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SANTA CRUZ

THE ETERNAL *MACBETH*:

A Tale of Wicked Transformation

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THEATER ARTS

by

Elysia Summer Mandolin Ellis

June 2016

This Thesis of Elysia Summer Mandolin Ellis

is approved:

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Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures....iv

Abstract....vi

Introduction....1

Chapter 1: The Witches....6

Chapter 2: *Marqués*....12

Chapter 3: Las Calaveras Catrinas....20

Chapter 4: Embodiment....25

Conclusion....41

Appendix: Internship....42

Bibliography....48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Steve DiBartolomeo. 2016. Digital Image............1

Figure 2: *Illustration Of The Witches Around Their Cauldron In Macbeth*. 1753. Lithograph Print. From *The Illustrated Library Shakspeare*. London, 1890. *Allposters.com* Web. 02 May 2016. Digital Image. 6

Figure 3: Macbeth, Banquo, and the Weird Sisters. From Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*. 1577. Woodcut Print. *Folger Shakespeare Library*. 31 Dec. 2014. Web. 01 May 2016. Digital Image. 6

Figure 4: The Fates spinning the thread of life in *A Golden Thread* by John Melhuish Strudwick. c. 1885. Oil on Canvas. *The Tate Museum*. Web. 01 May 2016. Digital Image..10

Figure 5: Illustration of the hag archetype. *Hag Study* by JRCoffronIII. *Deviant Art*. 2013-2016. Digital Image. 10

Figure 6: The Witches in Orsen Welles' 1935 production of *Voodoo Macbeth*. *Bard Film: The Shakespeare and Film Microblog*. 2008. Web. 6 May 2016. Digital Image...12

Figure 7: The audience immersed in the action of the play. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Erik Pearson. 2016. Digital Image..14

Figure 8: Visual inspiration for Las Brujas provided by *Marqués* playwrights. Image from *Vogue* Germany's March 2014 feature titled "Blonde Hair Blue Jeans," photographed by Mario Testino. *The Fashionography*. 10 Feb. 2014. Web. 10 Apr. 2016. Digital Image..16

Figure 9: An initial costume concept board for Las Brujas by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop...............17

Figure 10: Costume concept board for Las Brujas Negras by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop................18

Figure 11: Example of a broadside by Jose Posada titled *Calavera Revolucionaria* (*Revolutionary Calavera*) c. 1910. From *José Guadalupe Posada and the Mexican Broadside* by Diane Helen Miliotes. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2006. Page 36. Print...21

Figure 12: Image of a Dia de los Muertos celebration in Mexico City. Photo by AR. 2015. "Inicia En México Conmemoración Del Día De Muertos." *Mixed Voces*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.......22

Figure 13: Jose Posada's *La Calavera Catrina* c. 1910-1913. "Jose Guadalupe Posada." *SD Day of the Dead*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image..23

Figure 14: Photo of Frida Kahlo by Nickolas Muray. c.1937. "Uncovering Clues in Frida Kahlo's Private Wardrobe." *Collectors Weekly*. 1 Feb. 2013. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image. 24

Figure 15: Cipi Espaldon as Bruja 1. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.....26

Figure 16: Bruja 1 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photos by Elysia Ellis. 2016..27

Figure 17: Las Brujas tormenting Marqués and Paco. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016..28

Figure 18: Leah Tolmosoff as Bruja 2. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....30

Figure 19: Bruja 2 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....31

Figure 20: Bruja 2. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....32

Figure 21: Bruja 3 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo above by Elysia Ellis. Photo below by Erik Pearson. 2016....35

Figure 22: Costume concept board for Bruja 3 by Elysia Ellis. 2016. Photoshop....36

Figure 23: Lorena Rubio as Bruja 3. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....37

Figure 24: The staging of violence, and application of stage blood by Bruja 3 at the murder of Don David by Marqués. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....38

Figure 25: Bruja 2 following Doña to her death. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016....39

Figure 26: Las Brujas costume rendering by Elysia Ellis. 2016....40

Figure 27: Costume Design and Renderings by B. Modern, *Santa Cruz Shakespeare* Costume Shop. Collage by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop....42

Figure 28: Tracy Todd Smith crafting the Witches bridles at SCS, Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2015....43

Figure 29: The Witches in *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*. Photo by rr jones. 2015. *Santa Cruz Shakespeare - Facebook*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image....44

Figure 30: Patty Gallagher (Ross), Toby Onwumere (Macduff), and Sierra Jolene (Malcolm) in *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*. Photo by rr jones. 2015. *Santa Cruz Shakespeare - Facebook*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image....45

Figure 31: The blood table for *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2015....46

ABSTRACT

The Eternal *Macbeth*: A Tale of Wicked Transformation

by Elysia Summer Mandolin Ellis

My thesis project was to create costume designs for the world premiere of *Marqués,* directed by Erik Pearson. The play is a modern adaptation of *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare's seventeenth century tragedy, a classic that has been subject to layers of meaning over time. The story examines violence through the psychotic breakdown of a man consumed by greed and fear. Macbeth's desire to alter his destiny, prophesized by three witches, leads to the death of his comrades and loved ones. Ultimately, Macbeth's impulsive actions also lead to his own demise, foreseen by the Witches. The play poses the question: what is real and what is illusion in life? How does an individual maintain sight of their moral compass in the midst of a corrupt and vicious world?

The research process for *Marqués* required me to examine violence in two foreign settings: Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the Mexican drug cartel. In these dark worlds, I found inspiration for three eternal and wayward characters, which offered me a light to examine the specter of death. In redeveloping Shakespeare's iconic Witches, I hoped to enchant new audiences with the story, providing space to consider destruction of culture and of mind. My design process for this production became a resource through which to explore and strengthen my own values and identity as an artist. I found recognizing darkness led to more powerful results than what would have been without it.

In this thesis capstone paper, I focus on my costume design process for Las Brujas, the Witches in *Marqués*. Through historical, cultural, and contemporary research, discussion of the collaborative process, my direct experience interviewing subjects, and interning on a traditional production of *Macbeth*, I illustrate how I developed dynamic theatrical costume designs for Las Brujas. Satisfying the desires of the director, the design team, the playwrights, the actors, and the audience, I feel my process was successful in establishing an iconic look for Las Brujas that maintains the power of Shakespeare's Witches while offering a fresh and relevant interpretation.

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INTRODUCTION

To remain unconscious is to live in darkness. Oblivion may be comfortable, quiet, calm, undisturbed, but it is shallow. I have found myself falling into the desire to remain ignorant of the world's injustices because their truths are frightening and heartbreaking when one feels too small to make a difference. I have realized, however, that I am able to use my passion for costume design to be part of theater, a collaborative art form with the power to reveal truth in a way that inspires rather than alienates. Some of the best theater I have seen is that which invites audiences to step into new frames of consciousness, creating a deeper understanding of the issues afflicting our world.

Through work as costume designer on the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) 2016 winter production of *Marqués* (see fig. 1), I engaged my creative sensibilities to assist in the visual telling of the story through synthesis of research and informed artistic selection of clothing. My designs served the playwrights' and director's creative vision for the play, provided appropriate cultural and character cues, supported the actors in embodying their roles, and clarified intent to the audience while keeping their imagination engaged. *Marqués* is a project that challenged me to move beyond non-violent sources of inspiration to find the meaning and purpose of exploring gritty and dark inspiration.

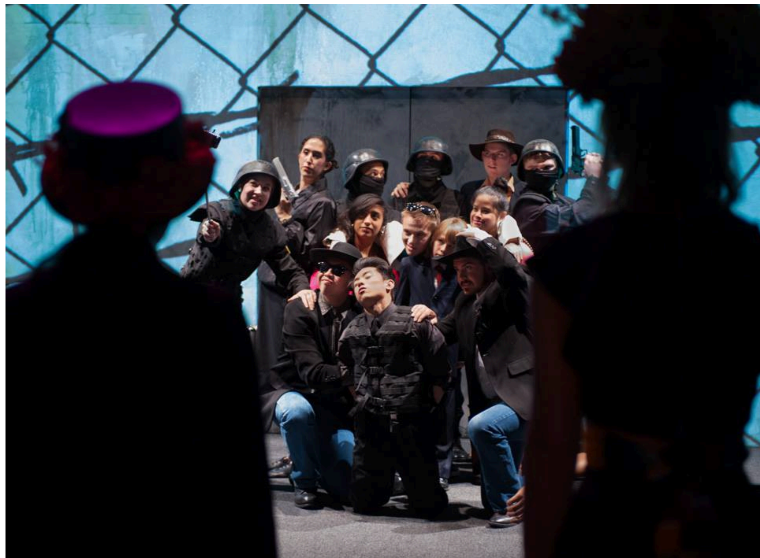

Fig. 1 UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Steve DiBartolomeo. 2016. Digital Image.

What excited me most about attending UCSC's MA in Theater Arts program was the opportunity to build upon my undergraduate training in fashion design (the creation of beautiful garments on the cutting-edge of fashion). I earned a BFA in Fashion Design from California College of the Arts (CCA). The program included training in the methodology of research, techniques of garment construction and design, presentation of design through illustration and *mood boards* (visual collages of inspiration), in addition to study of fashion history, and critical theory. Due to time pressures of shifting storylines and details through fourteen drafts of the *Marqués* script, I was pleased to have access to an inherent understanding of color, line, shape, composition, and the ability to rapidly develop inspiration through research and analysis of diverse resources. CCA's training prepared me to take on the visual aspects of costume design, but I was eager to gain collaborative experience on actualized theatrical productions, providing me with a better understanding of the wider scope of what it means to be a costume designer.

Going into the MA program, I had the expectation that greater emphasis would be placed on character research, and the practical and theoretical reasons behind design details within the play's story, this proved to be true. I also anticipated creative discussions regarding the visual collaboration of scenic design, costume design, and lighting design. However, I found design discussions remained specific to individual departments in the *Marqués* project. Therefore, I remained unaware of how my design concepts would look against the set and under stage light until technical rehearsal. My uncertainty in the overall look of the show gave me a sense of unease during my design process, but the result turned out to be an exciting revelation, surprisingly harmonious and effective. Conversations regarding detailed costume design decisions were exclusive to the director, playwrights, and myself. Weekly production meetings included the entire production team. These meetings were not concerned with how the costumes looked, but rather how they performed technically; for example, in dance choreography or in support of carrying *props* (objects separate from costumes and scenery, handled by actors onstage).

Many of my roles and responsibilities working as a costume designer on this production were similar to what they might be in a traditional production of *Macbeth*; a process I observed and participated in during my 2015 costume internship at *Santa Cruz Shakespeare* (see Appendix). *Pre-production* is a time in which research, concept development, and a plan for execution of the designs is made by the designer before a play's rehearsals begin and the department starts the *production process,* in which designs are materialized. A costume designer prepares for script analysis with a first read-through; reading the play without seeking to label or define anything, allowing the story to unfold naturally, and observing the emotions and questions to arise in the process. Then a designer re-reads the script, a minimum of two additional times. This is when one focuses on analyzing and interpreting the text, a process that requires careful attention to detail. It is important in this process to note all questions that come up as one attempts to identify the history and personalities of each character, their relations to each other, the social groups they belong to, the principle themes examined, and the development of these dynamics throughout the play.

An initial conversation with the director is the next step in pre-production. The first meeting is a good time to address any initial questions that arose when reading the script, discuss the director's production concept (their view of the world of the play), and to also consider elements known early on to be of particular importance, such as the portrayal of violence on stage. Unique to a new play is incorporation of data directly from living playwrights, which I discuss later as oral history research. Discussion continues with the director as the designer does *research*, text and visual information related to the location, time period, and mood of the play, the themes, inspirations, archetypes, and fashion related to the characters.

A play's production requirements are analyzed as early as possible during the pre-production process so the costume designer can develop a plan for the procurement of all costumes and materials. Factors such as the number of actors, number of costume changes required, deadlines, costume budget and available resources, effect how designs are realized. As was true for *Marqués*, sometimes even these important foundational details have to remain flexible for the play to be a success. A new play

can be subject to textual revisions up until *opening night* (the first night of a performance in which an audience is present and all elements of design are considered complete) and set for the *run of the show* (all subsequent performances of the production). Therefore, although not ideal, it is not uncommon for costumes to be altered up until opening night. After the show's opening, garments only change if there is a technical issue that cannot be repaired. Once the designs are finalized according to the production concept and requirements, they are presented to the creative team.

Communication of costume concepts through visual representation is it essential for understanding design. Words alone are more likely to be misinterpreted, whereas the terms "seeing is believing" and "a picture is worth a thousand words" hold their truth. Frequently, a series of costume illustrations are used to represent costume designs to the production team, but in *Marqués* this was not the case. No costumes could be *built*, a term for when a garment is constructed out of scratch from specified materials, due to a limited availability of resources. All costumes, apart from handcrafted accessories and embellishments, such as floral headpieces, would be sourced through procurement of already existing garments. I *pulled* costumes, a process of selecting costume pieces from stock, at the UCSC costume shop with the help of my design assistant, Trishana Wilson. I also rented costume pieces from the costume stock of other theater companies, and purchased garments and accessories from online and brick-and-mortar stores. Sometimes, a director will want to see illustrations regardless of how the costumes are sourced, but Pearson decided and I agreed that for the needs of this production of *Marqués*, presenting a series of images that represented the ideal wardrobe for each character was the most effective way to illustrate the costume design concepts.

Actor fittings begin and continue as costume looks are acquired. Usually, the costume designer takes photographs of the outfit chosen at the fitting, to share with the director, and in this case, with the playwrights who had input on the designs. Some elements of the costume may be required at rehearsal prior to dress rehearsal so the actors can learn to work with items that inhibit movement or might otherwise be a safety hazard such as: masks, headpieces, high-heels, corsets, and body padding. Costume items sent to rehearsal are called *rehearsal costumes*. During *tech rehearsals*,

sound and lighting designers have an opportunity to work through the realities of their designs, and the scenic designer places the finishing touches on their work. In the last few days of tech rehearsal, *dress rehearsal* takes place, the first time that all of the costumes will be seen together onstage. *Marqués* required three dress rehearsals, but some productions require more. During this time, costumes remain subject to change as deemed fit by the designer, director, and occasionally actors, where comfort, safety and practicality come into play.

Adapting this longstanding cornerstone of tragic theater is a significant academic undertaking. When *Macbeth* is translated successfully to new audiences, it means it has skillfully addressed modern social and political issues through its complex narrative and exhibited innovative artistic expression through complimentary collaboration of design. The somewhat daunting challenge is then transformed into an incredible accomplishment.

In this thesis, I discuss my process of costume design for adaptation of *Macbeth* with special attention to my two favorite aspects of design: the academic research, and the result of the final costume design. Honoring the playwrights' intent so my work might serve as a template for future designers of this play was an important part of my process. My research was based in the history, culture, and psychology of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and Ricther/Andrade's *Marqués*. Political and artistic movements, fashion theory, photographic research, and oral history informed my designs as I aimed to establish iconic looks that created clarity within the complex world of *Marqués*.

The production required men's, women's, and children's costumes in a variety of styles: high-end fashion, military, police, and hospital uniforms, underclass and working-class casual and business wear, exotic dance costumes, and costumes for supernatural entities. The many roles, played by twenty-three actors, resulted in sixty-one costumes; each required a unique set of data and analysis. In this thesis paper, I focus on the most difficult and triumphant aspect of the collaboration, the development and selection of my costume designs for Las Brujas. The premise and purpose of Las Brujas characters parallel that of the three Witches in the play *Macbeth*; they are supernatural beings who prophesize the downfall of a protagonist lead astray by his inner turmoil and violent actions.

CHAPTER 1: THE WITCHES

Macbeth is a play with deep history; it has sparked countless essays and books discussing theory and analysis that one can easily become buried under. Rather than go into a detailed analysis of the entire production, my intent is to discuss the history and interpretation of *Macbeth*'s Witches (see fig. 2), creating a backdrop to function as a base layer for understanding the decisions and details regarding the development of Las Brujas, the Witch influenced characters in *Marqués*. Apart from the lead roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the Witches are the most memorable characters in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Fig. 2 *Illustration Of The Witches Around Their Cauldron In Macbeth*. 1753. Lithograph Print. From *The Illustrated Library Shakespeare*. London, 1890. *Allposters.com* Web. 02 May 2016. Digital Image.

Macbeth was a story of elaborated fact. Raphael Holinshed was an English chronicler who lived from 1529-1580, and his work was a source of inspiration for Shakespeare. In Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, published in 1577, before *Macbeth* was written, he

Fig. 3 Macbeth, Banquo, and the Weird Sisters. From Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*. 1577. Woodcut Print. *Folger Shakespeare Library*. 31 Dec. 2014. Web. 01 May 2016. Digital Image.

describes the “Makbeth and Banquho” encounter with “The Weird Sisters.” *The Weird Sisters* are described as “three women in strange and wild apparel resembling preachers of the underworld... the common opinion was that these women were either ‘the weird sisters’ that is, as ye would say ‘the goddesses of destiny’ or else some ‘nymphs or fairies’ induced with knowledge of prophesies by their necromantical science because everything came to pass as they had spoken.” (Holinshed) The illustration alongside Holinshed’s account of the interaction shows the women wearing expensive looking, heavily detailed garments, quite distinct from the tattered costumes one associates with traditional productions of *Macbeth* today (see fig. 3).

Scholars are unable to agree on the origin of “Three Weird (or Wyrd) Sisters,” also called “The Fatal Sisters,” and “The Wayward (or Weyward) Sisters” as “Witches.” The debate of their witch characterization stems from controversy around what happened to the play script after Shakespeare’s death in 1616. Before going into details of the controversy, the central figure of dispute, Thomas Middleton must be introduced. A 2007 article published in *The Guardian*, written by Gary Taylor, an avid proponent regarding Middleton’s adaptation to Shakespeare’s text provides the insight required. G. Taylor frames Middleton as a prolific English playwright and poet, of the Jacobean Era. Middleton was sixteen years younger than Shakespeare, and they were undoubtedly aware of each other. Like Shakespeare, Middleton wrote both tragedy and comedy, but according to G. Taylor, his work was suppressed due to the “inconvenient truths” it revealed about the sociopolitical landscape of his time. After facing backlash like public burnings of his book *Microcynicon*[1], and imprisonment for the success of his play *A Game at Chess*[2], Middleton receded from the limelight. G. Taylor states actors in Shakespeare’s company viewed Middleton as “Shakespeare’s natural successor” and “chose him” to work on two Shakespeare plays after his death, including *Macbeth*. (G. Taylor, "The Orphan Playwright")

Some academics, like Celia R. Daileader who specializes in Renaissance drama and the representation of women in Shakespeare, argue that Shakespeare originally wrote the three characters

[1] *Microcynicon: Six Snarling Satires* was a book of poetic satire.
[2] *A Game at Chess*: A comic satirical play.

in *Macbeth* not as 'witches,' but 'fairies.' In Daileader's essay titled "Weird Brothers: What Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* Can Tell Us About Race, Sex, and Gender in *Macbeth*" in the book *Weyward Macbeth*, she takes the reader back in time, stating with no uncertainty that in 1616 Thomas Middelton took his quill pen to the folio text and changed the stage directions, altering "*enter three fairies*" to "*enter three witches*," adding the character Hecate, a Greek goddess of witchcraft ruling over the three Witches, and multiple verses of dialogue, for example, "you should be women / And yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so." (Shakespeare, 1.3.49-51 qtd. in Daileader, 11)

Daileader's confidence in the authorship of the edits is in part because the modified text is not a new revelation. She notes, "as early as 1778" quoting G. Taylor, "two songs identified in stage directions 3.5 and 4.1 [in Macbeth, were noted to have also] appear[ed] in Middleton's *The Witch*." (G. Taylor and Lavagnino, 348 qtd. in Daileader, 12) Daileader points to Marion O'Connor's introduction in the Oxford edition of Middelton's play, *The Witch* to reveal why the same characters might have been added to *Macbeth*. According to O'Connor "The courtiers who consult [Hecate] are neither her victims nor her converts but rather simply her clients. That they are neither harmed nor corrupted by their encounters with witchcraft is a flat violation of the rules of demonology as articulated in the Elizabethan and Jacobean treatises on the subject." (O'Connor, 1126 qtd. in Daileader, 14) Because Middleton's play was suppressed it seems plausible that he might inject his work into Shakespeare's play given the opportunity, perhaps even with the aims of a satirical statement on the concept of the witch. Daileader sites scholar Igna-Stina Ewbank stating, "what the introduction of the song and dance in 4.1 achieves... is to make the scene less focused on the moral destruction of Macbeth and to shift the emphasis on to the witches as being in command, free and unbounded" (Ewbank, 1168 qtd. Daileader, 14). "The witches represent a community of women entirely outside – even, in the stagecraft for 3.5, literally above – monarchical control, emphasizing more starkly Macbeth's isolation and increasing impotence." (Ewbank, 1168 qtd. in Daileader, 14) Like many of the mysteries surrounding Shakespeare's work, it is difficult to absolutely confirm or deny anything, but it is important to note the history of these figures as their characterization is key to the longevity *Macbeth*.

Why are these prophesizing Witches and the lines they utter so popular, centuries after the play was written? Certainly their eerie presence, playful foreshadowing of Macbeth's fate, and poetic banter in trochaic tetrameter with rhymed couplets, has greatly contributed to their popularity throughout centuries. However, there are multiple reasons why the *Macbeth* Witches stand the test of time. Perhaps most important, is that the Witches are a triad, meaning there are three of them.

The number three has held significance across cultures throughout history. Relating to human identity, it represents birth, life, and death, a balance between mind, body, and spirit, and creates the concept of time in past, present, and future. In religion, the number three appears in the *Holy Trinity* in Christianity representing: the father, the son, and the holy spirit, in the *Three Cardinal Sins* in Judaism: idolatry, murder, and sexual immorality, the Hindu *Trimurti* depicts a supreme divinity through the combination of three deities: *Brahama* the creator, *Vishnu* the preserver, and *Shiva* the destroyer, and the *Wiccian Rule of Three* carries the belief that whatever energy one projects into the universe will be returned times three. Due to these examples, which are a few among many, it is apparent that three is a number signifying power, wisdom, and balance.

Possible inspirations for the Witches in *Macbeth* are the classical figures of the *Fates* or *Furies*. Fates, found in Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology, are "three goddesses who controlled human lives." ("Fates") In Greek mythology, they are the *Moirai* (or *Moerae*), "Clotho, who spun the web of life; Lachesis, who measured its length; and Atropos, who cut it." ("Fates") In Roman mythology they were called "the *Parcae*—Nona, Decuma, and Morta." ("Fates") The Norse fates were called *Norns*, were named "Urth or Wyrd (the past), Verthandi (the present), and Skuld (the future)." ("Norns") Furies, called *Erinyes* in Greek mythology and *Dirae* in Roman mythology were "fierce and ruthless goddesses who avenged crimes by pursing the perpetrators to drive them mad." (Whalen, 61-62) Furies are said to be "agents of the fates, exacting the punishments decreed by the gods." ("The Furies") Parallels can be drawn between Shakespeare's Witches and these mythical figures through their purpose, as well as through their appearance.

Macbeth addresses the Witches as "secret, black and midnight hags" (Shakespeare, 4.1.52 qtd. in Daileader, 14), a description that may have borrowed from the physicality of the fates and furies. Although depictions of the Fates varies in art, they commonly appear "as maidens of grave aspect" (see fig. 4). (Peck) Furies are described figures with a "ghastly physical appearance that reflects their domain of concern and their methods of punishment. Their eyes ooze... their robes are black; their breath reeks; and they are generally repulsive... [and described as] 'unclean.'" (Roman, 163) The word "hag," is defined as "an ugly, slatternly, or evil-looking old woman," and this definition pertains to the physical appearance of the furies, many depictions of the fates, and has been the classic physical characterization of the Witches in *Macbeth* for centuries. ("Hag")

Fig. 4 The Fates spinning the thread of life in *A Golden Thread* by John Melhuish Strudwick. c. 1885. Oil on Canvas. *Tate Museum*. Web. 01 May 2016. Digital Image.

Through my research, I have drawn conclusions about the two most popular character archetypes for a witch: the hag and the enchantress. *Macbeth* makes use of the archetype of a hag (see fig. 5). This is a woman who cannot be trusted; she uses tricks and has destructive tendencies. Abundant in wisdom, she uses this gift to torture others as a form of twisted entertainment, and to accelerate her malicious desires. She moves freely amongst the living, the dead, and the forces of the

Fig. 5 Illustration of the hag archetype. *Hag Study* by JRCoffronIII. *Deviant Art*. 2013-2016. Digital Image.

underworld. Fearless, she is able to call upon multidimensional knowledge to access the psyche of others and foresee the future. The hag is an asexual woman. Universally unattractive, her undesirable features are emphasized, her psychological darkness mirrored through physical appearance. She is wild and chaotic in nature; her clothing reflects a rebellion against the norm. She can be both an agent of and a witness to destruction. Her appearance usually signifies an impending doom. In contrast, the enchantress archetype is personified through characters like Circe[3] from Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*.

I examined Shakespeare's Witches, because *Marqués* is an adaptation that uses Shakespeare's cues to carry the viewer into a new fictional theater space. The costume design process is itself an adaptation and translation of text. Therefore, I was working on an adaptation of twice removed from the Shakespeare's text. My visual translation of the Witches, led me to go between *Marqués* and *Macbeth*, pulling inspiration from both sources. There are ways in which my design moved away from the original *Marqués* Las Brujas concept back towards the Witches of *Macbeth*. This process will be discussed in the next chapter.

[3] Circe is a goddess of magic. She is a youthful, confident, powerful enchantress, surrounded by beauty. Her moral compass can point askew, which leads her to act impulsively. She has infinite knowledge of potions and spells to poison, heal, protect, and transform. Supernatural, her can navigate the realms of earth, heaven, and hell. She has the ability to produce extreme pleasure or inflict misfortune. Her physical depiction can be shimmering and light, rich and dark, or a harmonious play of the contrasting forces of good and evil.

CHAPTER 2: *MARQUÉS*

Macbeth maintains its popularity in part because of the Witches, but also because of its adaptability. The plot of *Macbeth* is imbued with cultural, political, and social issues, which lend to its iconic nature. Contrasting philosophies, values, and emotions are found in juxtaposition; femininity vs. masculinity, freedom vs. captivity, fate vs. control, power vs. weakness, love vs. fear, comedy vs. tragedy, and so on, lend to the play's adaptive quality. In Juan F. Cerdás' examination of Shakespeare adaptations, in a paper titled *Recurring Elements of the Macbeth Mytho*s, he observes that "adaptations of Shakespeare's plays rely on Shakespearean material while they also transform them, for they simultaneously incorporate reproduction and renewal. In this process, variation or absence of the source text results in the reshaping of the Shakespearean play into something different, since, while maintaining links and parallels with the source, adaptations establish their own autonomous representational system." (Cerda, 55)

The book, *Macbeth: New Critical Essays* by Nick Moschovakis, illuminates that "*Macbeth* has often been made to speak for politically oppressed and dissatisfied communities around the world." (Moschovakis, 37) The author cites a 1992 production by the English Shakespeare Company that "addressed registered global concerns with U.S. imperialism and militarism," and a "Nigerian pro-democracy adaptation, [titled] *Makbutu*," staged in 2000. (Moschovakis, 37) Orson Welles' *Voodoo Macbeth* is perhaps the most well known adaptation. Performed in 1936, under the direction of Welles, a European American, with funding from the Federal Theater Project, *Voodoo Macbeth* was criticized and praised for its use of an all African

Fig. 6 The *Witches* in Orsen Welles' 1935 production of *Voodoo Macbeth*. *Bard Film: The Shakespeare and Film Microblog*. 2008. Web. 6 May 2016. Digital Image.

American cast: the “Negro Theater Project’s New York unit.” ("The Show Must Go On!") While the play provided a tremendous performance opportunity, “it highlighted tensions within its audiences,” some of whom believed that the performance “strove to mock through comedy” because of the way the actors were performing Shakespeare ("The Show Must Go On!") Despite this criticism, the play became a box office sensation; it sold out for ten weeks during its first run at the Lafayette Theater, later going on a national tour. My primary interest in Welles’ adaptation is his representation of the Witches as voodoo priestesses (see fig. 6). I found it interesting that the designs were inspired by the specific culture in which his adaptation is set.

I mention the political and historical contexts of the adaptations above only to highlight the universality of the story of *Macbeth*. I felt it important to provide historical examples in which this play was adapted to new environments, and some of the issues that can arise in adaptation and representation. As a designer, I wished to be informed about the purpose of adaptation and the representation of a culture different that my own. There are political motivations behind the UCSC playwrights’ adaptation, *Marqués*, and I could talk about these at length. However, this paper is about Las Brujas, and I am eager to discuss more of their development.

Marqués is a contemporary, bilingual (English/Spanish/Shakespearean) adaptation of the classic Shakespearean tragedy, *Macbeth*. UCSC Graduate students, Stephen Richter and Mónica Andrade, wrote the play. Pearson, a successful UCSC alum, working as a director and projection designer, was invited to direct *Marqués*, which was produced through collaboration of the Theater Arts, Literature, and Digital Arts and New Media (DANM) departments at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). The arch of narrative in *Marqués* is the same as *Macbeth*. Their protagonists share a fear of death, a hunger for power, and a malicious desire to defy their own fate at the expense of others.

Every culture and every individual has unique methods of communication. I strived to present my findings with an authenticity that could be absorbed by an audience with varying degrees of familiarity or foreignness to the story being told. In this project, my objective was to reflect character

identity through the semiology of clothing, reinforcing the play's messages through visual signifiers. Understanding that every person comprehends the world through a unique set of "connotational meanings," the associations a person thinks or feels when exposed to an image, respectively the signified meaning triggered by a signifying object, I selected iconic elements of clothing which held the highest level of truth, cultural significance, stage presence, and ability to be understood universally among the anticipated audience. (Barnard, 85)

Set in the Baja Peninsula of Mexico, the adaptation took the audience into a theatrical representation of the environment of the Mexican drug cartels; exploring the contrast of beauty surrounded by desolation. *Marqués* was designed to immerse the audience in the theatrical experience (see fig. 7). Initially, it was challenging to sift through articles and images that reveal either in horror or glorification the "kill or be killed," criminal mentality that crushes the impoverished. Yet, there is another side of Mexico that celebrates the gift of life and solace in death. In the contrast of good and evil, light and dark, life and death, I found my inspiration.

Fig. 7 The audience immersed in the action of the play. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Erik Pearson. 2016. Digital Image.

I began this thesis design project by contacting the playwrights for a script of *Marqués*. The timing of this contact was serendipitous as the playwrights were doing a first read-through that same evening. I attended the momentous event, leaving with the new script in hand, completely confused but intrigued. I was not able follow the plot as many characters were still unnamed, or referenced by multiple names in script; the play was a work in progress. The text incorporated Spanish, of which I unfortunately have only an elementary vocabulary. During my second and third read-through, I

intentionally overlooked the Spanish; this allowed me to form a better understanding of the script, identifying its characters, and parallels to the plot of *Macbeth* without getting lost. I later learned most of the Spanish was restated in English. Incorporation of the language native to the play helped establish the setting, increased accessibility for Spanish speakers, and acknowledged the diverse audience the play was intended for. The process of script analysis continued as new drafts were formed.

The next step in my pre-production process was speaking with the director, Erik Pearson. During pre-production Pearson was in New York where he resides. Our initial design conversations took place on conference calls, which included the scenic designer, Austin Kottkamp. As I have since learned is often the case in theatrical design, these initial conversations with Pearson and Kottkamp were heavy in scenic design discussion, but light in costume. Costume details often come a little later in the process as casting can greatly influence foundational design decisions, whereas scenic design is not as reliant on specific casting decisions. I hoped the initial conversations would shed light on the scale of this project, but it remained undecided whether the cast would be ten with lots of *doubling* (when one actor playing multiple roles), or fifty with no doubling. However, the director made it clear from the first conversation that I was to create costume designs that spoke true to the playwrights' vision of the world of *Marqués*, and he encouraged me to go to them directly with questions. Pearson expressed interest in creating a visual language, by giving actors a base costume with a gesture here and there, such as using items to denote wealth in the cartel world. As Pearson was also unfamiliar with this world, he asked that I educate him with imagery.

In my undergraduate education, I was taught countless methods of finding inspiration for design; yet the most common advice I received was never to look at fashion magazines or images of high fashion for inspiration. One was to look at art and draw from the vast details of the world for innovative ideas: sounds in a building, textures in a cityscape, colors of a landscape, etc. The goal was to apply unique pleasing shapes, colors, and patterns into both functional and decorative design elements in a fashion collection, with a very specific consumer in mind. In this, I found that crafting

not only a visual world, but also a story for my inspirational figure representing a larger target market, was my most successful method for design.

In costume design for theater, the fundamental story already exists. Inspiration begins with concepts drawn from the script, which are then developed through research. In first draft I received, Las Brujas are introduced in the fifth scene, surrounded by trash and vultures at a municipal dump near the village of Candaleria. The stage directions described them as “women with wild blonde hair... Bandanas cover their mouths and noses... They wear duster coats, yellow dishwashing gloves and carry shovels.” (Richter and Andrade, 9) The playwrights spoke about Las Brujas as women living in in the village of Candelaria, surviving by scavenging the municipal dump for jewelry and clothing where the cartel abandoned corpses.

These were intended to be highly sexualized supernatural forces; Richter later called them “fate embodied in human form.” The playwrights presented me with high fashion images to support their vision (see fig. 8). These were the exact types of images I had been told to avoid as a fashion design student. However, working as a costume designer it is not uncommon to reinterpret fashion for the stage. As I was aiming to establish archetypes, and the playwrights desired an image conscious, glamorous world, I felt it would be a misstep to ignore these types of images. Therefore, I began to look at Mexican street fashion to confirm and further detail the playwrights’ initial inspirations. Based on the street fashion images, and aided by the brand names mentioned in the script, I was able to collect more fashion images to develop costume

Fig. 8 Visual inspiration for Las Brujas provided by *Marqués* playwrights. Image from *Vogue* Germany’s March 2014 feature titled “Blonde Hair Blue Jeans,” photographed by Mario Testino. *The Fashionography*. 10 Feb. 2014. Web. 10 Apr. 2016. Digital Image.

concept boards, reflecting elements of regional fashion, while maintaining the playwrights' concept. I also sought images of the Mexican drug cartel, and found actual depictions in photojournalism of arrests and the idealization of these figures through popular music videos. To complete my visual conception of the world surrounding the play, I collected photographs that represented rural, working and underclass citizens, and people directly affected by the cartel violence. Photojournalism again aided in this process; images of natural disasters, funerals, and festivals gave me a clearer understanding of the visual culture.

For my first design presentation, I provided the playwrights and director with nine costume concept boards for Las Brujas. My intent was to reflect the information they had provided me, and suggest ways their idea might be pushed further. If Las Brujas were to remain cowgirls, as a costume designer I wished to shift them towards a more powerful look, charged with Latin American influences (see fig. 9).

Fig. 9 An initial costume concept board for Las Brujas by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop.

Pearson pushed the playwrights to develop Las Brujas story further and a new concept was born. No longer supernatural or sexualized, the three sisters' family had been victimized by the cartel and they were on a revenge mission to bring down the cartel leader, Don David and his gang. Las Brujas costumes would literally be costumes for the characters, as the women intended to torment the cartel by engaging their catholic superstition by dressing as *Las Brujas Negras*, witches who practice

black magic (see fig. 10). At the end of the play, the sisters would be revealed as contemporary Mexican women.

My core research method for this production was oral history. Engaging in conversation with the playwrights was essential to my process. In addition to being the originators of the highly conceptualized script, the writers had personal knowledge of the world surrounding *Marqués*. Richter, an American who served in the Marines overseas was familiar with the stories of Marines who had been part of drug counterinsurgency operations in Mexico. Struggling to adjust to the "real world" after the military, he and Andrade spent time in Mexico, where they witnessed, "how the war on drugs and violence of the cartels affected everyone, particularly lower income populations – some are lured into the world of the cartels, many are killed. The rich are affected in a different way as they are forced to have bodyguards and live under constant fear of being kidnapped, held for ransom and possibly killed." (Richter and Andrade, "Questions") Richter was drawn to writing as an outlet to talk about the things he saw during war, and as a tool for adjusting to life after military service.

Fig. 10 Costume concept board for Las Brujas Negras by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop.

Although the visual material the playwrights provided (in addition to the costume descriptions in the script) sometimes contradicted the visuals I imagined when reading the script, this only encouraged me to go deeper into my research. In doing so, I was able to come to our conversations with faith in their concepts and an ability to propose new researched ideas, and have intelligent

conversations about very specific details regarding the costumes without an unnecessary attachment to my concepts. Letting go of the preciousness of my visualizations served to my benefit, as it formed a mutual trust between the playwrights, director, and myself, leading to a respect and flexibility of mind regarding what each other brought to the conversation.

CHAPTER 3: LAS CALAVERAS CATRINAS

One of the reasons I enjoy costume design is because it provides me with opportunities for in-depth study of subjects in which I previously lacked education. I found it important to study Mexican culture because the primary influence for the characterization of Las Brujas was a Mexican pop icon born through art. Lou Taylor, a renowned, published dress historian who works internationally as a professor and exhibit curator specializing in "the development of critical approaches to the discussion of the objects of clothing in their historical, material culture and museology settings" has been a tremendous resource contributing to my blossoming knowledge of the study of dress. ("Lou Taylor") In her book *The Study of Dress History*, L. Taylor states, "No painting or drawing is free from the personal preferences and prejudices of its creator nor free from the etiquettes, politics and prejudices of its day. It can be positively misleading to accept visual sources at face value because the relationships between images and their cultural meanings are so multi-layered and complex." (L. Tayor, 115)

Through the study of Mexican culture, I aimed to gain a better understanding of the meaning of the art serving as the basis of my design for Las Brujas. My goal was to be able to translate an image rich in historical and cultural significance for the stage without inappropriate, inadvertent and harmful *cultural appropriation*. Susan Scafidi author of *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law,* defines the action as "taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission." (Rodriguez) As a costume designer, I hope to avoid disrespectful cultural appropriation in my career. Coming from a culture outside of that in which the pop icon inspiration for Las Brujas was developed, and on which the play was based, the study of Mexican history and culture was essential to my process.

The final shift in Las Brujas design concept came from the playwrights, who wanted to use images of "Las Catrinas" as a source of inspiration. La Catrina, is a *calavera*, a skeleton caricature created by Mexican political printmaker José Guadalupe Posada during the *Porfiriato* era[4] of the early twentieth century. Posada's *La Calavera Catrina* was developed for the use in *broadsides*, an inexpensive document printed on both sides, circulated with an image and a story (see fig. 11). Broadsides were accessible to all social classes, the image and story were satirical in nature, and the incorporation of an image made the story accessible to even those who were illiterate. The broad message of these skeleton caricatures was that death is the inescapable equalizer. In the book, *Digging the Days of the Dead*, Juanita Garciagodoy explains the purpose of the calavera, "by exposing and ridiculing the roles in which they cast their calaveras, the artists make those roles available for comment, for consideration, and even for possible overturning... Habitual activities... shown performed by skeletons [...] are unnaturalized such that we are invited to think about them: What do we do? Why do we do it? For Whom? What does our activity mean? When will it change or cease?"(Garciagody,

Fig. 11 Example of a broadside by Jose Posada titled *Calavera Revolucionaria* (*Revolutionary Calavera*) c. 1910. From *José Guadalupe Posada and the Mexican Broadside* by Diane Helen Miliotes. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2006. Page 36. Print.

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[4] A thirty-five year, dictatorship of Mexico by President Porfirio Díaz Mori. Beginning in 1876, the regime is known the *Porfiriato*, is eloquently described by Diane Miliotes in her book titled *José Guadalupe Posada and the Mexican Broadsides*: "[it was] a contradictory period, when stability was achieved through political repression, centralization of power, and press censorship, [this period] saw the opening of the country to foreign economic interests and outside cultural influences, as well as the modernization of infrastructures that created new circuits for the movement of people and ideas... [including] the adoption of modern printing technologies." (Milliotes, 9) The *Porfiriato* era lead to the *Mexican Revolution*, a "bloody conflict... in which 900,000 people lost their lives." ("Feature Mexican Revolution")

200-201) This context made me feel that these figures were the perfect physical representation for Las Brujas in *Marqués*. I am an advocate of art that challenges us to question motives; I believe that is also the playwrights' intent for *Marqués*.

Posada created hundreds of calaveras caricatures, but Las Calaveras Catrinas have been established as a pop-icon, still seen in great numbers today, especially on *Dia de los Muertos* (*Day of the Dead*), a Mexican holiday in which people come together to honor the deceased through ritual, remembrance, and celebration (see fig. 12). In my research, I have read that in Mexican culture there is an understanding and acceptance of death, "death is feared and respected, but it is thought to be an inevitable part of the natural cycle, a phenomenon as logical as life itself." ("Mexican Culture") This acceptance allows "Mexicans to joke about death and poke fun at it in their art, literature, and music." ("Mexican Culture") Shakespeare's Witches are not only as mysterious as one's fate after death, they also carry a comedic affect through their dialogue, which the *Marqués* playwrights chose to carry through in *Marqués*.

Fig. 12 Image of a Dia de los Muertos celebration in Mexico City. Photo by AR. 2015. "Inicia En México Conmemoración Del Día De Muertos." *Mixed Voces*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.

In their presentation of this concept to the director, and myself, the playwrights provided brief descriptions for each of the Las Calaveras Catrinas, which they wanted me to further for Las Brujas. Actor Cipi Espaldon in the role of Bruja 1 would portray La Catrina Emplovada. This calavera caricature is associated with the term *emplovar,* meaning 'to cover with dust,' and she warned against chasing false beauty. La Catrina Garbancera, they said, would be played by actor Leah Tolomosoff in

the role of Bruja 2. La Catrina Garbancera, was described as a warning against attempts to escape one's roots for another culture. And finally, La Calavera Catrina performed by Lorena Rubio in her role of Bruja 3, represents the impermanence of social status.

Academic information about the specific backstories of each individual La Calavera Catrina is difficult to find, as these figures have become legends, their stories are passed down through oral history. I found one reference to their overall look. "According to the grandson of Posada's colleague, the famous printer and journalist Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, Posada's 'Calavera catrina' was intended to make fun of women from the lower classes who were imitating women from the upper classes' ...Most calaveras catrinas exhibit signs of turn-of-the-century wealth." (see fig. 13) (Garciagody, 60) I utilized this information in my decision to create costumes that displayed a sense of wealth, in the appearance of the material, the silhouette, and detailing.

Fig. 13 Jose Posada's *La Calavera Catrina* c. 1910-1913. "Jose Guadalupe Posada." *SD Day of the Dead*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.

Often, moving from costume concept into the reality of working with the actor's physical features and their need for mobility on stage require costume adjustments. The challenge was to maintain the strength of my costume concept while accommodating the needs of *blocking*, the choreographed manner in which actors move on stage. I also desired to highlight the actor's physical qualities in the costume, amplifying not only their ability to embody their role, but also to engage the audience's imagination, transforming these actors into supernatural beings. A heightened, theatrical sense of reality was desired. This was achieved through a high contrast in tone and color, using vibrant color against black, and slight over exaggeration of the details in the costume, such as using larger

flowers on the headpieces, that looked oversized when seen up close, but appeared to balanced in their potency against the skull makeup on stage.

Las Calaveras Catrinas have been depicted in a variety of ways, some of which are not culturally sensitive. I strived to maintain sensitivity, examining the history of representation of Las Calaveras Catrinas past the time of Posada. I viewed Diego Rivera's 1947 mural, *Suéno de una Tarde Dominical en la Alameda Central* (*Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park*), and I also looked at their appropriation through the Halloween holiday. According to fashion theorist, Malcom Barnard, "fashion, clothing and dress are signifying practices, they are ways of generating meanings, which produce and reproduce those cultural groups along with their positions of relative power." (Barnard, 38) To use a work of art, particularly of cultural significance, as a source of inspiration without studying the origin of its creation and reproduction, one runs the risk of sending the wrong message through their design. In my attempt to create designs with respect for the culture, I also examined traditional Mexican garments from the regions of Tehuana, Campeche, Chiapas, and Jalisco, and looked at images of iconic Mexican woman in traditional dress. My designs were not replicas of the traditional costumes, but gained inspiration from their style, particularly in the distribution of color, pattern, and shape (see fig. 14). In the next chapter, I will discuss the specifics of the garments selected for Las Brujas.

Fig. 14 Photo of Frida Kahlo by Nickolas Muray. c.1937. "Uncovering Clues in Frida Kahlo's Private Wardrobe." *Collectors Weekly*. 1 Feb. 2013. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.

CHAPTER 4: EMBODIMENT

As mentioned in my introduction, I have a BFA in Fashion Design. My training involved interviewing subjects about their fashion choices. I have used my interview skills to have discussions about traditional Mexican dress and the evolution of dress through foreign influence. As a *salsa dancer*[5], I have been able to do primary research interviewing Chicano subjects. In one such interview, my subject presented physical garments to illustrate their "cowboy style" and "salsa style" worn in Mexico, and contrasted these examples with garments illustrating their "current style" influenced by residency in California.

The semiotics of dress[6] was a fascinating principle for me to consider, particularly as I moved from more broad costume concepts to the selection of specific garments. In Malcom Bernard's examination of "Fashion and Allegory" in his book *Fashion as Communication*, he cites philosopher Jacques Derrida, noting that "signs are only meaningful on the basis of their relation to all other signs... the relations to the other signs are called 'traces' ...the meaning of a sign as being produced by its differences from, or its relation to, other signs and by traces of those differences or relations." (Bernard, 169) I wanted to draw out the individual story of each of Las Brujas. To achieve this, I had to look at their costumes in relation to each other, and try to identify meaning through contrast.

The costumes for Las Brujas not only had to reflect the original source of inspiration, but also gain inspiration from each individual actor. The costumes for *Marqués* are meant to be theatrically realistic, and the goal was to make the clothing an extension of the actor's performance; I wished for the actors to step into the clothing and feel that they were the character, that it was natural, perhaps even an alter ego. Because actors play such an essential role in my design decisions, and in the impact of their costume on an audience, I felt it important to get the perspective of the embodiment of Las Brujas, from three actors in UCSC's 2016 production of *Marqués*.

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[5] Salsa is a form of dance influence by Latin American dance and music.
[6] Developed from the structure of language, semiology is the study of signs and symbols, used for interpretation. Like language, clothing makes meaning differentially (i.e. by means of contrast to the interpretation of other garments).

On April 12, 2016 I had the privilege of speaking on the phone with Cipi Espaldon for thirty minutes. The conversation was not recorded; I instead transcribed the conversation as we spoke. Espaldon played Bruja 1 (see fig. 15), based on La Catrina Emplovada.

Fig. 15 Cipi Espaldon as Bruja 1. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

The foundation of her costume consisted of a black asymmetrical satin ruffled skirt, and a black satin brocade corset, embellished with lilac, pink, orange, white, and red artificial flowers along the hem and neckline. Espaldon wore her long, voluminous hair with a streak of orange framing her face, down and natural. On top of her head, she wore a floral embellished headband, matching the corset. The look was accessorized with a pink rhinestone ring, black stockings, black patent high-heels, and had skull makeup applied by Azucena Beltran, who specializes in make up for Dia de los Muertos, and *Folklorico*[7] groups. Beltran and I worked in collaboration to look at my inspiration for makeup design, and come up with a look that was theatrical, but non-offensive.

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[7] Folkloric dance is a traditional style of Latin American dance.

Espaldon's makeup was perhaps the most beautiful among Las Brujas, in all of its detail. The design was feminine, with a red glittering heart on her forehead and flower petals around her eyes; rhinestones were placed in each petal. Holographic glitter was added to her nose and eyes, and her lips were painted with red glitter (see fig. 16). The look was meant to be the idealization of beauty and femininity as perceived by cultures that encourage women enhance their bodies through makeup and cosmetic surgery.

Fig. 16 Bruja 1 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photos by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

In Espaldon's first appearance onstage, carried a black patent purse with a silver chain. This item was added so that she could hold a bag of powder, discretely in the purse, to later unveil a magical theatrical moment. When Las Brujas depart from their first meeting with *Marqués*, they surprise the audience by throwing baby powder into the air as they quickly disappear into the *trapdoor*, which allows actors to exit and enter from beneath the center stage platform. The moment created an inclusive experience, where the actors playing the roles of Marqués and his best friend (later turned mortal enemy) Paco, have a shared reaction of shock and awe, creating a sense of excitement and intrigue about what will happen next (see fig. 17).

Fig. 17 Las Brujas tormenting Marqués and Paco. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

I began my interview with Espaldon by asking her to discuss how she prepared for the role, and from where she drew her character inspiration. The actor noted that research from the dramaturg, Adrian Centeno contributed to her understanding of meaning and history of Las Calaveras Catrinas, and that she drew on the unique personality of La Emplovada. She felt that Las Brujas were distinct from Shakespeare's Witches, and did not spend much time looking at those characters for inspiration.

The primary characteristics Espaldon felt were important to portray through Bruja 1 were a sense of femininity and overt sexuality. She stated that she was "embracing sexuality that is usually reserved for privacy." (Espaldon) Curious as to how her costume may have assisted in her transformation into a decidedly sexualized character, I asked Espaldon how she felt in her costume. She said, "the corset wasn't that bad," further explaining that she felt "more empowered when moving in a corset" as it "helped with movement because it felt restricting." (Espaldon) In addition, she noted that skirt helped her get into character and that the flowers allowed her to embrace more femininity.

I was interested to learn about Espaldon's perception of embodying a character developed as a part of Mexican history and culture. She is of Filipino ancestry and identifies as Asian, remarking that it feels odd to be considered a Pacific Islander by some people. Due to her Filipino ancestry, Espaldon felt an inherent understanding of the overall culture of the play; drawing upon similarities in the history of Mexico and the Philippines, both countries were conquered and are primarily Roman Catholic in religion. The fear of sexuality inherent in catholic culture was an important point of discussion with Espaldon. She explained, "sexual power is terrifying to a culture that believes women are supposed to be demure, docile, and feminine." (Espaldon)

Discussing the representation of power, Espaldon noted tension due to classicism undertones, even among Las Brujas as a trio. In her perspective, Bruja 3 held the highest position of power due to masculine traits, Bruja 2 was next in line due to the character's European influences, and Bruja 1, the idealization of beauty, had the lowest social status. Espaldon individuated herself from the other Las Calaveras Catrinas by shedding the concept of a desire to be more European, a characteristic the playwrights noted as inherent in their inspirational figures.

What I found most enlightening about the conversation with Espaldon was her description of the internal struggle of playing what might be perceived as a stereotyped role, and how she overcame that. She explained that there are not many Filipino roles, and as an Asian woman, she previously felt conflicted about portraying "a stereotype... [of a] Mexican gangster" in Ricther's last UCSC produced play, *Maria*. (Espaldon) Instead of focusing on a stereotype for her role in *Marqués*, Espaldon focused on the embodiment of Bruja 1's character in the satirized form of La Calavera Catrina Emplovada. I asked Espaldon if she felt comfortable with satire, and if she believed it is an effective way of delivering a message. Admittedly a tough question, she said it was difficult to answer, but that she believed it was "a good way of honoring a form of the Witches." (Espaldon) From this point, I draw the conclusion that examining a character through satire is not the same as through stereotype. The Merriam-Webster definition of stereotype is "to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same... to repeat without variation." ("Stereotype") Satire is defined as

"a way of using humor to show that someone or something is foolish, weak, bad, etc.: humor that shows the weaknesses or bad qualities of a person, government, society, etc." ("Satire") Las Calaveras Catrinas take many different forms. The playwrights selected these specific catrinas because they have distinct traits. Although Las Calaveras Catrinas have similarities they are not one in the same; they are like three sisters, sharing genealogy but their methods of response to their upbringing are slightly different.

I met with Leah Tolmosoff in-person on April 19th, 2016 to discuss her role as Bruja 2 (see fig.18). This proved to be the most effective means for an interview as I was able to record the conversation on my phone, improving conversational flow, and allowing me to gather more information during our thirty-minute discussion. I asked similar questions that I had asked to Espaldon, but due to the in-person format I was able to dig deeper for detailed answers by asking direct follow-up questions. Tolmosoff's costume, inspired by La Catrina Garbancera, received the most compliments from audience members. Her costume consisted of a black taffeta *maxi skirt*[8] with a large ruffle hem and a

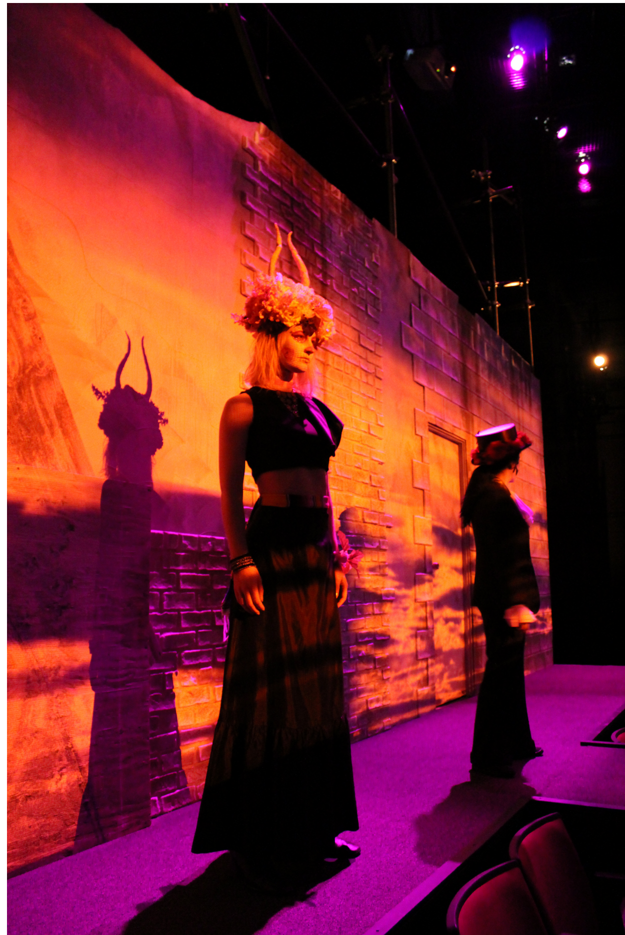

Fig. 18 Leah Tolmosoff as Bruja 2. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

[8] a maxi skirt is a long skirt, which can extend all the way to the ground, or a of couple inches above the ground

vibrant, striped *serape*[9] waistband, a black sleeveless crop top with an asymmetrical ruffle, black Victorian-influenced boots with a Cuban heel, a black beaded bracelet, a red-orange jeweled necklace, a black leather envelope clutch which clipped to her waistband to hold powder (worn only for one scene), and a yellow flower corsage that matched her yellow, orange, and white artificial floral headpiece with sculpted animal horns. Bruja 2's makeup was geometric; it was orange, red, yellow and white, using only a little black to accent details (see fig. 19). Her make up also incorporated red rhinestones to catch the light and create a sense of magic. She wore her short blonde hair down, allowing it to be disheveled.

Fig. 19 Bruja 2 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

Bruja 2's costume was influenced by the needs of blocking. I had pulled two options for her skirt, both black maxi skirts. When I learned that choreographer, Gerald Casel, intended to have Las Brujas dance on stage, I realized Bruja 2's skirt would have to be *rigged* (when an item receives special tailoring to address a production's needs). The actor tried on both options, and although I preferred the movement of the first skirt, which was slimmer around the hips and fuller at the hem, it

[9] A serape is a brightly colored shawl worn in Mexico. The term can also refer to a blanket of the same design.

was impractical for the production's purposes; I decided to go with the *A-line skirt*, a style that extends out from the waistband in a triangular shape. The skirt was rigged by hemming the lining to half its original length which allowed for increased mobility as the lining was cut narrower than the skirt.

I found Tolmosoff's description of the emotion that overcame her when putting on her completed costume rewarding; "I felt a passion and I felt sensual. [...] Everything about being a woman in that costume, felt really empowering to me, and there was a spiritual feeling that I got with the flowers and the horns; I felt like I transformed into a goddess." (Tolmosoff) The headpiece for Bruja 2 was crafted in part to accent her makeup design. When I applied the flowers, I thought about how the front of her headpiece required more yellow flowers, to accent her orange and red face paint, as opposed to blending in with it. As the makeup was crucial to the meaning and unique look of La Catrina Garbancera, I asked Tolmosoff if she felt the makeup assisted in her transformation. "Definitely," she said, "people would react to me.... they couldn't help but stare because everything was so intricate. It was also this

Fig. 20 Bruja 2. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

gaze that I could hold for a longer time and it was awesome to be able to mesmerize people, almost like I was this real life snake or bull... I was something worldly... resonating this other spirit that was around, like an animal." (see fig. 20) (Tolmosoff)

Tolmosoff described initial inspiration for embodiment of the character, from Casel, in addition to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, "Gerald...made me dive into what is the meaning of worldly, what is femininity and what is masculinity, and to be eternal. I was embodying the Witches from Shakespeare as well as trying to embrace and search for what it would be to live forever and have all this history, to know what is going to happen, and how that makes my body react, how that makes me respond to mortals." (Tolmosoff) I asked Tolmosoff to describe her technique of accessing inspiration in *Macbeth*'s Witches. She explained that she spoke about the text with UCSC professors and was trying to access the essence of being an eternal being, "brewing this plan for an immortal," trying to find answers to the questions of "what is your purpose?" "what propels the storyline?" (Tolmosoff)

I was curious what direction Tolmosoff received from Pearson in the backstory and meaning of her character. She agreed that her character was inspired by the idea of one trying to escape indigenous roots to become more European. In addition, she described her character as "a lady in a modern world... not flashy like Cipi, but the definition of what it is to be a lady... to show wealth... showed power... and class, and I have this feeling that in my mortal life, I... [was messed] around with... and there is something that I want[ed] to take back... [to take revenge] on the world in the same way... vindication... that is what I drew from." (Tolmosoff) Tolmosoff further explained her development of a backstory for Bruja 2, drawing on prior experience from a role she performed at her city college, "the story of my Bruja.... to know everything, and that pain, suffering, love, happiness... it's all one keyboard and there is nothing that's better or less than what it is at the moment." (Tolmosoff) This description of the keyboard of emotions, reminded me of the mindset regarding death in Mexico; the cycle of life is respected as a whole, the condition of being human is something to be accepted rather than dismissed.

When asked about specific character traits she emphasized in the role, and whether the costume assisted with her movement, Tolmosoff noted her interest in *flamenco dancing*[10]. She also drew comparison to Bruja 3 and Bruja 1, "Lorena was more masculine, so she was about power" and "Cipi was sensual, but I was sensual on another level where it was empowering for me to go about my sexuality... with dignity... [Cipi was] overtly sexual, and I felt like mine had a lot to do with the essence of nature, grace, and elegance.... I was striving for the power of elegance and how nature can pull that." (Tolmosoff)

Tolmosoff is a European American actor, and I curious to find out how she felt about embodying a pop-icon of Mexican culture, that satirizes the desire to escape indigenous roots in favor of appearing European. Earlier in the interview, Leah informed me that she is from San Diego and has often traveled to the Baja Peninsula, feeling that her experiences contributed to her understanding of issues in the play, and her exposure to aspects of that world help her understand the spirit of Mexico. Describing her costume, Tolmosoff mentioned her appreciation of the incorporation of the serape as "an accent of Mexico," and enjoyed the characterization of her shoes with a thick heel. (Tolmosoff) She felt that the skirt and crop-top were "spot on" in their representation of "wanting to be more Europeanized" because she recognized that those garments were not "traditionally Mexican, but more European and Spanish influenced." (Tolmosoff) In response to my question about her comfort level in the role, she said that she felt "happy to carry a traditional Mexican pop-icon" that "was satirical in itself with the addition of gems," she felt the costume was "it's own style," and in conclusion exclaimed, "it was the most amazing part!" (Tolmosoff)

[10] *Flamenco* is a style of dance and music from Spain.

My final actor interview was an in-person interview with Lorena Rubio on May 5th, 2016. Rubio acted in the role of Bruja 3, who was visually inspired by La Catrina. Her costume consisted of black, high-waisted, wide-leg dress pants, a black jacket with an inverted faux leather collar, a white blouse with a *pussy bow*[11] necktie and ruffled cuffs, a black satin top hat with a band of roses, and solid black patent, wingtip high heel shoes that were later replaced with solid black ked sneakers. The actor wore her long brown hair in a low ponytail. The skull face paint of Bruja 3 was simple in comparison with her sisters; it did not include embellishment, just the face of death (see fig. 21). As an accessory for the application of *stage blood*[12], she carried a gold compact mirror covered in green and clear crystals, in her jacket pocket. Later she used this pocket to hold a zip-loc bag filled with baby powder.

Fig. 21 Bruja 3 makeup detail, backstage and onstage. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo above by Elysia Ellis. Photo below by Erik Pearson. 2016.

Again, I used a similar set of questions as with the other actors, and recorded the conversation for later transcription. Rubio cited the Witches of *Macbeth* and the first company script read-through as her point of initial inspiration. She explained that at the first read-through Pearson "told us [Las Brujas] that we are all different. We are all Catrinas, but [...] [I] was the 'Lady of Death.' So when I found out what my makeup was going to look like (see fig. 22), I was like, *woah*, she's really dark, but there is something in her that makes her dark." (Rubio) I had given a costume design presentation to the actors at this first read-through, and pinned my costume concept boards to a corkboard on wheels,

[11] A *pussy bow* necktie is a wide tie sewn on the neck of a woman's blouse that can be tied into a bow.
[12] The use of fake blood for theatrical effect.

so they could remain in the rehearsal room to be referenced by actors. I appreciated knowing that this assisted actors in their process.

Fig. 22 Costume concept board for Bruja 3 by Elysia Ellis. 2016. Photoshop.

From Shakespeare's Witches, Rubio developed a sense of the role. She described the "hag archetype" I discussed in Chapter 1 of this paper. "They were all really weird... creepy... hags... scary witches, you wouldn't want to be around them, and [...] [the *Marqués*] witches were not... they were different... these are the kinds of witches you want to see everyday, exciting, they bring attention, they are unforgettable." (Rubio)

I asked Rubio if her costume helped her embodiment of the character and if so, in what way. Rubio said, "I fell in love with the costume, she felt like she was it... the main... don't mess with me." (Rubio) Describing how it influenced her sense of power, she said, "Erik [the director] told us to walk around the stage and establish different postures... I [was] walking with more authority, more

genuinely... when I was wearing the heels, I felt more power, I had more energy... it made me feel taller and stronger... the whole costume, [...] made me feel more above [the others]... there was definitely some status" (Rubio)

Unfortunately, at the final dress rehearsal, Rubio tripped and badly twisted her ankle. I provided her with a lace up ankle brace, a black cane to use on-stage, crutches to use off-stage, and flat black sneakers. The hem of her pants was adjusted accordingly. The actor showed great determination, and did not use the cane for performances; her embodiment of the character was not effected. The blocking shifted, but Rubio credited this to an increased feeling of power as she entered and exited the stage independent from Bruja 1 and Bruja 2, not utilizing the trapdoor.

Fig. 23 Lorena Rubio as Bruja 3. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

La Catrina is a contrast to her sisters, in that she is an androgynous character (see fig. 23). Both Espaldon and Tolmosoff mentioned Rubio's gender identity equating to an increased status of power. One of Rubio's first statements in the interview was that her character was neither masculine nor feminine. It was evident in speaking with Rubio, that she too felt the power dynamic amongst Las Brujas. "Erik [the director] said I could make up my own story for the witch, but he did say that I am playful, especially when torturing men... I had more strength and courage to tell my ladies 'I have the best stories to tell' ...I was the leader." (Rubio) She described the backstory she developed, Bruja 3 "was comical, she was playful, she was determined.

When she wanted something she knew she wanted her way. She would tell her sisters, 'this is what we're going to do, this is our plan.'" (Rubio) Bruja 3 was further described as a "show-off, [but] serious when it came to death. " (Rubio) Curios as to whether her sense of power came solely through gender identity, I asked what the source of her power was. Rubio said, "we had the power to control and it felt really liberating for us, we were laughing all the time." (Rubio)

Rubio is Latina, her mother from El Salvador and her father from Honduras. She grew up in Los Angeles; she used to visit Honduras every year, and continues to visit El Salvador annually. Her cultural heritage does not celebrate Dia de los Muertos, and does not hold the same views on death as many people do in Mexico. Tragically, she explained "people die every day in Honduras, they are being... murdered... mainly by gangs... the economy is really bad right now.... it is really dangerous." (Rubio) I had no idea that was part of Rubio's life story, when I asked her about her heritage. Rubio explained how this affected her role in *Marqués*: "that's why I am afraid of death. When I was playing that character, I was like wow, now I'm going to be the opposite. I'm going to be the person that is in charge of death." (Rubio) When I asked Rubio if her costume held a

Fig. 24 The staging of violence, and application of stage blood by Bruja 3 at the murder of Don David by Marqués. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

sense of transformation. She said, "I felt different with the costume and the makeup on. I just was not me anymore. I wanted to be that character and I was that character." (Rubio)

For Rubio's role as "the Lady of Death," she applied stage blood as the murders occurred in a very theatrical format *Marqués* (see fig. 24). The director did not envision realistic staging of violence for the play. Pearson's choreography of the violence was innovative and surreal. All of Las Brujas were involved in the murders; Bruja 3 applied the bright red stage blood, while Bruja 1 and Bruja 2 collected the bodies. I was pleased with the director's decision to depict violence through simple and effective theatrical gestures.

Fig. 25 Bruja 2 following Doña to her death. UCSC's production of *Marqués*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

Through multiple script re-writes, which had an impact on the storyline, such as the introduction of Shakespeare's character Hecate, adapted to Tonantzin, an Aztec goddess[13], I became unclear on exactly what Las Brujas role was. Were they grim reapers? Did they control fate or observe it? Were they under the rule of Major Burns, the US Marine who kills Marqués, or was it Tonantzin, their "mother" who decided the fate of the characters in the play? I asked these questions to the actors who played Las Brujas, and to the playwrights. I received conflicting replies. For example, Tolmosoff expressed her mutual confusion, "that is what is tough, because then how can we not stop Marqués

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[13] *Tonantzin*: "an ancient mother figure who nurtures people and all that dwells in the land... the life and light of the world." (RavynStar)

from dying? ...When I followed Doña to her deathbed (see fig. 25), in my mind I was visualizing an energy flow and I was just following the energy... that was the orders of Tonantzin, and that was my force... sensing the energy, and knowing what was going to come next." (Tolmosoff)

I have come to the conclusion, that is the way the story of the Witches, and Las Brujas should remain. The fact that the nature of their power in the play remains unknown is what makes them fascinating as character studies. In the text *Critical Theory and Performance*, the work of Clifford Geertz, an expert on symbolic anthropology is cited as inspiration for the following idea, "the creative process 'must be inevitably conditioned by the artistic tools of the artist's own culture and by the ways that culture define[s] and interpret[s] artistic artifacts... such a view... is surely a useful corrective to the naïve assumption that such a work makes... a specific 'aesthetic' statement, the same for all audiences, whatever their cultural background." (Reinelt and Roach, 43) It is clear to me that *Macbeth*, and therefore, *Marqués* are open to interpretation. As I have discovered, just one aspect of a production, can take an individual down many paths.

Fig. 26 Las Brujas costume rendering by Elysia Ellis. 2016.

CONCLUSION

Initially surprised by the great need to maintain flexibility in my design concepts for *Marqués*, I quickly learned the continued development of costume design is extremely common in theater, especially when working on a new play. The challenges I faced within my department regarding the need to support the play's progression were at times exceptional. The most rewarding realization I had while working on this production was the importance of fortitude both in my personality and my design skill set. Problems that arose were best resolved with grace and dignity. In doing so, I learned the importance of trusting my instincts, maintaining a positive attitude, and being a good collaborator while upholding my values as a costume designer.

Art can be a reflection of the society in which it was developed, and of the values of the individual who created it. My experience at UCSC has been in an artistic coven. From summer to spring I have been investigating the sphere of power, discomfort, rebirth, and beauty, framed by a single narrative. David Mamet makes several articulate statements regarding fashion in his book *Writing in Restaurants*. Although this book was written before my time, it still holds truth for today, "we are in the midst of a vogue for the truly decedent in art – for that which is destructive rather than regenerative, self-referential rather than outward-looking, elitist rather than popular... it appeals to the prejudice or predilection held mutually with the audience" (Mamet, 58) Studying dress through research of history, art, culture, and individuals can assist a costume designer in creating universally accessible work. We are living in a time where darkness should not be ignored because history has a tendency to repeat itself, and change only comes from sustained effort. I believe transformation out of this shadowy space can be assisted through art that provides a safe haven for the examination of issues and exploration of ideas.

APPENDIX: INTERNSHIP

During the summer of 2015, I worked on a traditional version of *Macbeth* directed by Kristen Brandt for my costume internship at Santa Cruz Shakespeare (SCS). Santa Cruz Shakespeare, the professional theater company that reincarnated from the over three-decade-old Shakespeare Santa Cruz, was in its second summer season. While I also worked in the costume shop on all SCS summer productions, including *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Liar*, I spent the most time learning intricacies of theater, working on *Macbeth*.

The costumes, designed by B. Modern for SCS's 2015 summer production of *Macbeth*, required modification and heavy layering of garments (see fig. 27). In the costume shop, I worked on altering garment fit, embellishment, and transforming items such as leather jackets into armor by removing sleeves and adding trim. The tasks of the costume shop were not foreign to me, due to my fashion design background. However, I found it fascinating to watch fittings and learn how costumes for a large cast signified traits of individual characters, relationships between them, and the story of the play.

Fig. 27 Costume Design and Renderings by B. Modern, *Santa Cruz Shakespeare* Costume Shop. Collage by Elysia Ellis. 2015. Photoshop.

From what I witnessed working in the costume shop, the Witches in the summer production of *Macbeth* were the first costumes started, and the last costumes complete. The costumes began with intricate headpieces called *Scold's bridles*; torture devices developed to punish women accused of gossip and witchcraft by preventing speech. The contraptions consisted of an iron muzzle padlocked

onto the head with a metal plate that protruded into the wearer's mouth. Bridles could be requested by husbands for their wives, and were exclusively meant for women, an unfortunate example of men fearing and silencing women. The costume bridles took weeks to craft and fit the actors securely (see fig. 28), and although they were completed early, the Witch dresses and their purses were worked on up until first dress rehearsal.

Fig. 28 Tracy Todd Smith crafting the 'Witches' bridles at SCS, Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2015.

In SCS's summer *Macbeth* production, the Witches appear in the first scene. On trial for witchcraft and removing body parts from the war field, they are forced into the bridles, each with a different animal identity affixed to the top: pig ears, bullhorns, and ram horns. Barefoot and draped in conservative white maxi dresses with long sleeves and a crew neckline, the edges of the garments were frayed and stained with paint to look old and muddy, as though they had been digging up body parts (see fig. 29). The dresses were overlaid with a long tunic, made of a knit lace fabric, also heavily stained and disheveled with rips and uneven tacking. In purses made of the same materials, they stored their herbs for potion making. Dreaded, braided, and frizzy dark haired wigs covered the actors' natural hair, aiding in their portrayal of the classic "hag witch" archetype, and in their ability to switch roles quickly.

The most unfamiliar part of my internship was working on the wardrobe crew. Learning about *quick-changes*, a rapid change of costumes on a single actor, significantly influenced my work on *Marqués*. For *Marqués*, I created detailed paperwork tracking the costume changes for both actors and wardrobe. This process can be laborious depending on the scale of the show, but it is necessary. The paperwork allowed the six wardrobe crewmembers of *Marqués* to coordinate on managing the sixty-one different looks, requiring fifty costume changes on twenty-three actors. Actors were also provided with copies of the tracking paperwork and a personal handout that included all of the pieces for each of their looks, as many characters were cast in multiple roles – something which was not done over the summer at SCS. Had I not experienced the intensity of working wardrobe on SCS's *Macbeth*, with only three other wardrobe crewmembers, I would not have fully understood what was required to assist the wardrobe crew for *Marqués*.

Fig. 29 The Witches in *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*.
Photo by rr jones. 2015. *Santa Cruz Shakespeare - Facebook*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.

Patty Gallagher acted as one of the Witches in *Macbeth*, and had the most challenging quick-changes on the production. She doubled as a Witch and a Scottish nobleman named Ross (see fig. 30). Gallagher was to transform from Witch to Ross in roughly two minutes. Ross' costume was a contrast to the witch costume, as it was a dignified and orderly look. I was assigned to assist her in the transformation.

To make Gallagher's changes go smoothly, a variety of technical costume devices were implemented. I employed some of these devices on *Marqués*. The use of an unkempt wig for Gallagher's Witch to a natural hairstyle for Ross disguised her doubling. In the Witch costume, she *underdressed* in Ross' leather pants, as they would not show under the long dress. In theater, underdressing refers to a technique of wearing clothing for one costume underneath another. The upper-half of the Ross costume was rigged. The chainmail, leather vest, belt, sword holster, and swag were stitched together as one garment, and that garment was *quick-rigged* with velcro. To quick-rig is to discretely alter garment closures for swift fastening and un-fastening. The costumes Gallagher had to change into and out of were *preset*, meaning they were placed in the location she would exit or enter the stage prior to her costume change. As she appeared in several scenes back-to-back switching between Ross and the Witch, changes were *choreographed* with four *dressers* (a person who helps an actor put on a costume during a performance), and one *stagehand* (a person who handles props, items handled by actors, and scenery during a performance). To choreograph a costume change is to predetermine the order in which dressers will remove and add the garments an actor wears, the choreography includes a stagehand when a prop, such as a sword is involved in the change. Well-choreographed costume changes are crucial to the successful entrance of an actor with a quick-change; a live performance can be greatly disrupted if an actor has a late entrance.

Fig. 30 Patty Gallagher (Ross), Toby Onwumere (Macduff), and Sierra Jolene (Malcolm) in *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*. Photo by rr jones. 2015. *Santa Cruz Shakespeare - Facebook*. Web. 05 May 2016. Digital Image.

Another challenging element in Gallagher's costume changes was the application of stage blood. Her face and her Witch dress would get spotted with stage blood and contamination of other costumes was of great concern; the blood was challenging to remove. This became a huge issue on *Marqués*, despite having a *blood tech*[14]. The *Macbeth* blood tech devised several blood formulas (see fig. 31). The blood that landed on clothing was a realistic looking and mixed with dawn dish soap, yet it still required immediate rinsing, oxyclean spray, oxyclean powder, and bleach to remove. For *Marqués*, the director wanted the blood to be unrealistic, bright red, like a child's paint; child's "washable" Crayola paint was chosen as it seemed like a simple solution, but it was not thoroughly tested on all garments.

Fig. 31 The blood table for *SCS*'s production of *Macbeth*. Photo by Elysia Ellis. 2015.

When dress rehearsal arrived, the bright red stage bloodstained the lead actors' white colored dress shirts. I was told wardrobe would not have time to launder the shirts again, which I then took home nightly to remove the stains until identical 'throw away' shirts were purchased, along with blocking changes to keep bloody hands off Marqués' dress shirt. The director insisted that Don David, the cartel leader murdered by Marqués and his wife, wear a white shirt for the visual effect of the surreal stage blood application.

Macbeth is said to be a cursed play. During my internship, I did not at first understand why everyone kept referring to it as "Mackers." It was not until the last night of preview performances that I learned about the superstition. It had been a pleasant sunny day, the sunset transformed the clouds into vibrant colors, and the night appeared to be the same as the previous in open-air, Sinsheimer-

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[14] A blood tech tests and develops the stage blood formulas and application.

Stanley Festival Glen Theater surrounded by redwood tress on UCSC's campus. Crisp and chill, but nothing a nice coat could not resolve. That is, until Gallagher and her wayward sisters took the stage. Gallagher just completed a quick change into her Witch costume, and the moment she stepped on to the stage and said her line, thunder pounded, lightening flashed, and rain poured. At first there was a sense of awe. The last scene in which Gallager and her weird sisters had been on stage, the famous lines "when shall we three meet again, in thunder, lightening, or in rain?" had been uttered. (Shakespeare, 1.1.1-2)

California was in the middle of a drought, and this was the first time in the history of the SCS festival that it had been rained out. However, the sense of awe quickly vanished as, as the show was called, and a young female stagehand began to have a terrible coughing fit. As everyone rushed around backstage to clear items, an actress worked with the choking stagehand to try and help her regain her breath. Thankfully, she survived the attack received the medical attention she needed; it was diagnosed that she'd had a severe allergic reaction to the redwood dust stirred up with the rain. Back in the dressing room, the actors had left their costumes and wardrobe remained to make sure everything was accounted for, until the power went out, casting an eerie feeling throughout the building. It was then that I learned the theater superstition that one is never to say the name *Macbeth* in a theater, as it carries a curse. The play is therefore, referred to by alternative names, such as "Mackers," "MacB," "The Scottish Play," or "The Bard's Play."

Perhaps *Marqués* should hold the same superstition, as some of the oddities that occurred during the production held a similar feeling of being cursed. A lone red garment from another show being thrown into the white *Marqués* laundry dying everything peach, Bruja 3 falling and spraining her ankle during the final scene of final dress rehearsal, an actor's pants misplaced backstage so he had to enter the next scene pant-less, wearing his red stripper G-string from the previous scene were just a few incident that led me to wonder: is it all the curse of *Macbeth* or does this simply go with the territory of working in theater? I think it is both, or there wouldn't be the phrase "the show must go on."

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