



Welcome to Animated Shakespeare!

About Macbeth the King

We think you'll find these teaching resources – created by professional theatre actors and educators – very valuable supports to your classroom explorations of Shakespeare. The following pages include lesson plans that can stand alone or be used to accompany our video series.

In each Module, you will have three or four Units that deepen students' understanding of various aspects of Shakespeare's work or a particular play. Each video is accompanied by several pages of in-class activities for teachers to prepare, as well as Class Handout sheets to reproduce for your students.

No matter which play you are studying, these activities can supplement your regular class work to enliven the text that has become so influential, not only in theatre, but in the common speech of Western society. Enjoy!

– *The team at KDOONS and WYRD Productions*

NOTE: In the following activities and handouts, you may see references to a few terms:

The First Folio: This is the common name for the collection of Shakespeare's plays, entitled 'Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies', published in 1623. This is the text favored by most professional actors, and the scenes used in the activities will come straight from the Folio. Many of the Folio plays, however, are not broken down into scenes, just five long acts. For ease of reference, therefore, we will include the standardized line numbers from modern editions of Shakespeare.

Puke Books: This term was not created by Shakespeare! We recommend each student have a small notepad – or "Puke Book" – in which she can do timed writing. Students are never forced to share this writing. They will be asked to read it over, highlight the phrase that resonates most strongly and, if they choose, share this tidbit with the class. 'Puking' allows students to personalize their experience of Shakespeare by reflecting on themes from the plays. In their Puke Books, they may discover connections between the stories and their own lives. Optional **Puke Topics** are suggested in an inset many of the Units for students' personal reflections.

MacHomer: The videos are performed by Rick Miller, creator of MacHomer (The Simpsons do Macbeth), a solo play that has been performed in 175 cities over 17 years. Prior knowledge of MacHomer is not a pre-requisite to using these videos, but the DVD and/or script are often used as additional teaching tools, and can be purchased as part of the full Outreach bundle at animatedshakespeare.com



Puke Topic

Students are given a topic, usually a reflective question that they are to consider with pen in hand. We suggest 2 - 3 minutes for students who are new to timed writing, 5 - 10 minutes for a class who is comfortable with it. Their pens are to move constantly through the timed writing period, even if just to repeat 'blah blah blah', because this movement is preferable to both the inertia of thinking and the self-critique of editing. The stream of consciousness that is produced may be ugly – like puke – but it comes whether we like it or not. Students are never forced to share this personal writing. When time is up, everyone should read over his/her own words and underline the phrase that resonates most for him/her.

About Macbeth the King Video Transcript

Shakespeare's Macbeth is set in Scotland in the 11th century and it's actually about a *real King* who ruled at the time.

In Shakespeare's retelling of the story some of the facts were changed and I'll tell you why after. Basically, the real King Macbeth was of royal blood, and like in the story, he was a fierce warrior, someone who was fighting for the Scots against the invasion of the Vikings from Norway. He also killed King Duncan, but the difference was that he actually killed him **in battle**, whereas in Shakespeare's tale, he was assassinated. It's very different killing someone in battle to murdering them in their sleep!

Another difference is that King Macbeth actually ruled for **17 years of peace and prosperity**. He was a good King: apparently he was very generous and he created laws that protected women and children. Whereas in Shakespeare's play, he is this bloodthirsty butcher.

The question is: *why did Shakespeare distort the facts so much?* The obvious reason is because it tells a better story. It's much more interesting to talk about a tragic hero than to talk about a good King. Another reason is that Shakespeare was using stories that had already built up at the time, myths that were starting to say that maybe Macbeth was a tyrant and he was a betrayer of people. They actually called him the Red King and said his father was the devil!

Another reason is that Shakespeare was trying to please the new King, King James I. See, the Queen of England – Queen Elizabeth – had just died and she loved Shakespeare. So when King James I of Scotland came, who apparently was a descendant of Banquo (who used to fight with Macbeth in Macbeth's time), Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* and he turned Macbeth into a bad guy and Banquo into a good guy whose children legitimately inherit the throne... leading to King James. This made the King very happy.

Another thing that made the King very happy was that Shakespeare threw in the famous 3 Witches, and James I had written a book about witches. He loved the occult. He loved the supernatural. So all in all, Shakespeare was just sucking up to the King. Which, if you think about it, is not a bad idea if you're a writer back then trying to make a living!

About Macbeth the King

Topic Recap and Discussion Starter:

Macbeth in real life:

- Killed King Duncan in battle
- Ruled for 17 years of peace and prosperity
- Obtained the throne with royal blood

Macbeth as portrayed in the play *Macbeth*:

- Killed King Duncan by assassination
- Portrayed as a bloodthirsty butcher

The real Macbeth ruled from 1040 - 1057

The play was written from 1603 - 1607

Reasons to distort the facts:

- Violence is more dramatic
- Macbeth already had a lot of untrue myths about him by the time Shakespeare wrote the play (550 years later!)
- These myths were known by Shakespeare's audience
- To please King James I (King James believed himself to be a descendant of Banquo, so Banquo is made heroic and Macbeth more evil)



About Macbeth the King

Activity 1: Playwrights and Patrons

Objective:

To make modern parallels with Shakespeare's motivation for writing Macbeth as he did.

