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Welles's *Macbeth*, a Textual Parable

*Bernice W. Kliman*

Orson Welles burst into films before he was twenty-five, in 1941, with *Citizen Kane* — a work generally featured on everybody's list of the ten best films of all time. In spite of instant acclaim both for acting and directing, Welles had difficulty negotiating his way through the Hollywood establishment, and his attempts to retain artistic control over his work were often unsuccessful. His early attachment to Shakespeare made inevitable his films based on *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Henry the Fourth* (the last known as *Falstaff* or *Chimes at Midnight*), but he was able to film only the first within the United States. While the latter two films, released in 1952 and 1966, respectively, have earned a high place among Shakespeare films, the *Macbeth* has had a more troubled reception. Tracing its history clarifies Welles's relations with Hollywood and yields a parable that can apply to the production of any theatrical or film text.

Welles's *Macbeth* illustrates the complex interactions and artistic struggles that shape a production. The film, a Mercury Production, was a collaborative effort. A multi-faceted company, Mercury Productions was organized by John Houston and Orson Welles after they left the United States Government's Works Project Administration (W.P.A.), Federal Theater Project, where they had worked on the so-called 'Voodoo Macbeth', produced in Harlem in 1936.¹ Their first Mercury Theatre production was the 1937 *Julius Caesar* in modern dress, set in fascist Italy. Mercury Productions' several sub-groups worked on school editions, audio recordings, radio and stage shows, films, and the like. Though collaborative and organic processes led to a *Macbeth* different in some ways from Orson Welles's original idea, these were natural and beneficial features of his Mercury filmmaking. The Studio, with its narrow motives, inevitably affected the outcome also. Charles K. Feldman (Charlie), the Republic Pictures producer, for example, seemed to think that Lady Macbeth should be more like a Hollywood star than a Shakespearean character. He complains that 'The first scene of Lady Macbeth should be cut in my opinion because I think she looks horrible and frightening, and everyone who has seen the picture ...
was appalled at the looks of the girl. In her next scene she looks infinitely better – as a matter of fact she looks damned attractive… The soliloquy we lose may be of some importance, but I think it is of greater importance to have the right opening for the girl’. Finally the reviewers and the first audiences had their say. Over a period of several years, Welles attempted to make the film a marketable as well as artistic commodity, but eventually his new film, Othello, diminished his interest in the Macbeth film, and he let it go to make its own way.

The story of the film’s evolution is available because one of his Mercury collaborators, Richard Alan Wilson, saved almost every scrap of paper – scripts at every stage of development, memos, voice recordings, letters, reviews, and drawings – and, at the end of a long Hollywood career, deposited them in the Special Collection Library at the University of California at Los Angeles. Breezily affectionate in his letters, Welles salutes Wilson as ‘my dearest partner of greatness’. Wilson was Welles’s right-hand man, who, as associate producer, was a constant go-between for Welles, the rest of the production crew and the studio brass. Difficulties abounded, and the Wilson material, including his own comments and explanations, details the struggle. While the memos sketch the sociology of collaborative filmmaking, the scripts record the traces of that interaction.

As is well known, Welles designed the film to buoy up filmed Shakespeare, which clunkers like the 1930s As You Like It and Romeo and Juliet had virtually sunk – fond as many Shakespeare fans are of these films. Intense preparation would, Welles thought, enable his team to create a low budget yet artistic film and make Shakespeare an attractive product. Trying in March 1947 to sell British producer Alexander Korda the film, Welles said he could have a script ready in three weeks, that he was ready to drop everything and come to London to talk about casting: ‘Can start Macbeth instant costumes ready shoot fast because much detailed work already put into production plan’ (box 25).

