Duncan. The revolting Scots have joined forces with Norway, and there are battles being fought throughout the country.

B. Another key thing that happens before the opening scene in the play is that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have lost a child. Lady Macbeth mentions that she has “given suck” but is
now changing her “milk for gall.” This particular fact can explain a lot about the actions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

VI. What is the function of each character in the play.
   A. Principal Characters: Lady Macbeth, Duncan, Malcolm, Banquo, and Macduff.
   B. Protagonist?
      1. The protagonist of Macbeth is Macbeth. While Macbeth may not be the “hero” of the play, he is still the character that drives the action forward.
   C. Antagonist?
      1. It would argue that Macbeth is also the play’s antagonist. The definition of an antagonist is “the adversary of the hero or protagonist of a drama or other literary work. Macbeth and his fear are the things that most keep him from getting what he wants most in the play.
   D. Primary Actions?
      1. When Macbeth writes the letter to Lady Macbeth to let her know what the witches have said. This letter leads them to plot to kill King Duncan.
      2. Macbeth murders Duncan and is crowned King of Scotland.
      3. Macbeth has Banquo murdered.
      4. Mac Beth orders Macduff’s wife and children to be murdered which leads Malcolm and Macduff to plot to kill Macbeth.
      5. Macbeth is killed which leads to Malcolm becoming King.
   E. What are the functions of the other principle characters.
      1. Banquo serves as a foil to Macbeth. Banquo is predicted to have his his children become Kings. While Macbeth lets his ambitions rule his actions, Banquo does not. He is not obsessed with ambition as Macbeth is.
      2. Lady Macbeth serves as a partner and accessory in murder to Macbeth.
      3. Macduff is the only one who can kill Macbeth as he was born by C-section.

VII. What kind of dialogue do the characters speak?
   A. The characters in Macbeth speak contemporary English, but the way the words are arranged can sound poetic at times. Since this play was written by William Shakespeare the words have rhythm and flow. The language is quite eerie and dark, especially the dialogue of the 3 witches who speak spells in unison. They use language differently than the other characters.

VIII. What is the theme of the play?
   A. A theme that stands out in this play is ambition. Once the witches prophecy that Macbeth shall be named King, he and Lady Macbeth aim to fulfill the prophecy. While it seems like Macbeth may have been cursed by the witches, they never force him to kill anyone; his own ambition leads him and his wife to murder in order to fulfill their desire. Macbeth says, “ I have no spur to pick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself and falls on th’ other.” (1.7.25-28) The theme of ambition in Macbeth is a cautionary tale of how ambition and the sight of something as desirable as becoming a King.
   B. As much as Macbeth is about ambition, it is equally about fear. Fear is a motivational force behind much of the actions of Macbeth. In Act One, the witches that he encounters leave
him fearful and shaken. Macbeth’s fear results in his paranoia and insomnia, which lead him to make horrible decisions just as much as his ambitions does. As the play progresses, Macbeth becomes less motivated by his fear. He states, “I have almost forgotten the taste of fears… Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts, cannot once start me.” (5.5.11-17)

IX. What happens in the play?
A. Macbeth, a noble and loyal Thane to King Duncan, is predicted to become King by three witches he encounters. He writes to his wife to tell her of his encounter, and they plot to kill King Duncan in their home. They murder Duncan, and Macbeth becomes King of Scotland. After the murders, Macbeth becomes an insomniac overcome with paranoia and guilt. Macbeth hires murderers to kill Banquo, because the witches also predicted that Banquo would be the father of Kings. When the plot to murder Banquo does not go as planned he returns to the witches who show him haunting apparitions. There are several plots to have Macbeth dethroned. Macduff comes to Macbeth and claims that Macbeth is a tyrant who has murdered his family. Macduff kills Macbeth. He is the only one who can do so, because he was born by C-section.

See Works Cited, Page 19
Appendix 2: Inspiration Collage

(All research images were found on Pinterest and are located on Authors board titled “Macbeth”)
Appendix 3: Selected Research Boards

Lady Macbeth

Funeral and Letter

Receiving Duncan

Lady Macbeth Research Board
Lady Macbeth

Banquet, Act 3

After Duncan's Murder & Sleepwalking

Lady Macbeth Research Board
Macbeth

Military Uniform
Ratko Mladic

After King is Murdered

Receiving King

As King

Macbeth Research Board
Appendix 4: Dress Forms

Photos of Dress Forms Dressed as Weird Sisters
(Photos taken by Author)
Appendix 5: Selected Sketches

Lady Macbeth Sketches  
(Sketched by Author)

Lady Macbeth Sketches  
(Sketched by Author)
Royal Family Sketches
(Sketched by Author)

Banquo and Fleance Sketches
(Sketched by Author)
Appendix 6: Selected Color Renderings

Lady Macbeth
(Rendered by Author)
Lady Macbeth
(Rendered by Author)
King Duncan
(Rendered by Author)
Banquo and Fleance
(Rendered by Author)
Lady Macduff
(Rendered by Author)
Appendix 7: Selected Fitting Photos

Lady Macbeth Costume Fittings
(Photographed by Author)
King Duncan Costume Fitting
(Photographed by the Author)
Appendix 8: Production Photos

Lady Macduff with Murderers
(Photographed by Author)

Malcolm, King Duncan, and Donalbain
(Photographed by Author)
Macbeth and Lady Macbeth at Coronation
(Photographed by Author)
Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking
(Photographed by Author)