Introduction:

Though the real Macbeth may have been a good king, by the time Shakespeare wrote his play, a myth had begun circulating that Macbeth had been a tyrant and he became known as the Red King. As Rick Miller says in the video, Shakespeare wrote Macbeth for the new king, James I of Scotland, who was a descendant of Banquo. Have your students consider the depictions of both Macbeth and Banquo in the play to see what Shakespeare has done to please his patron, King James.

Additionally, consider playwright Judith Thompson's piece, *Body and Soul*, written specifically for Dove's 'Campaign for Real Beauty' (See Class Hand-out). Is this a modern, Canadian equivalent of writing to please the king? Can one argue that corporations have replaced monarchs as the seat of power? Or is this just an artist with integrity creating theatre with the tools and financing available in our time?

Instructions:

Ask students to **list examples** of artists 'sucking up' to leaders or corporations. Think of portrayals of living people in movies or plays, product placement in movies or TV, references to name brands in hip hop songs, etc.

Now ask them to consider **Shakespeare's portrayals of Macbeth and Banquo** in their first encounter with the witches (Act I, Sc iii, lines 38-69) (See Class Handout)

Review the witches' predictions for Macbeth on one side of the chalkboard /Smartboard and Banquo's on the other side. Who is portrayed in a more positive light: murderous Macbeth or murdered Banquo?



Puke Topic

Selling out?

Do you think that you would say anything – even tell lies – if someone paid you enough money?

Have you ever felt disappointed in other people (or in yourself) when they seem to be going against what they believe in?

What do you think of artists selling their music for commercials?

What do you think of the claim that some scientists are paid by companies to write reports denying climate change?



Activity 2: The Real McCoy (The Real Macbeth!)

Note: the expression “the real McCoy” meaning ‘the real thing’ was first recorded in 1856 in Scotland as “The real McKay.” The current spelling occurred in Canada in 1881, and may refer to Elijah McCoy, the Canadian inventor educated in Scotland.

Objective:

To appreciate the difference between the *historical* Macbeth, and Shakespeare’s *fictional* Macbeth.

Introduction:

From the video, students learn that the historical Macbeth was of royal blood, ruled for 17 years, was generous and passed laws that protected women and children. Nonetheless he later became known as the Red King, remembered as a tyrant, and even said to be descended from the devil.

- **The historical Macbeth**, 11th century Scotland, attained his crown through royal lineage. He reigned for 17 years – from the years 1040 - 1057 – in which time he fought the Vikings alongside the real Banquo and killed the real Duncan in battle.
- **The fictional Macbeth**, created by Shakespeare in 17th century England – from the years 1603 - 1607 – attained the Scottish crown by murdering the rightful king, King Duncan, in his sleep. Shakespeare’s Macbeth ruled only a very short time, killing Banquo and Macduff’s family before being killed by Macduff.

Instructions:

In this activity, we will use **tableau** – a frozen image made by actors onstage. Each group of students can decide how they would like to present their tableau – they might hold their image for 5 seconds, in silence or with sound (a soundtrack, sound effect, or sound sting). They might include the building and dismantling of the image in their presentation.

- At stage right, have 5-7 students create a tableau that represents **the real Macbeth’s 11th century** reign.
- At stage left, have another group of 5 – 7 students create a tableau that represents **the story of Shakespeare’s Macbeth**.
- Have the remaining students add another tableau (or perhaps a series of three tableaux) in the middle of the stage that show the transformation from the first tableau to the last.

If you have access to spotlights, shine one on the first tableau for several seconds. Fade this scene down and fade up on the scene(s) in the middle. Finally, shine the spotlight on the final scene. Choose music or add student sound effects to cover the transitions from beginning to end. Each time you repeat the sequence, 1 or 2 students from each group could come out of the tableaux to see the performance. Alternately, student videographers could project the piece for the whole class to see.



Activity 3: Ring Around the Rosie

You may have heard:

Ring-a-round the rosie,
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down.

Introduction:

Some folklorists refute the following but many believe that this rhyme sings of the Bubonic Plague (the contagious disease that closed theatres during Shakespeare's time and made Londoners dread the new sicknesses that came every summer.) The 'ring around the rosie' means the ringed red spots that covered an afflicted person's body. It was believed that people could contract the disease from those who had died from it so the dead person's shirt pocket was filled with flowers to warn off others. In fact, the only way to prevent further spread of the plague was to burn the dead and therefore, 'Ashes!' The plague killed so many people in Europe at the time that many believed all of civilization would 'fall down' from Bubonic Plague.