After Korda refused the offer, Republic Pictures, known for its low-budget films, came through, hoping perhaps to change its image. With the film in their sights, the cast rehearsed the script thoroughly for Mercury’s ANTA (American National Theater and Academy) production in Salt Lake City at the Utah Centennial Festival, ending June 1947. As several scholars, including Andrea Nouryeh, have shown, Welles didn’t distinguish greatly between stage and screen texts: in both media he reshaped, transposed, and sliced long scenes into fragments to further his creative aims. Thus the ANTA text and the practice on stage would speed the filmmaking. A film production’s main expense is camera time; Welles planned to get this film into the can in twenty-two days, achieving a B-picture budget of $700,000 by scripting with Hitchcock-like attention to sequences, filming schedules, setting, and style. The actual camera time, according to the record of dailies (the shots completed each day), was twenty-three days, from Friday, June 20 to Thursday, July 17, 1947.
What should have been a *tour de force* and the harbinger of many other Hollywood Shakespeare films directed by Welles was instead a disaster—not so much in filmmaking as in postproduction, marketing and packaging. After mixed previews and reviews in 1947-48, largely because the film did not reach its ideal audience and because showings were continuous rather than scheduled, the heads of Republic Pictures in December 1948 yanked the 106- or 107-minute film. They insisted on pruning to speed the pace and on relooping (rerecording) the sound track to eliminate the Scottish burr, which they thought unintelligible. The pruning worked better than the relooping. With Welles in Europe trying to make *Othello*, yet insisting on artistic control, the project dragged on, reopening in March 1950 at a spare 86 minutes; but still success eluded the project. Memories of the first release tantalized film buffs. In 1979, UCLA’s Bob Gitt with the help of the Folger Shakespeare Library and the National Endowment for the Arts restored the original film, by reintroducing cut scenes and adding an original voice track (while retaining the Jacques Ibert music composed for the rerelease). This version became available on videotape several years ago. Perfectly intelligible, it seems to many who have seen both films an improvement over the rerelease. Thus, there are three films, each highlighting different facets of collaboration: the original release (1947), which, with several significant differences, is close to the restoration (1979), and the rerelease (1950), the response to the film’s initial poor showing.5

One script in the Wilson collection captures the film as originally shot, with one numbered scene for each camera setup, a total of 645 shots. Labeled a cutting continuity, this postproduction script (or one like it) plus the outtakes (that is, the excised frames) must have given Gitt the information he needed to restore the original from the rerelease, which had no more than 547 shots. With the shots to be pruned marked in grease pencil, the longer script contains two layers: the film as completed and the film after compressing 12 reels into 9: it is thus a double script. The most interesting script to compare to this late double script is the earliest, dated May 16, 1947 and written by Welles himself, with 41 scenes not broken yet into separate camera setups. Wilson notes the rarity of such scripts; more often, a filmmaker will convey the overall plan orally or through a story summary to studio script writers. Welles explicitly names the emotional content he seeks while clarifying for Republic Pictures personnel, bewildered by the poetic settings, how the filming would work.6 As an intermediate phase between the ANTA stage script and the true shooting script, for which the studio staff divided the scenes into shots, the early script marks Welles’s turn from stage thinking to screen thinking.

Though he had the whole film in his mind at the beginning, Welles was a tinkerer and thus responsive to the idea of change. Therefore it is wrong to assume that any deviation from his first-released film is bad. Change is a constant—from first concept through first filming through final editing of the rereleased film. Even during his first filming, if a good idea occurred to him,
to one of the actors, or to one of his staff, very likely Welles would use it; unbelievably, his short schedule was supple enough to accommodate these shifts. Many items from the Wilson Collection document the changes. In the days before word processors or photo-copying machines, the studio and Wilson systematically coded revisions by using, successively, white, blue, pink, yellow, and green sheets. Some scripts in the collection are a kaleidoscope of colors. A prayer in Latin and English on a white sheet is replaced later by a Celtic prayer, when the studio’s research department finds one (box 11, f.8). The shots of Cawdor being dragged in and placed on the executioner’s block are recorded on a green sheet, signaling that his presence was a late addition. Amazingly, many of the film’s most memorable sequences are added to the early script. The image of Seyton hanging from the bell rope was late, as was Lady Macbeth’s suicidal leap into an endless crevasse, a special effect that cost $53.36 when redone for the rerelease (invoice, 27 February 1950, box 12, f.5). Also, the crown (that falls from the beheaded doll of Macbeth) in Fleance’s hands, his eyes turned angelically upward, is another late addition (recorded in dailies as shot 91). Welles’s concept of the friar, a character who derives partly from Ross, partly from an entirely new, non-Shakespearean idea, developed during the filmmaking. Beginning as Holy Father, he became for Welles more ambiguous. Memos show Wilson struggling with Welles about changing the character late in the day: ‘Lou [Lindsay, the editor] also told me of your desire to change Alan Napier’s character from a Holy Father to something else.... Let’s have an answer on this....’ Even though the credits in the restored film call him ‘Holy Father’, he is a much seedier character than he appears to be in the initial script. Change, then, is to be expected in a Welles project – along with a fundamental vision that remains consistent in all the Macbeth projects, from the Harlem ‘Voodoo’ production (1936) through the rereleased film (1950).

Sometimes his cuts were inspired. Welles eliminates from his first script a sentimental scene in which Macbeth, having taken part in the murder of the Macduff family, carries a dead boy to his throne and strokes his head. He wanted Macbeth to be, in essence, a noble person, but this mourning scene would have strained credibility. The drastic cutting for the rerelease of Macbeth’s entire scene suborning the murderers works surprisingly well; the film dissolves smoothly from Banquo’s leavetak ing to the two murderers ready to ambush him and Fleance (from shot 284 directly to shot 332). More problematically, the studio also forced Welles to cut parts of Macbeth’s soliloquy expressing his doubts about killing Duncan (I.3.134-37; I.7.21-25), but he successfully resisted other cuts from his soliloquies, keeping, for example, the first part of ‘If it were done’ through ‘We’d jump the life to come’ (I.7.1-7). Wilson expresses Welles’s view in a memo to Robert Newman and another studio executive, Herbert Yates. After justifying each of the soliloquies leading to the murder, Wilson says, ‘Any further cutting ... would bring Shakespeare’s
audiences more seriously on our heads and would definitely jeopardize Macbeth as a tragic character.’ Without many words or deeds to help the audience, expression alone often had to communicate Macbeth’s nobility. That Welles succeeds in conveying the subtext without text to support it is a credit to his acting ability. Throughout his career, limitations brought out his best solutions.

No one aspect of the film gave more trouble than the supernatural, and no other aspect better demonstrates Welles’s evolving concepts and concessions to exigencies. The witches of the originally released film disturbed the producers almost as much as had the Scottish accent. With their exaggerated witchiness, they were, Republic thought, more silly than frightening. But Welles, too, was not completely satisfied with them; when the three actors could not actualize his conception, he was forced to reshape their scenes.

The early script interjects the witches repeatedly, for example, before Lady Macbeth and Macbeth meet to discuss the arrival of Duncan – with Hecate’s lines from III.5 – and just before the appearance of the dagger (II.1) – with lines from I.3. Welles moves, from early script to final creation, towards greater simplicity, leaving more to the viewer’s imagination. With each succeeding script, he recedes further from his design for the Voodoo Macbeth, in which the witches and their cohorts were a dominant feature, appearing in six scenes of eight, particularly at the ends of scenes, as visual and aural punctuation. Though the film compared to the Harlem production plays down their overriding control over events, it similarly punctuates important scenes. In both the early script and the postproduction script before pruning, the witches reappear after Macbeth exits with Ross, the friar and Banquo, and share lines 30-31 from Hecate’s speech in the normally excised III.5. In the postproduction script:

[shot] 73. ‘MED. CLOSE UPWARD ANGLE (MIST)’ on the Three, shooting over rocky formation.

THE FIRST:
He shall spurn fate.

THE SECOND:
Scorn death.

THE THIRD:
And bear his hopes above wisdom!

THE FIRST:
Grace!

74. MED. LONG DOWN ANGLE (MIST)
On group as Macbeth Mounts.
THE SECOND: O.S. [i.e., voiceover]
And fear!
Welles had amplified the witches even more in his early script for the film, where a few lines from the witches’ Sabbath precede the same lines from III.5: Welles writes, ‘The three witches crawl out of their hiding place, and the first leads the others in the weaving of a spell....’ that includes the ‘thrice to thine’ lines (I.3.35-36). At the conclusion, ‘They smile at each other.’ The rerelease eliminates their lines after Macbeth’s exit and simply ends the scene with a ghostly ‘Hail!’ on the fadeout.

Another punctuating shot in all three film scripts, after Banquo’s exit from the court, shows the three with their forked sticks, the castle in the background, then, in a dissolve, a small Macbeth doll, moisture running down its face. As a witch says lines that in the text do not apply to Macbeth (‘I will drain him dry as hay.... He shall live a man forbid’ from I.3.18-22), a hand reaches into the frame and claps the crown on the doll’s head, its face now distorted into a sneer. The image dissolves into that of Macbeth, staring into his distorted reflection in a metal mirror before the banquet scene, his face beaded with sweat. Also, when Macduff jeers ‘untimely ripp’d’ in response to Macbeth’s boast that no man born of woman will harm him, Welles again introduces a shot of the three and has them echo Macduff’s words. The early script has Macbeth see them through a window; in the films they are simply there. Similarly, while the cauldron scene is their last in the play, the post-production script calls not only for a long shot of the witches, with their ‘forked sticks, silhouetted against the mist’, to end the film, but also for a final shot, a superimposition of (that is, a dissolve to) a close-medium shot of the same image. The First Witch says at the end, just as in the Harlem production, ‘Peace!/ The charm’s wound up.’ The early script has a similar ending, but even more overtly stresses the witches’ control:

41 A CORNER OF THE CASTLE.

The three weird sisters appear on the scene. The Second Witch opens her mouth to speak. The First stops her with a complacent gesture of her skinny hand.

FIRST WITCH

Peace!
The charm’s wound up.

Overscene there continues the scirling bagpipes, the mighty shouts of the crowd.
– We read the end of the story in the Witch’s eyes.

FADEOUT.

THE END

The double script shows the last line deleted for the rerelease. In an eight-page memo to Wilson that describes alternatives for the last shot, Welles writing from the set of Othello knows that he cannot control the witches’ performance.
After several detailed suggestions for visual and sound effects, he states, and he underlines,

I think we should try a fadeout without the witches closing line.

In this version we would do without the close shot of the witches. We would bring in the tomorrow and tomorrow clouds at the same musical place during the pull back, and then immediately before the pull-back action is completed ... the clouds take over from the pull-back-castle image. Then the clouds slowly fadeout but in this version definately not before THE END has faded in. In this version THE END and the clouds will fadeout together, just as the music proper finishes, There will be a grand Mercury pause over a black screen (perhaps with very low tympani keeping the screen alive) and then the Republic trademark will slowly slowly slowly fadein and hold for the length of the closing distant fanfare.

I have high hopes for this version.

The witches may stink it up – I hope not, but they may.

The Gitt restoration, in other words, because it includes the last line from the originally-released film and the medium shot of the witches, does not represent Welles’s last thoughts about the scene – does not respond to Welles’s concern that they may ‘stink it up’. The omission of the last shot is just one example of the rerelease improving, in Welles’s mind, on the original. The extra year and a half gave him time to correct some aspects he hadn’t liked. Since he had been willing to release the film originally with the witches’ less-than-adequate performances, his film benefits from the studio’s dislike of cackling witchiness, for though the rerelease cuts their lines, it enhances their menace. The rerelease and to a somewhat lesser extent the restoration solve the problem of retaining the witches’ theatrical energy while not allowing them to swamp the production (as they did the Harlem version), but with its trimmed sound track, the rerelease better upholds their mystery. We must ascribe part of the solution to the studio’s interference and part to Welles’s ability to satisfy their demands creatively.

Welles’s image of the witches’ three main scenes – the first scene (I.1), their greeting of Macbeth (I.3), and the cauldron scene (IV.1) – also changes. His early script has a straightforward first scene, to which the postproduction script adds elements from the cauldron scene. Welles calls them in his early script ‘wicked old women’ and ‘wise women’, but they seem unlike women in the final film because, never shown clearly, they remain unknowable and otherworldly. In the film but not in the early script, they have the power to reach into the boiling cauldron, from which they bring to birth the doll they will use to control Macbeth. The figure is recognizably Macbeth, though none of the scripts note this resemblance (a memo of 11 February 1948 mentions creating a new figure; perhaps it was not until the rerelease, then, that the doll did resemble Welles). Structure is similar in the two scripts, for, in both, the first
scene merges into the third (the prophetic greeting of Macbeth and Banquo), interrupted only by the credits, without the bloody sergeant scene (I.2). The more intense rerelease is better without Gitt’s restoration of several lines and images, particularly the lines from the cauldron scene (dialogue under shots of them reaching into the cauldron) and from Banquo’s part. As cut for the re-release, they work without speaking, and Banquo doesn’t ask for his fate, the witches volunteering only the information that he will ‘get kings Though thou be none’. In the early script the witches disappear before the entrance of Ross and the friar. In the later scripts, the friar warns them off, and they fall back before his staff. This power over them requires another change — his death at the end to assure their ascendancy.

In the film, the cauldron scene is the witches’ only full scene after the opening sequence. The early script introduces it after a fadeout of the banquet scene. The scene, in the traditional cavern, opens with Macbeth’s arrival:

SECOND WITCH
By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Macbeth enters the Cavern, followed by a bitter gust of wind.

MACBETH
How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is’t you do? (IV.1.45-46, 49-50).

After this initial greeting, the scene continues with the opening of IV.1, the brewing of the cauldron’s foul mixture, which Macbeth observes, ‘flattened against the slimy wall of the cave’. The dailies show that the witches were shot reflected in a mirror, their images distorted, while they spoke the prophecies, a visual echo of Macbeth’s face in the distorted mirror before arranging Banquo’s murder.

The double script merges the banquet and the cauldron scenes, with the cavernous tunnel of the one merging into the open wilderness of the other. Terrified by drunken visions of Banquo (and then Duncan), Macbeth runs from the banquet directly to a promontory where he conjures the witches to speak to him, and, invisible throughout, they respond with the three prophecies. Beginning with a high angle long shot of a far distant Macbeth, his face lit by lightning flashes, the scene fades out on a high angle closeup of Macbeth speaking directly to the camera: ‘But is all this so?’ The answer comes, ‘Aye. sir, all this is so’, as the image fades to the Macduff scene. The witches have fewer lines in the film than in the early script and do not even appear on the screen, but their uncanny discovery on Macbeth’s own ground heightens their eeriness. Since the actors playing the witches couldn’t deliver what Welles or anyone else wanted, Welles, pressed by necessity, shaped them into a usable aural image.
For relooping the witches’ least satisfactory lines, Welles secured the help of English actress Fay Compton, Emilia in his Othello, who, one memo says, was willing to spend a day on witch dialogue for the film, working with Welles in Europe, but it is not clear that she actually did the job. And though equipment and technicians followed him to Europe to elicit his approval and his personal dubbing of dialogue relooped in the United States, there was no substitute for being on the spot. Wilson couldn’t always accomplish the task as Welles wanted. Welles, for example, writes to Wilson, unhappy with Jeanette Nolan’s (Lady Macbeth’s) new sound:

Jean Nolan’s Montana ‘r’ is excruciating, and will excite, without any question whatsoever, a great deal of unfavourable comment, not only in England but also in all metropolitan areas of the English speaking world where ears are educated to these broad distinctions of speech.

Particularly unhappy is the change not only in speech, but actually in character. When Miss Nolan moves from the Scottish speech (in which she had been rehearsed) to what she considers a normal speech for Shakespeare, her vocal tone moves at least an octave upwards, and the entire personality of Lady Macbeth vanishes. We are given instead an intense and sometimes intelligent reading of the lines by an American farm girl. It would be impossible to state strongly enough the gravity of this mistake. Nolan is not a large woman; her personality is not commanding. She lacks what the French call ‘presence’. Her success in the role of Lady Macbeth was entirely based on her intelligence and on the vocal authority which informed and underlined the playing of all her big scenes. The unfortunate Montana whine, wheeze, and scrape completely nullify this authority. The result is downright embarrassing, and as the producer of the film I cannot permit this to be countenanced.

Disagreeng with Welles’s earnest request that Nolan’s lines not be redubbed, Wilson writes to Studio head Robert V. Newman that 85% of her lines have been relooped [and thus are ready for redubbing], all except the sleepwalking scene. ‘We would never have enough time or money to follow the dictates of [Welles’s] memo. I have, however, in added re-looping, eliminated to the best of her and my ability (consistent with cost and time considerations) this objection [to her Montana accent]...’

In an earlier memo (November 18, 1948), Wilson explained the use of a Scottish accent:

We didn’t put a Scotch dialect in the picture because Macbeth was laid in Scotland. A Scotch dialect was put in because we determined, after careful tests, that the intelligibility was greater with the Scotch accent, because it had a tendency to slow the actors down just enough to make it more comprehensible to the ear. The secondary reason was that it absolutely made it impossible for the actor to sing his lines ala Shakespearian declamation.

Though the idea was excellent, though the Scottish accent did help the actors to be less declamatory (just as the Caribbean accent similarly helped the cast
of the Harlem *Macbeth*), Wilson did not succeed completely in carrying this point with the studio.

Welles kept on trying. In a memo of March 6, 1949, Welles writes to 'Dearest Charlie' [Feldman]:

Although we only took 21 days for shooting the film, we spent — you may remember — many weeks of very hard work prerecording, and many more weeks of equally hard work dubbing and re-dubbing dialogue afterwards. This represents as much of my efforts as all the other parts of the picture put together, and to re-do this completely under anyone else's supervision (even Dick's [Richard Wilson], in whom I need not say I have the utmost confidence) would be to remove from the film more than fifty percent of my contribution to it.

Welles's assessment of the total time spent on the film is certainly accurate. In addition to all the preliminary preparation, including the ANTA work and the precording of dialogue, postproduction work on the film continued, according to memos, at least through November 1947 (box 10, f.6). Welles suggests that they 're-record all difficult and questioned parts of the film. *But to re-do everything would be quite literally to undo everything.*' Since the burr remains in many lines, clearly Welles's advice was heeded. On the other hand, Wilson pleads that

Attention [be paid] to the old problem of matching in terms of voice and volume levels, quality, acoustics, etc. It seems to me important that you remember that this is becoming more and more a patch up job and therefore, we should bend over backwards to do the work in the way that will minimize this patch up effort. By this, I mean if there is time, all the loops should be done and particularly all the loops of any given speech should be done because our problem is going to be intercutting lines within the same speech.

Welles himself, in checking the relooping, realized that the patching would not work and insisted that speeches be completely redone without the Scottish accent, instead of the word or two he had earlier proposed. 'Obviously,' he writes in a memo, 'if the Scots burr was to be taken out, every single evidence of it should go' (box 25). A Wilson memo to Robert V. Newman expresses the confusion:

In [Welles's] memo, with sharpness and at length, he criticized the fact that if were to do any removal of the dialect he assumed we would do every bit. Yet he sent back loops undone which we requested, and left untouched of his own volition and without comment practically the whole latter part of the picture. He 'assumed' a 'thoroughness' when the policy decided upon was based on his own request and reasoning to the contrary (box 11, f.6).

Compromises eventually soothed the clashes of opinion and smoothed out the disparate goals. The sound of the rerelease compares favorably to the restored sound, and many of the cuts improve the film.
We have, then, pieces of a whole that we can puzzle out. Like a Shakespeare text, Welles's *Macbeth* requires some archeology to work out the accurate text. Or perhaps a better way to put it is that, like a Shakespeare text, and for the same reasons, there is no one, accurate text. Michael Goldman demonstrates through the example of *Hamlet* that each script provides its own set of opportunities and responsibilities, that each provides an array of choices suitable for a particular moment. When a work is the result of collaboration, when the process allows for continual change, no individual text can be selected as the correct version. Some of the changes are the result of Welles's revisions: should the 'true' film, then, be the one he himself superseded? Other changes are the result of interference for commercial reasons, but Welles ultimately accepted them. On November 14, 1949, he writes to his colleague Richard Alan Wilson:

Dearest Dick... I am sorry you find yourself so much at odds with the final editing of 'Macbeth' as done by Lou [Lindsay] and myself. Your suggestions are always interesting and often impressive but I'm afraid this last version should stand as it is.... Republic-Feldman, Lindsay and Welles are generally content with this last form. There has been allot of disagreement up till now and it seems to me a shame to enperil this strange, pleasant, new atmosphere.... In my view our job on Macbeth is finished. Given limitless time, more money and a great deal of loving patience and passion on the part of Republic, we might continue to piddle and diddle around with it, but particularly since I am one whole ocean and a continent away from the scene of operations, it seems to me we had better address the damned thing, stamp it, and send it off to its destiny ... [sic, these ellipses are Welles's] whatever that may be.10

The film exists as a valid entity in every stage of its progress. Thanks to Richard Alan Wilson, the materials are available. The full story awaits telling.

Notes

All references are to Kenneth Muir, ed., *Macbeth*, Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1982).

2. All manuscript materials cited are from the Richard Alan Wilson Collection, UCLA (call no. 1154); the Feldman letter is dated May 10, 1949. I identify items, where possible, by date, box and/or folder number and retain original punctuation and spelling. My appreciation to the UCLA Special Collections Library staff for their assistance.
3. To summarize the main scripts: (1) Orson Welles's script with 41 scenes, May 16, 1947 (box 11, f.7); (2) the shooting script as marked up by Lou Lindsay, the editor, with 91 shots, June 16, 1947 (box 11, f.8); (3) another copy of this shooting script, heavily marked, with first and last pages missing, and with white and pink sheets, no date (box
11, f.9); (4) another copy of this shooting script with blue, pink, yellow, and green sheets, heavily marked by a script assistant; the color code indicates level of revision (box 11, f.10); (5) copies of sheets taken from scripts along with green sheets (box 11, f.9); (6) the record of the dailies showing the number of versions of each shot and Orson Welles’s reactions to the rushes (box 10, f.5); (7) the cutting continuity with 645 shots, marked with cuts (box 10, f.2); (8) a copy of this cutting continuity (box 10, f.3); (9) an earlier version from which the cutting continuity was made, with an instruction sheet dated Sept. 1, 1949 noting that a blue squiggle through a word indicated that it required relooping to replace the Scottish ‘dialect’ (box 10, f.4); (10) a cutting continuity, 547 shots, with cuts executed mostly as marked on (7), labeled ‘final’, with narration substituted for some shots (box 10, f.7). Copies of several scripts have been deposited in the Folger Shakespeare Library.


5. The Library of Congress has no version of the film. The Folger Shakespeare Library has the restored film, both on film and tape, the film beginning with 8 minutes of orchestral music by Jacques Ibert, who was, as memos reveal, a source of constant concern and difficulty during the preparation for rerelease. The Museum of Modern Art has both the restored and the rereleased film, and I am grateful to the Museum of Modern Art Film Department and its director Charles Silver for allowing me to screen the rereleased film. According to Kenneth S. Rothwell (Kenneth S. Rothwell and Annabelle Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen: An International Filmography and Videography* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1990), the film is available for rent both in rereleased and restored form. An opportunity to compare the original release to the rerelease and to the restored version could yield further insights, but no copy of the original has, apparently, survived.

6. The script with other Wilson materials provides full details: three cameras churned simultaneously and takes were long. Instead of repeating ‘takes’, Welles selected specific cuts from among the three sets of rushes, reshooting only when necessary. The dialogue, too, was prerecorded in several different styles in a sound studio so that the best could be used for the film’s sound track. An innovation derived from filmed musicals, this way of composing the sound track would assure quality control, Welles thought. The actors performed while listening to their speeches. In an explanatory note, Wilson says that they shot 85 to 90% of the film in one large space with movable pillars, another 10% in a Republic set with tunnels and caverns left over from a serial. They shot only a few scenes outside on the back lot, enhancing them with matte shots.


10. Welles possibly could feel satisfied at this point because he had gotten his way about several scenes. The studio had objected, for example, to shots of the Macduff child (played by Welles’s daughter) running and falling, yet these remain. They had also denied the effectiveness of a high angle extreme long shot, a shot that Welles had
sketched – a rarity in the collection – of Macbeth standing, staff in hand, on a snow-covered courtyard, but the shot appears after the ‘I ’gin to be a-weary of the sun’ soliloquy in the rereleased film (shot 510; V.5.49).
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