Instructions:

Share the history of this rhyme with the class. Remind them that nursery rhymes were often used as cautionary tales (the Brothers Grimm kept little boys and girls from running away by filling the woods with terrible creatures like the witch with the candy house in Hansel & Gretel.)

Ask students to wax poetic about Macbeth's murderous ambition.

Create a nursery rhyme, maybe even invent a melody for it, that will warn children away from Macbeth's castle or from becoming usurpers/butchers themselves. Students may want to sit with paper and pencil or brainstorm the rhymes on their feet. Some will prefer to work alone while others might work in groups to prepare a performance of their piece as they go.

Would a nursery rhyme or song about Macbeth, the good historical King, be as interesting?

Think about a songwriter you like. Do you prefer when they write about being happy, or when they are struggling? Which makes for better art in your opinion?



About Macbeth the King

Playwrights and Patrons

Macbeth

Act I, Sc iii, lines 38-69

Macbeth and Banquo are returning to Forres across a stormy heath when they see three strange women

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand
me,
By each at once her chappy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Dove anti-ageism campaign hits stage

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Debra Black
Staff Reporter

"I walk like the wind," says one woman all dressed in white. "I have spectacular tits," chimes in another as she takes centre stage. "I have hot booty," adds another woman. "I have ravishing curls," says a fourth.

These women and nine others, all over 40, stand proudly onstage as internationally renowned playwright and director Judith Thompson puts them through their paces, adding last minute touches to their performances.

The women are part of a unique collaborative play that deals with age and beauty, opening this weekend at Toronto's Young Centre for the Performing Arts. Dove commissioned the play – *Body & Soul* – as part of an ongoing campaign to challenge the way society thinks about beauty and aging.

Ironically, Dove, and its parent company Unilever, were embroiled in controversy this week just as Thompson's show was in final rehearsals. A New York airbrush artist, Pascal Dangin, first admitted and then denied he did extensive retouching of photos of women in Dove's Real Beauty campaign. Unilever denied the pictures had been retouched.

For deaf teacher Rhonda Tepper, who will be 50 this summer, this play lets women of a certain age be more visible. She is one of the 13 who will take to the stage Saturday night. "I think the public looks at you differently when you're grey ... but when I open my mouth to speak I know that I am definitely more attractive than I've ever been."

Female beauty is "a wonderful ability to connect with people," said Tepper, who received a cochlear implant three years ago. She recounted how when she was a 30-year-old in Tuscany sexual sparks flew between herself and a young man when their eyes met. Despite being 20 pounds heavier and greying, she believes she is still capable of sexual electricity.

Her sentiments are shared by the others in the play, including Janice Kulyk Keefer, 55, a Canadian author who is moving into new territory in taking to the stage.

"I thought it would be fascinating," she explained. She was intrigued by the idea of learning about the theatre as well as exploring aging and beauty. "One of my lines in the play is that even though age takes away a lot from us in terms of cosmetic things, your neck, your skin, we gain a lot as well. I find with age you gain the confidence to really know where you stand on a whole range of issues."

The idea behind the play is to demonstrate that beauty has no age limit, explained Sharon MacLeod, the director of marketing for Dove in Canada. It is designed to try to spark debate, MacLeod said, rather than sell cosmetics or soap. "Of course," she conceded, "we are a commercial business and our hope is that women will like what Dove is doing and will support Dove so we can continue to do this kind of great work."

The beginnings of the play took shape from thousands of letters Canadian women wrote: an ode to their bodies. Thompson read them and, after narrowing down the thousands to hundreds of candidates, she held auditions. The 13 women chosen attended two workshops to create monologues that explore beauty, aging and the various stages of a woman's life. "What emerged was this extraordinary tapestry of truth," Thompson said.

In a written message, the playwright suggests that working on *Body & Soul* has "been the most gratifying and illuminative creative work I have done in my 30-year career." Because she is middle-aged herself, she found the issues of great interest. "We have history. We wear history in our bodies.... But enduring makes you stronger, more beautiful like all those sites in Rome."

Thompson doesn't have a problem with Dove's sponsorship. "There isn't a mention of soap in the play or any Dove product... It's not a theatricalization of a commercial," she said. And she doesn't believe it's any different than the Canadian Opera Company being sponsored by a bank. The playwright and acting teacher hopes the audience takes away an important message. "If you value your stories and you value your place in them, your accomplishments ... then you will feel good in your skin ... and as far as looking like movie stars, who cares?" Thompson said. "If you notice the women, they're already beautiful, but when they tell their stories they're transformed."



Women rehearse their parts in *Body & Soul* at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts this week.

DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR



About Macbeth the King

Ring Around the Rosie

The following nursery rhyme warns children about the plague:

Ring-a-round the rosie,
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down

Write your own nursery rhyme warning children about Macbeth:
