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### Shakespeare: The Mirror of the Human Soul

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*Ouachita Baptist University*

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# **SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL**

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Shakespeare: The Mirror of the Human Soul”**

written by

**Sarah Lynnette Davis**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for completion of  
the Carl Goodson Honors Program  
meets the criteria for acceptance  
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

Professor Eric Phillips, thesis director

Dr. Byron Eubanks, second reader

Dr. Rob Hewell, third reader

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April 14, 2014

*Shakespeare: The Mirror of the Human Soul*

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By: Sarah Lynnette Davis

April 14, 2014

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## Glossary of Terms

Scansion: “the metrical analysis of verse. The usual marks for scansion are ~ for a short or unaccented syllable, ¯ or · for a long or accented syllable, ^ for a rest, | for a foot division, and | for a caesura or pause.”<sup>1</sup>

Rhythm: The number of feet in a line (two syllable sections)

Rhythm: The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables

Iambic Pentarhythm: The rhythm in which Shakespeare usually writes. It falls unstressed/stressed (da/DUM da/DUM) and contains five feet per line for a total of ten syllables.

Trochee: Stressed/Unstressed (DUM/da DUM/da)

Anapest: Unstressed/Unstressed/Stressed (da/da/DUM)

Dactyl: Stressed/Unstressed/Unstressed (DUM/da/da)

Spondee: Stressed/Stressed (DUM/DUM)

Pyrric: Unstressed/Unstressed (da/da)

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<sup>1</sup> "Scansion." *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com, n.d. Web. 07 Apr. 2014.

## I. Preface

The idea for this thesis came to me in the summer of 2013 while studying at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. It began as a desire to continue my training in Shakespeare, and I initially thought to simply enlist acting coaching on a few of my favorite monologues. However, I am known to overcomplicate things, and soon enough this monstrous project was conceived. A challenge from the beginning I would not have made it this far without help from numerous people. Therefore, I feel it is only right to acknowledge those whose continual support has kept me going throughout this process: Professor Eric Phillips, Professor Dan Inouye, Professor Johnny Wink, Dr. Barbara Pemberton, and of course, Jim and Paula Davis. Thank you all for being willing to invest in me. I would have given up without your advice, coaching, and encouragement.

## II. Introduction

Shakespeare is one of the most popular playwrights of all time. Even during his own life time, Shakespeare experienced tremendous popularity that has lasted hundreds of years. Perhaps no one has said it better than Shakespeare's own contemporary Ben Jonson:

He was not of an age, but for all time! And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm !  
Nature herself was proud of his designs, And joyed to wear the dressing of his  
lines ! Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit, As, since, she will vouchsafe  
no other wit.<sup>1</sup>

One of the many reasons Shakespeare is so tremendously popular is his mastery of the human condition. Whether it is the heroic Henry V, the love-struck Julia, the wise Prospero, or the fierce Queen Margaret, Shakespeare writes characters that the audience can relate to. Shakespeare does not simply write a hero or a villain. He writes characters that reveal their true emotions in moments of extremity. This is what is interesting to us. We relate to the hero and the villain because we understand why they choose to act in the way they do. We love to share in the moments of triumph, love, defeat, loss, and friendship because we have been there. That is why I think Shakespeare remains such a powerful playwright. The ten monologues chosen for this thesis are just a sampling of his mastery. Each character will be analyzed within the context of the show, scene, and my thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhodes, R. Crompton. "Preface." *Shakespeare's First Folio*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1923. 3. Print.

III. Chorus from *Henry V*

✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
The flat unraised spirits that have dared  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
So great an object: can this cockpit hold  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Attest in little place a million;  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
On your imaginary forces work.  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts  
✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / ✓ /  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:



Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
 Into a thousand parts divide one man,  
 And make imaginary puissance;  
 Think when we talk of horses, that you see them  
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;  
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
 Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,  
 Turning the accomplishment of many years  
 Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,  
 Admit me Chorus to this history;  
 Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,  
 Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.<sup>2</sup>

*Henry V* is arguably Shakespeare's most famous history play. Estimated to have been written in 1599 it is still enjoyed by audiences today. Set in 1415 during King Henry V's war with France and victory in Agincourt, *Henry V* depicts the patriotism of the English. It begins with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely discussing a bill that will take away much of the Church's land if Henry signs it. They decide to encourage him to invade France as a distraction. After much discussion with his council, King Henry receives the French ambassadors who come bearing a contemptuous gift of tennis balls from the Dauphin. Although this does not seem offensive to contemporary audiences, it shows that the French do not take Henry seriously as a king. This is due to his partying past as Prince Hal. Henry is enraged and states that he will go to France, and they will regret their joke when "when thousands weep more than did laugh at

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<sup>2</sup> *Henry V*: Act I, Prologue

it.”<sup>3</sup> The rest of the play depicts Henry’s various battles and interactions with his men. He is depicted as a kind leader and a fierce warrior. The most famous battle portrayed is the Battle of Agincourt which caused the French to surrender. After this Henry allows the French King to retain his throne, but he takes some French territories and marries Princess Catherine, creating an alliance between France and England. Shakespeare takes historical liberties with the play, as usual, but it makes for great entertainment. Henry is a loveable, loyal leader that most people would be happy to follow. The French are mostly depicted as bumbling fools, and even a few Frenchmen in the play come to respect Henry. Although it is blatant nationalistic propaganda, *Henry V* remains a wonderful piece that captivates audiences.

The beginning prologue is one of the most well-known prologues in all of Shakespeare. Many people have at least heard the opening line: “O for a muse of fire.” It is the prologue that is most often studied because it is vulnerable, powerful, and unabashedly admits the limitations of the stage. It is particularly tricky to play because the chorus is utilized as a plot device instead of a character. Shakespeare utilizes the chorus to set the stage and clarify where Henry is in France. Instead of figuring out background, motivation, and objectives from the text, it is up to the actor to decide who the chorus is and motivate their lines. The interesting thing about the prologue is that it gives the actor a chance to tell the audience what every actor thinks before they go on. The stage has limitations, and actors know that they need the audience’s imagination to join with them in order to make the play work. The chorus admits that the audience cannot be transported to the battlefield: “Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France,” and we cannot have actual horses on stage: “Think when we talk of horses that you see them.” The chorus is simply an actor connecting with the audience and asking them to suspend their disbelief.

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<sup>3</sup> Act I, Scene II

The scansion within this text is almost completely regular. This means that almost every line follows the rhythm of unstressed/stressed and has five feet. There are four separate lines which break the rhythm. First, "Crouch for employment. But pardon and gentles all," has regular rhythm, but it contains twelve syllables which gives the line six feet. Second, "The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:" also contains twelve syllables and six feet. Third, "Think when we talk of horses, that you see them," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Finally, "Turning the accomplishment of many years," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Both endings can be made masculine however with a bit of examination. "Think when we talk of horses, that you see them," is made masculine when given a pyrrhic ending. This means that stress is put on the last two words "see" and "them." This gives a masculine ending while still keeping the emphasis on the word "see" which is crucial in this line. The second line is given a masculine ending by employing a trochee in the beginning. In this case the trochee is easy to hear because when you say the word "turning," you place the emphasis on the first syllable "turn." In both cases the solution is fairly simple. It is not possible to make the lines completely regular, but they are not meant to be. Shakespeare gives the actors clues within the scansion. If he had wanted those three lines to be regular, he could have made them regular. Instead he chose to set them apart. This gives the actor a hint that something more is happening within these lines.

The first irregular line, "Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all," completes a thought and begins a new one. It concludes the initial fangirling over Henry and moves into the first apology. It transitions from fangirling into recognizing all of the limitations of the theatre. Although this line does not stand out in an initial reading, upon closer examination it becomes an important transition line. The second irregular line, "The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder," does not seem important at the first glance as well. However, it is important to note that the line

contains a grammatical enjambment and once again serves as a transition line. It tells the reader that the “two mighty monarchies” are separated by an ocean which, particularly in Shakespeare’s time, would imply England and France.

The third irregular line, “Think when we talk of horses, that you see them,” signifies what I believe is a significant change in tone. The previous three lines tell the audience to use their imagination to complete the story. This line feels more intimate. This shift strikes me almost as if the chorus is confiding in the audience. It paints a picture for the audience with words. Instead of just “piecing out our imperfections with your thoughts,” this line tells the audience to actually see the horses when they are talked about. The fourth and final irregular line: “Turning the accomplishment of many years” remains in this intimate moment. This is the beginning of the admission that parts of the historical event have been left out and dramatized. It admits that what actually happened took several years, but is now condensed to about two and a half hours. For me, this line marks the beginning of the end for the prologue. It transitions from asking the audience to utilize their imagination to asking them to judge the play kindly and allow the Chorus to serve as their guide.

My personal challenges with the monologue have been many. It has fluctuated between being one of the stronger monologues, to being the weakest, to being somewhere in between. Considering the fact that it begins my thesis performance it has to be one of the strongest, or else I have lost my audience in the first moment. This was actually the first monologue I knew I wanted to do when piecing this performance together. I knew from the conception of this project that this was the one I wanted to open with. I am striving to portray ten different characters of different genders, ages, social statuses, occupations, etc. It only seemed natural to begin with the monologue that openly asks the audience to suspend their disbelief.

The first thing I did with the Chorus was decide upon its Laban energy. The idea behind Laban is that there are eight physical energies or efforts inherent in human nature. You can be sudden or sustained, direct or indirect, and strong or light. The various combinations of these qualities have been given names which relate to their physical bearing. This was the only character in my thesis whose inherent energy I chose immediately. I made the Chorus a glide which is sustained, direct, and light. This was partially because my actual characterization in life is a glide, and this monologue is so much about the actor simply connecting with the audience. I also felt like the other energies simply did not match the overall tone I wanted for the monologue as well as this one. The Chorus is direct with the audience. She openly breaks the fourth wall and addresses them. She is also excited to be delivering this monologue and talking about Henry V, so she is more light than heavy. Finally, although she is excited, for me, this monologue has a sustained quality to it. She does not seem rushed or frenzied, which to me implies that she is sustained.

One of my biggest pet peeves is actors who do Shakespeare in a grandiose and unnatural voice. To my shame, I have found that this particular monologue tempts me into the very thing that I despise. The words are so grand and eloquent that I often feel my own voice is not capable or worthy to do them justice. This impulse must be fought against at all costs. The words are eloquent and grand, but to speak them in a voice that is not natural does them an injustice. To counteract this I often employed a technique where you paraphrase what the original text in modern vernacular. To make it even more pertinent, I would change the text to talking about my own thesis performance, instead of *Henry V*. For example, I would say the lines: "Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts, into a thousand parts divide one man and make imaginary puissance," and then I would paraphrase them: "Add in the missing pieces with your

imagination, pretend that there are other people on stage that I am talking to, and imagine that I am the character.” This made the monologue much more personal and much scarier.

This monologue is all about connection. In fact, connection is its primary goal. The Chorus has to connect with the audience in order for them to participate. What has been intimidating for me as an actor is the fact that this monologue is so connection heavy. I love connection. I love connecting on stage with a scene partner, connecting with a director, and just connecting with people in general. What is scary is the fact that so much of this monologue is simply me standing in front of the audience and asking them to actually engage in the show. Although every actor thinks this before a show, but we do not necessarily want to stand up there and talk to the audience about it. I am an actor and not a public speaker for a reason. To put yourself into a character’s place and go on stage is vulnerable enough. To simply put yourself on stage and ask the audience to enjoy and engage in the show that you have put your heart into is terrifying. For this, I have found no formula or technique to cure it other than practice. Practicing in front of everyone and everything is the only way it has become easier.

#### IV. Calpurnia

What mean you, Caesar? Think you to walk forth?  
You shall not stir out of your house today.  
Caesar, I ne'er stood on ceremonies.  
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,  
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,  
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.  
A lioness hath whelped in the streets,  
And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead;

Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds  
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,  
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;  
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air,  
 Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan,  
 And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.  
 O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,  
 And I do fear them.  
 When beggars die, there are no comets seen;  
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.<sup>4</sup>

*Julius Caesar* is estimated to have been written around 1599. It is set in 44 BC just before the Ides of March. The play opens with the citizens celebrating Caesar's triumphant return from battle with the sons of Pompey. Cassius and Brutus, two of Caesar's friends, both express concern over the citizens wanting Caesar to become king. Although Marc Antony offers Caesar the crown three times, and Caesar repeatedly turns it down, both Cassius and Brutus are afraid that he will eventually accept it. They believe that Caesar is unfit to rule and they deeply fear the fall of the republic. The same night, terrible weather plagues the city of Rome giving omens to soothsayers. Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, has horrific nightmares, and she fights to convince Caesar to stay home the next day, fearing that he will be killed if he ventures out. After some time, she convinces him to stay out of regard for her; however one of the conspirators, Decius, convinces Caesar otherwise. As history goes, Caesar is then stabbed to death by the conspirators, including his close friend, Brutus. The conspirators speak to the people and seem to quell them; however Marc Antony's famous speech: "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears," turns them

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<sup>4</sup> *Julius Caesar*: Act II, Scene II

into a murderous mob. Rome begins to fall into shambles and war. After losing the war against Marc Antony and Octavius (Caesar's son) Cassius and Brutus fall on their swords and declare Caesar to be avenged. I believe *Julius Caesar* remains popular because it remains relevant. It deals with issues such as political corruption, greed, and betrayal. These issues will resonate with people as long as there is a governmental system in place.

Calpurnia is an interesting character because she appears briefly for one powerful moment and then is not seen again. She comes on only in Act II Scene II. In this moment, Caesar prepares to leave his house and sends a servant to the priests to learn if they deem it safe for him to leave. Calpurnia discovers him and fights for him to stay. Shakespeare gives us insight into who Calpurnia is through her lines. First, she is the wife of Caesar and she loves him dearly. Second, she is a strong enough woman to give a command to the man ruling her country: "You shall not stir out of your house today." Third, she was not superstitious or particularly religious up until now: "Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies yet now they fright me." Fourth, she has had a restless night due to visions of Caesar's death and the downfall of Rome. Fifth, she spoke with the servants and learned that she is not the only one who has had frightful dreams. In a few lines Shakespeare gives insight into who Calpurnia is and what motivates her. However, he does not give everything, and that is where the actor comes in. It is the actor's job to fill in the blanks both for themselves and the audience.

Shakespeare does not give any information on Calpurnia's past, but history does. Calpurnia Pisonis was the last wife of Julius Caesar. She was the daughter of a Roman Pontifex and was married to Caesar when she was sixteen. The Caesar's murder happened fifteen years later. Therefore, if history is an influence on the actor's performance, Calpurnia would be about thirty-one. Although one does not have to stick by historical guidelines, especially when



Shakespeare is involved, I think its influence can be powerful. Calpurnia would have grown up wealthy, well-educated, and politically intelligent. She would carry herself with the grace and poise of a well-born woman. It is doubtful that she would be meek or timid, considering her family and upbringing.

On the surface, Calpurnia's main objective is to keep Caesar within the house. However, it is obvious that her purpose has a much deeper meaning. Calpurnia is not simply trying to keep Caesar in the house, she is trying to save his life, and by extension Rome. If Caesar exits through his gates today; he will die. If Caesar dies, Rome will descend into a civil war. One of her visions had blood raining down upon the Capitol. This is not simply the blood of Caesar, but also the blood of Roman citizens who will die due to the war. The heavens do not blaze forth the death of beggars because their deaths do not destroy countries; only the death of a king can do that. Essentially in this moment the fate of Rome rests on Calpurnia. Shakespeare once again proves that he is the master of raising the stakes.

What is fascinating about this monologue is that although the stakes are incredibly high for Calpurnia, it remains fairly regular in scansion. There are only three lines in the entire monologue that are irregular. The line, "Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies" has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Next, the line, "And I do fear them." has only five syllables and a feminine ending. Finally, "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." has twelve syllables and six feet. The fact that the majority of Calpurnia's monologue is regular tells the actor that although she is sleep-deprived, afraid, and fighting for her husband's life, she remains in control. The first irregular line tells us a great deal about Calpurnia. She states, "Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies." In this case, the word "ceremonies" refers to omens and the predictions of soothsayers. She is reminding Caesar that she is a sensible woman, and he

knows her to be logical. She is not easily given to believing in superstition or signs, so Caesar needs to take heed. Of the three irregular lines, this is the only one that can be edited to become regular. The word “never” can be shortened to “ne’er” and then it scans in perfect rhythm with ten syllables. However, this line still remains important in that it immediately tells the audience what kind of woman Calpurnia is.

The next irregular line is the one that stands out from the initial reading: “And I do fear them.” It even stands apart visually, looking almost incomplete upon a first glance. Shakespeare is telling the actor that this line is crucial. In five syllables he brings Calpurnia out from the visions and nightmares and puts her back in the moment with her husband. She is openly admitting that she is afraid. This line essentially restates Calpurnia’s earlier statement that she does not usually believe in omens. Shakespeare sets it apart to reiterate the fact that this is unusual for her. For Calpurnia, this is the most vulnerable part of the monologue. This is the first time that she blatantly admits to being afraid of the signs, not simply believing them. The last irregular line comes at the end of the piece, “The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.” It is interesting that Shakespeare chooses to end the monologue on an irregular line. This essentially makes it a double emphasis on its importance. This is Calpurnia’s biggest warning to Caesar. He has not given into her yet, and this is her final admonition. She reminds him that the sky only falls apart for the death of significant leaders.

For me, Calpurnia has posed several unique challenges. She has seen days where she was right on point and strong, and days where she seemed to fall by the wayside. To be frank, she has seen more of the latter. The struggle has been keeping her fresh. I began working her during the summer before this project was even a passing thought. Although this should mean that she was the easiest to develop and the strongest, that is simply not the case. I found that I hit a brick wall

with her a few months in and lost all of the connection I formally had. I never quite regained that original connection, which meant I had to go back to basics and re-find her as a character. I could not simply try to recreate what I had. That simply read as forcing emotion on stage, which no one wants to see. Instead, I had to go back and find the character of Calpurnia again.

The first thing I did was solidify and decide on a Laban energy. After a great deal of deliberation and waffling back and forth, I felt that thrust best suited her. Thrust is direct, strong, and sudden. That Calpurnia is direct would be difficult to argue against. She immediately confronts Caesar, and addresses her concerns with him. The burden placed on her in this moment and the repercussions should she fail would definitely make her strong. The main thing I struggled with was deciding whether she was sudden or sustained. I feel that both could be argued for, and both choices could be equally correct for different reasons. I ended up choosing sudden because I felt that it communicated the stakes a little bit better. In the scene, Calpurnia seems to come out of nowhere to stop Caesar. In the monologue, she bursts into a rant about the visions and prophecies that have been seen, in hopes that it will stop him. Considering the fact that she has not slept well and that if she fails not only does her husband die but her country descends into war, it only seems natural to have her be a bit frenzied.

After deciding upon her Laban effort, I spent several hours simply speaking the text. One of the notes often given to actors who do Shakespeare is to let the words play you; do not play the words. This means not to force out emotion but simply let it happen through the language, because it is so powerful. This is often easier said than done, especially for young actors just getting their start in Shakespeare, like myself. One thing I have found helpful is to simply sit cross legged on the floor, close my eyes, and speak the text. Once I have spent some time in that position, I get up, and begin to move around the room speaking the text and utilizing the specific

Laban energy. I found that this was quite helpful in rediscovering the power of Calpurnia's words. More than once I would be moved from simply stating the text in a monotone manner, to crying by the end of it. This type of reaction did not (and cannot) happen every time, but it helped in finding the strength of the language.

Another specific exercise I did was simply asking a fellow actor to essentially play Caesar for me. Initially, I had the two of us sit down close together and I just looked him in the eyes and spoke the text. Next, I held his hands in mine and delivered the monologue to him. After doing this a few times, we got up and began to enact this specific moment. He would move with purpose towards a specific direction, and I would stop him. I found this exercise to be extraordinarily powerful in helping me reconnect with the stakes of this monologue. Having a physical person there, staring back at you, really helps the text hit home. It can become difficult to consistently connect on stage with someone who is not there and make the moment believable. I found that it was helpful to work with another person and then work on translating that connection to the stage without them.

## V. Mercutio

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
On the fore-finger of an alderman,

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
Drawn with a team of little atomies

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep.

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut

Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,  
 Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.  
 And in this state she gallops night by night  
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
 O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,  
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,  
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:  
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
 And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail  
 Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,  
 Then dreams, he of another benefice:  
 Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
 Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon  
 Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
 And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two  
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
 That plats the manes of horses in the night,  
 And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,

Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes:  
 This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
 Making them women of good carriage:  
 This is she--<sup>5</sup>

*Romeo and Juliet* is arguably Shakespeare's most famous work. One would be hard pressed to find a person who did not know the plot and could not give at least one quote from it. Written in the mid-1590s *Romeo and Juliet* makes a bold move by telling the audience how the play ends in the prologue: "A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life." He moves from the prologue to a brawl in the streets between the Capulets and Montagues. The Prince declares that the next person to cause a brawl in the city will be sentenced to death. Romeo mopes over his love of Rosaline and his cousin Benvolio tries to cheer him up. They decide to crash a Capulet party, and this is where Romeo meets Juliet. They fall in love and decide to marry in secret. Just after the marriage, Juliet's cousin Tybalt endeavors to start a fight with Romeo. Romeo refuses to brawl with him, and the hot-headed Mercutio steps in. Tybalt kills Mercutio, and Romeo becomes furious and kills Tybalt. The Prince shows mercy and banishes Romeo to the town of Mantua. Juliet is forced to become engaged with Paris and hatches a plan with the Friar to fake her death and go to Mantua. Romeo hears of her "death" and misses the important fact that it was faked. He buys poison and goes to Juliet's tomb in Verona. Thinking her dead, he kills himself so he can be with her in death. Juliet wakes up, and kills herself when she realizes that Romeo is dead. The play ends with the Capulets and Montagues crying over their dead children and finally reaching a truce.

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<sup>5</sup> *Romeo and Juliet*: Act I, Scene IV

Mercutio is one of the most fascinating sidekicks in Shakespeare. Everyone knows or has experienced a Mercutio at some point in their lives. He is the guy who is a young buck. He does not quite know when to let the joke go. He takes things a little too far, is a little too hot headed, and always wants to be the center of attention. But, he is still a good guy and a loyal friend. Mercutio is a kinsman to the Prince, which means he grew up wealthy and likely being given anything he wanted. He is a member of the royal family, but without the responsibilities of eventually becoming King: think Prince Harry as a teenager. Mercutio is an extreme extrovert. Romeo is often estimated to be around sixteen; therefore I am estimating Mercutio to be around eighteen or nineteen. He strikes me as the cool, older friend who is not necessarily the best influence.

In this moment, Mercutio, Romeo, Benvolio and all the other Montague “bros” are preparing to crash the Capulet party. Everyone is in a good mood, except Romeo who says that he does not want to go because he had a strange dream. On the surface, Mercutio’s responding monologue is simply him making fun of Romeo. That observation would be correct, but I do not think it is the entire story. Mercutio and Romeo have been friends since boyhood. They probably grew up together causing all sorts of mischief. However, lately Romeo has not been acting like himself. A wall has come between them, and Mercutio does not understand why. Therefore, he reacts in the only way Mercutio knows how; he teases. Mercutio is an immature teenage boy. He is not going to sit Romeo down and talk with him about what is going on. But, he is hurting because of his friend’s distance. How do young, immature teenage boys deal with their feelings? They put on a front and ignore them. Mercutio just wants Romeo to cheer up, drink up, and go party with him. He just does it in a different way than most people would.

Although it is a longer monologue, the rhythm remains almost completely regular. In fact, there are only two lines that are irregular and one shared line. The line, "Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep," contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. It is particularly tricky because the word "tickling" becomes a trochee because the emphasis is on the first syllable "tick." The second syllable "ing" is unstressed and the following syllable "a" also gets an unstressed making it an anapest. This is so the stress can be placed on the first syllable of "parson's" where it falls naturally. So, the line begins with a trochee and anapest. It ends with a spondee since the word "asleep" has almost equal emphasis on both syllables." The line, "And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two," contains twelve syllables. It is difficult to decipher exactly why these two lines, out of all of Mercutio's lines, are irregular. They do not seem to be particularly significant. However, I think that the line, "Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep," is made irregular to simply emphasize the playfulness of the line. I believe that the extra two syllables in: "And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two," signify that there is a slight change here. I interpret it as telling the actor to slow down a bit with this line.

Mercutio was another character that I knew I wanted to perform from the conception of this project. He also terrified me. Mercutio is my absolute favorite character in *Romeo and Juliet*. I find him to be fascinating, fun, and intricate. Performing his famous monologue seemed to be an impossible task for me. For a split second, I debated not doing him and choosing something easier to take his place. However, I would not pass up this opportunity to portray one of my dream roles. I argue that Mercutio could be portrayed by a female without harming the integrity of the script. But there are not many directors who feel the same. So I knew I could not miss this chance to portray one of my favorite characters in all of Shakespeare. Plus, his monologue about the futility of dreams follows nicely after Calpurnia's.



The first thing I did with Mercutio was practice his physicality. Instead of initially deciding upon a specific Laban movement, I knew that I wanted him to have a rakish quality to his movement. So, I slouched my shoulders, bent my knees, let my arms hang, and moved my hips forward. This was tremendously helpful with finding his character. After I became comfortable in Mercutio's physical bearing, I began working on which Laban energy he was. I knew that he was not heavy and not sustained, which left him between dab and flick. Dab is light, sudden, and direct, while flick is light, sudden, and indirect. After a little bit of debate back and forth, I settled on flick, because Mercutio says in thirty-five lines what could be said in two. Instead of simply telling Romeo not to pay attention to his dreams, he goes into a rant about a fictional creature who brings dreams and nightmares to various people. He gets so involved in his rant that Romeo has to cut him off. This is not a character who is direct and to the point, thus making him a flick.

The next step in developing Mercutio was to comb through all of the language and symbolism in the text. I worked through each line and once again paraphrased what it meant in modern terms. Next, I decided which lines were sexual innuendos and which could be taken at face value as simply being playful. For instance, the lines: "And in this state she gallops night by night through lovers brains and then they dream of love," is simply a playful rib at the love-struck Romeo. But, the lines: "O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream, which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues, because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are," can easily be interpreted as a sexual innuendo regarding oral sex. I made the choice to play it that way, because Mercutio is nothing if not bawdy.

The third step was to simply play with him. A great portion of acting is simply throwing stuff out there and seeing what sticks. I felt that was the best way to go about developing

Mercutio. He is having a great deal of fun in this moment, so I decided to have a great deal of fun working on him. I played with what images I wanted to truly paint in front of the audience, which specific metaphors I wanted to use a prop piece for. To help give the performance a through-line, I utilized a piece of fabric cut specifically so it could be ten different things for the ten different characters. For the chorus, it was modestly brought out and unfolded, for Calpurnia it serves as a shawl. For Mercutio, it became whatever he wanted it to be. He turned it into a tickling feather on the line, “tickling a parson’s nose as a’ lies asleep.” He draws it across his throat on the line, “And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats.” All of the specific images were developed while simply playing with Mercutio. There was no grand formula, no complicated exercises, no emotional breakthrough. He was (and is) simply fun.

After developing a solid foundation with Mercutio, the challenge became to discover how the monologue ebbed and flowed, and how Mercutio grew. He could not simply end the same as he began. I essentially just did the same thing I did to develop his foundation. I played around with him. I played with having him start off as large, bold, and grandiose and then moving towards becoming smaller and quieter. But, that did not fit him. Mercutio is the kind of character who builds upon a thought, gets louder and louder, and crosses more and more lines until someone stops him. It seemed more his style to begin the monologue more level and then build until he gets a bit out of control and has to be interrupted.

## VI. Julia

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
Here is a coil with protestation!

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /  
Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same!

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!  
 Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey  
 And kill the bees that yield it with your stings!  
 I'll kiss each several paper for amends.  
 Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!  
 As in revenge of thy ingratitude,  
 I throw thy name against the bruising stones,  
 Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.  
 And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'  
 Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed  
 Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd;  
 And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.  
 But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down.  
 Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away  
 Till I have found each letter in the letter,  
 Except mine own name: that some whirlwind bear  
 Unto a ragged fearful-hanging rock  
 And throw it thence into the raging sea!  
 Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,  
 'Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,  
 To the sweet Julia:' that I'll tear away.  
 And yet I will not, sith so prettily  
 He couples it to his complaining names.

Thus will I fold them one on another:  
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.<sup>6</sup>

Shakespeare wrote *Two Gentlemen of Verona* sometime between 1589 and 1592. The play opens with two best friends, Proteus and Valentine, saying goodbye on a street in Verona. Valentine has decided to venture off to Milan, and Proteus says that he will stay home to be near his beloved, Julia. The play then shifts to Julia and her handmaiden, Lucetta. Julia asks Lucetta which guy she should fall in love with. Lucetta suggests Proteus and gives Julia a love letter that he wrote to Julia. Julia promptly becomes flustered and the two girls bicker and Julia tears the letter. Proteus' father, Antonio, decides to send his son to Milan. Proteus exchanges rings with Julia and embarks to his destination. Julia decides to disguise herself as a boy and follow her love to Milan. In the meantime, Valentine has courted and fallen in love with the Duke of Milan's daughter, Silvia. Proteus arrives to Milan and also becomes enamored with the beautiful Silvia. Proteus goes so far as to betray the confidence of Valentine and get him banished. Silvia however, loves Valentine and runs away to be with him. Proteus pursues her with the disguised Julia in tow as his page. Valentine, who has become king of a band of outlaws, offers Silvia to Proteus as a token of their mended friendship. At this moment, the disguised Julia faints and her identity is revealed. Proteus realizes that he truly loves Julia, and the play ends with the double marriage of Julia to Proteus and Silvia to Valentine.

Julia is a young, playful character. Although Shakespeare does not give any indication of her age, she reads fairly young. In the first scene she asks Lucetta which of her suitors she should fall in love with. When Lucetta reveals that Proteus has written her a love letter, she argues that it is not proper for a young woman to read such a thing. She dismisses Lucetta, only to bring her

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<sup>5</sup> *Two Gentlemen of Verona*: Act I, Scene II

back almost immediately. Instead of asking for the letter outright, Julia makes small talk about dinner. Once she does get the letter, she gets frustrated with Lucetta again and tears it simply to prove a point. These are not the actions of a twenty year old woman, but rather a thirteen or fourteen year old girl who is love-struck for the first time.

Julia's monologue takes place just after she has torn the letter in her fit and Lucetta has left. She immediately regrets the decision to tear the letter: "Nay, would I were so angered with the same!" She then proceeds to desperately piece it back together. Her main objective is to piece Proteus's love letter back together so she can read it. However, she gets easily distracted by reading the sweet words written on the torn pieces. She also becomes easily flustered at some of the more steamy ideas that come into her head. This monologue is incredibly playful and fun. It is a wonderful and accurate depiction of a young teenage girl in love.

Julia's monologue has a total of eight irregular lines, which is a lot considering there are only twenty-eight lines. This emphasizes Julia's youth and emotional turbulence. The first one: "Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey," has twelve syllables. The next irregular line, "Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!" has thirteen syllables and a feminine ending. The feminine ending is changed by utilizing a spondee and placing the emphasis on "kind" and the first syllable of "Julia." Next, the line, "Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The ending is made masculine by beginning the line with a trochee and placing the emphasis on the first syllable, "tramp," where it falls naturally, then continuing the scansion as normal. The next irregular line, "Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. This time the feminine ending cannot be changed since all of the emphases fall naturally. The line "But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. However, the

feminine ending is quickly fixed when the word “written” is turned into a trochee, placing the emphasis on the first syllable, “writ,” where it falls. The final two irregular lines happen back to back. The first, “Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,” has twelve syllables. The second, “To the sweet Julia:’ that I’ll tear away,” has eleven syllables and feminine ending. The feminine ending is changed by utilizing a pyrric and making the word “tear” and the first syllable in “away” unstressed, so the rhythm falls naturally.

The first irregular line “Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey,” I believe, emphasizes Julia’s frustration. She has just torn up a passionate love letter from the man she loves for seemingly no reason other than being flustered. Instead of placing the blame on herself, she places it on her hands. The next irregular line, “Look, here is writ ‘kind Julia.’ Unkind Julia!” also contains twelve syllables. This particular line turns on a dime. It contains a quick emotional shift from being enamored in the first moment, “Look, here is writ ‘kind Julia,” back to frustration in the second, “Unkind Julia!” This is the first time she reads part of the letter, and for a fleeting second she becomes lost in Proteus’ words. It is an incredibly sweet moment that is shattered the moment she remembers that she tore the letter. Next, the line “Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain,” concludes Julia’s frustration with herself after reading Proteus’ words, “kind Julia.” She not only crumples up her name but throws it on the ground and stomps on it. She is clearly very upset.

The line “Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal’d,” is a particularly fun moment. It is the first time Julia has found Proteus’ name written down in the letter: “And here is writ ‘love-wounded Proteus.” She vows to keep this torn piece within her bosom until he heals. By all accounts Julia is a proper and modest young girl. The irregularity of the line where she decides to essentially keep Proteus’ name in her bra gives credence to this. Julia becomes

consumed with finding all the pieces that have Proteus' name on them in the next irregular line "But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down." Julia has just been consumed with joy over finding a piece of the torn letter that has Proteus' name on it. With this line she snaps out of her joy and realizes that there are more pieces with his name on them for her to find. It transitions her from being enamored with that one piece, to frantically searching for the others. In this instance, I believe the irregularity of the line implies that Julia is slightly distressed. To her, finding the pieces with her love's name written on them is as serious as life and death. Remember, she is a teenage girl; everything is going to be heightened.

The final two irregular lines: "Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus, to the sweet Julia: that I'll tear away," are particularly tricky. It is the only full line that is a quote from the letter. Every other time Julia reads a snippet of the letter she responds to it within the same line. This line not only informs the actor about Julia, but also about Proteus. Proteus is so overcome by his passion for Julia that in this line his scansion is irregular. The feminine ending of the second line can be made masculine by placing the stress on the words "I'll tear," thus making it pyrhicc. In this line Julia once again turns on a dime. Teenage girls are not known for their stability. When she sees her own name again in the letter she has the immediate impulse to tear it away from Proteus' names. The irregularity of this line helps to emphasize her quick shift and the overwhelming nature of her impulse. Julia gets lost in the letter again for a brief moment, and once again that moment is shattered by the reading of her own name. She is still angry with herself for tearing the letter. However, she stops her impulse in the next line since her name looks good with his.

Although I initially did not think Julia's monologue would pose any significant problems, I was quickly proven wrong. In fact, I was told by a director that he had never seen this

monologue done well. Upon closer examination, I could see why. Although Julia is probably the least intricate character in my thesis, her monologue posed unique challenges. She was definitely one of the more difficult ones to connect with. She is a young, teenage girl and I am a twenty-two year old woman. Although I remember being thirteen, it was difficult to try to put myself back in that mind frame. It was a particular struggle to make a torn love-letter seem like life and death.

One of the greatest struggles with Julia was portraying someone so much younger than me, especially when I know that at five foot eight I do not look that young. The number one piece of advice when an actor has to portray age is to play the obstacle not the age. This simply means to buy into the problem that the character is having instead of trying to pretend you are an old woman or a young girl. This is often easier said than done, especially in this case, because the problem is a torn love-letter. To everyone else, this torn letter is not life or death. No one will die or be harmed if she cannot piece it back together. However, to Julia, this letter is her entire world. She makes this torn letter seem like a life and death situation. She is a teenage girl. It is what they do.

In order to better understand what Julia was going through, I employed the help of one of my best friends. I asked her to write me a one page letter, telling me exactly what she thinks about me. I informed her that this was for an acting exercise and that I would be tearing it up. She happily obliged. Before even glancing at the letter, I tore it up. It actually took me a few tries to work up the courage to do so, which immediately helped me realize just how serious this actually is for Julia. I tore my friend's letter and began to run through the monologue while piecing it together. Except this time, I was actually angry at myself for tearing the letter, and even tearful over it. In an instant, I understood what she was going through. Imagine if the



person you loved most in the world wrote you a letter, and in a fleeting moment of stupidity and frustration, you ripped it up before actually reading it. You would fiercely try to piece it back together as well. Physical objects have significant meaning to us, and a handwritten letter from a lover is serious business at any age.

The other significant challenge this monologue posed was the section with the wind: “Be calm good wind! Blow not a word away till I have found each letter in the letter.” At first glance, this does not seem like it would be a problematic part at all: two simple lines telling the wind not to blow any of the pieces away. But there is no actual wind on stage. The pieces of the letter are not rustling, not moving, not being blown away. It lies fully on the actor’s shoulders to sell this moment to the audience and make them believe that the pieces of the letter are actually being tossed about by the wind. In order to figure out exactly how to move to gather the pieces up, I did another exercise. This time, I got a fan, and I wrote out the monologue on a piece of paper. I then tore it up, tossed it on the ground, and turned the fan on high. I proceeded to see how long it took me to gather these pieces, making specific notes about how I moved. Although, I could not maneuver my body in exactly the same way on stage, it helped to feel which muscles tensed, how jerky I become, and how quickly I gathered all of the pieces and protected them against the wind with my hands.

Finally, I decided that Julia is also classified as a flick, similar to Mercutio. This posed a real problem since the two monologues happened back to back. Julia obviously would not move the same way the dissolute Mercutio would. However, they both have the same inherent energy. Julia is definitely indirect because she blatantly avoids asking Lucetta for the letter outright, and instead beats around the bush by asking about dinner. She is light because she is a young, teenage girl in love. She does not have a care in the world. She is sudden because she makes

quick, rash decisions, and changes focus frequently throughout the monologue. However, although they have the same energies, Julia has a distinctly different physicality from Mercutio. Unlike of Mercutio's bawdy version of the flick, Julia's is sweet. I came up with the image of a hummingbird version of the flick. She moves quickly but gracefully.

## VII. Iago

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:  
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,  
If I would time expend with such a snipe.  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:  
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:  
To get his place and to plume up my will  
In double knavery—How, how? Let's see:—  
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,

And will as tenderly be led by the nose as asses are.  
 I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night  
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.<sup>7</sup>

*Othello* is one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. Estimated to have been written in 1603, *Othello* contains a powerful cast of intricate, complicated characters. The play takes place in Venice, and opens in the middle of an argument between Roderigo and Iago. Roderigo is angry because he has been paying Iago to help him woo the beautiful Desdemona, but she has just married Othello. Iago and Roderigo go to Desdemona's father, Brabantio, and claim that Othello stole Desdemona and married her. Brabantio brings Othello before the senate and accuses him of taking Desdemona through witchcraft. However, when Othello speaks for himself, he quickly wins the senate to his side by exclaiming how he won Desdemona's heart through stories of battle and that she bewitched him with her beauty. After the senate sides with Othello, Iago determines to ruin Othello's life by convincing him that Desdemona has been unfaithful. Iago uses his cunning to slyly drop hints that Desdemona is too friendly with Cassio, a fellow soldier. He then gets his wife to unwittingly help him by procuring Desdemona's handkerchief, which he then hides in Cassio's room. Othello becomes consumed by his anger and jealousy and he smothers Desdemona. When Iago's wife realizes what he has done, she admits taking the handkerchief, and Othello realizes that he has been fooled. In the end, Iago murders his wife, Othello commits suicide, and Iago is sentenced to death.

Iago is one of the most complicated, vile villains in all of Shakespeare. His motive for destroying Othello's life is never truly made clear. In Act I Scene I, Iago is clearly agitated that Othello chose to promote Cassio to the position of lieutenant over himself. In Act I Scene III

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<sup>7</sup> *Othello*: Act I, Scene III

Iago claims that he hates Othello simply for sport and profit. He also claims that some people think Othello has slept with his wife, Emilia. However, it is difficult to argue that these claims fully explain Iago's deeply rooted hatred against Othello. Iago's lack of a clear motivation makes him one of the most scary, intricate villains in literature. Yet, one must be careful not to classify Iago as something that cannot be understood. That is to say, everyone has an Iago somewhere within them. William Hazlitt puts it perfectly:

We might ask those who think the character of Iago not natural, why they go to see it performed, but from the interest it excites, the sharper edge which it sets on their curiosity and imagination? Why do we go to see tragedies in general? Why do we always read the accounts in the newspapers of dreadful fires and shocking murders, but for the same reason? Why do so many persons frequent executions and trials or why do the lower classes almost universally take delight in barbarous sports and cruelty to animals, but because there is a natural tendency in the mind to strong excitement, a desire to have its faculties roused and stimulated to the utmost. Whenever this principle is not under the restraint of humanity, or the sense of moral obligation, there are no excesses to which it will not of itself give rise, without the assistance of any other motive, either of passion or self-interest.<sup>8</sup>

There are a total of eight irregular lines in this monologue. This is a high number, considering it only has twenty-one lines. This can be expected however, since Iago is not a regular character. The first irregular line "But for my sport and profit, I hate the Moor," contains eleven syllables and has a feminine ending. The feminine ending can be made masculine by utilizing a spondee and placing a double emphasis on "I hate." The next irregular line "He has

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<sup>8</sup> Bloom, Harold. "Othello." *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead, 1998. 433. Print.

done my office: I know not if it be true,” contains twelve syllables. Also, the line “Will do as if for surety. He holds me well,” contains twelve syllables. The fourth irregular line “After some time, to abuse Othello’s ear,” contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The ending remains feminine here. The last four irregular lines all happen in conjunction. The first three “To be suspected, framed to make women false. The Moor is of a free and open nature, That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,” all contain eleven syllables and a feminine ending. In all of them the rhythm falls within the natural speaking pattern, so the feminine endings remain. The fourth line is the most irregular one in the entire monologue: “And will as tenderly be led by the nose as asses are.” It contains fifteen syllables and a feminine ending. The rhythm remains natural, so the feminine ending cannot be made masculine.

In the first irregular line “But for my sport and profit, I hate the Moor,” Iago is admitting that he hates Othello simply for the pleasure of it. The next irregular line also gives insight into Iago’s motives and character: “He has done my office: I know not if it be true.” This refers to the baseless rumor that Othello has slept with Iago’s wife. Iago himself admits that there is no evidence for this claim. Once again, Iago is informing the audience that he has no proper motive for hating Othello. The third irregular line “will do as if for surety. He holds me well,” serves as a transition. It concludes Iago’s decision to act as if the rumored affair is true, and admits that Othello thinks highly of him, which Iago will use to his advantage. The line “After some time, to abuse Othello’s ear,” serves as Iago’s “aha” moment. The light bulb above his head has just turned on. In this moment Iago has decided how he is going to ruin Othello’s life. The last four irregular lines “To be suspected, framed to make women false. | The Moor is of a free and open nature, | That thinks men honest that but seem to be so, | And will as tenderly be led by the nose as asses are,” I believe, are where Iago gets a little lost within his grand plot. He realizes that Cassio

is charming, so it will be easy to convince Othello that he has charmed Desdemona. He knows that Othello is trusting and easily fooled. Not only that, Othello can be led around blindly like a donkey. This is the moment where the villain monologues about how ingenious his plan is. Iago revels in his genius, and becomes almost ecstatic over it in these four lines.

Playing Iago has been an interesting journey. I chose this specific monologue because I felt it transitioned nicely into the second half of my thesis, which is considerably darker than the first. Iago's scheming takes Julia's innocent love and morphs it into Imogen's monologue, which is love gone seriously askew. I must admit, I did not have a strong desire to take on one of Shakespeare's most fearsome villains. I was incredibly intimidated by my lack of experience and afraid to take on such a daunting and infamous role, but, I felt the monologue served the play well so I decided to go for it anyway.

I began working on Iago by establishing his Laban energy. I decided rather quickly that I saw Iago as being sustained, direct, and strong. This classifies him as a press. He carefully plots against Othello instead of simply outright killing him in a fit of anger, which to me implies sustained. He is also the kind of character that looks people in the eyes when speaking to them, and, even when he is weaving a lie, speaks in a commanding manner. This is what makes him direct, in my opinion. Iago takes great joy and pleasure in plotting against Othello, but not in a lighthearted kind of way. Iago's enjoyment of Othello's pain is eerie and disturbing. I think Iago becomes burdened by his own seething hatred, and to be simple, he is a strong character. Therefore, his energy would be strong.

I would say my biggest struggle with working on Iago was finding his malice. I prefer to fully understand why a character, even a villain, makes the choices that they do. I did not have

that luxury with Iago. No one does. Iago's condition has often been likened to the kid with the magnifying glass, burning ants on a hot summer day just to watch them burn. In my opinion, this is what makes him the most frightening of Shakespeare's villains. Harold Bloom states that actors who play Iago should: "manifest an ever-growing wonder and confidence in the diabolic art."<sup>9</sup> So, that is what I strove to do. The most frightening job of an actor is to realize that within everyone is the greatest hero and most vile villain. As William Hazlitt observed, everyone to some degree enjoys watching the sufferings of someone else.

Finding both the joy and malice in this monologue took some time. One exercise that I find tremendously helpful as an actor is to utilize music. What helped me the most with Iago was going into a darkened room, taking on his physicality, and playing the song "Requiem Mass in D Minor, K. 626 VII. Lacrimosa" by David Parry and the London Phillharmonic choir. I felt that Iago was the intelligent kind of villain who would listen to classical music, similar to Moriarty from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. This song has a strange eerie quality to it, and I cannot quite understand why, which makes it perfect for Iago. I played the song on repeat and simply moved about the space as Iago. After several minutes of just getting into his physical bearing, I would practice laughing. I felt that Iago needed a little bit of laughter at the beginning and at the "aha" moment. So, in his physicality I began to try out different kinds of laughs to see which one seemed to fit. This undoubtedly was a very strange experience for anyone who happened to pass by the room I was working in. The final task in this exercise was to simply say the words with the music playing. I went back to the tried and true concept of letting Shakespeare's words play you. This exercise is when I felt Iago come to life for me. I finally felt connected to him, and he became much less daunting.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 436.

VIII. Imogen

Why, I must die;  
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art  
No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter  
There is a prohibition so divine  
That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart.  
Something's afore 't; soft, soft! we'll no defence;  
Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?  
The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus  
All turn'd to heresy! Away, away!  
Corrupters of my faith; you shall no more  
Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools  
Believe false teachers; though those that are betray'd  
Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor  
Stands in worse case of woe.  
And thou, Posthumus, thou that didst set up  
My disobedience 'gainst the king my father,  
And make me put into contempt the suits  
Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find  
It is no act of common passage, but  
A strain of rareness; and I grieve myself  
To think, when thou shalt be disedg'd by her  
That now thou tir'st on, how thy memory



Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee, dispatch;  
 The lamb entreats the butcher; where's thy knife?  
 Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,  
 When I desire it too.<sup>10</sup>

*Cymbeline* is one of Shakespeare's later Romances written between 1608-1610. Not one to waste time, Shakespeare opens his play with two gentlemen discussing Imogen's recent marriage to a lower born man, Posthumous. The audience then discovers that she was supposed to marry her step-mother's son, Cloten, and because of her disobedience the King has banished Posthumous and imprisoned Imogen. The audience also learns that the King had two sons that were kidnapped about twenty years ago. Shakespeare gives his audience drama from the first moment. During Posthumous's banishment he makes a bet with the lecherous Iachimo that Imogen will remain faithful to him. Iachimo tries to seduce Imogen and fails. But he successfully convinces Posthumous that he did. In a jealous rage, Posthumous orders his servant, Pisanio to kill Imogen. Pisanio cannot carry out his orders, although Imogen literally begs him to. Instead, he convinces her to disguise herself as a man until he can make things right. While disguised as a man, Imogen unwittingly stumbles upon her long lost brothers. More confusion ensues, and the brothers end up killing the oafish Cloten. In the end, it is revealed that the disguised brothers are the long-lost princes, Imogen was faithful to Posthumous, and Cymbeline relents of his anger and welcomes his children home.

Although the play is titled *Cymbeline*, it is most assuredly Imogen's story. After all, she is the one with her life on the line throughout most of the play. Imogen is a beautiful, graceful, royal woman. I must admit, upon first reading *Cymbeline* I did not care for her. She came across

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<sup>10</sup> *Cymbeline*: Act III, Scene IV

as weak-willed and submissive. When I discovered that her suicide monologue fit perfectly into my thesis, I was loathe to include her. Upon further examination of the play and her character, I began to see who Imogen really is. Imogen is not weak. She disobeys her father and endures imprisonment for the right to love Posthumous. She stands up to Cymbeline, the Queen, Iachimo, and Cloten. She endures losing Posthumous's love and carries herself through it. Imogen is stronger than many people give her credit for, including myself.

The difficult and beautiful thing about this monologue is that it shows Imogen at her absolute weakest. She is told that her husband falsely believes she is cheating on him and wants her dead, so she literally begs Pisanio to kill her. A surface reading of this monologue implies that she is simply a weak-willed, one-dimensional character. However, upon closer examination the concept of a weak Imogen is destroyed. This is not simply a weak woman who cannot live without her man. This is a rare glimpse into the soul of a strong woman at her lowest point. Imogen has given up everything for Posthumous. She has disobeyed her father, been imprisoned, and turned down the love of Princes. Without Posthumous, she literally has no one. It is not simply losing her husband, it is losing her entire world. Imogen essentially has two options in this moment: convince Pisanio to kill her or beg forgiveness and marry Cloten. Bear in mind that she earlier remarked that she held Posthumous' clothes more dearly than she did Cloten. Also, and this is important, in Act III Scene V Cloten vows to kill Posthumous in front of Imogen and then rape her on his dead body:

With that suit upon my

Back, will I ravish her: first kill him, and in her

Eyes; there shall she see my valour, which will then

Be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my  
Speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and  
When my lust hath dined,--which, as I say, to vex  
Her I will execute in the clothes that she so  
Praised,--to the court I'll knock her back, foot  
Her home again. She hath despised me rejoicingly,  
And I'll be merry in my revenge.<sup>11</sup>

She does not exactly have a wide variety of options in this moment. This is a woman whose world has come crushing down upon her. She reacts in a natural, human way. Many people who have hit rock-bottom have prayed for death. Imogen is able to be vulnerable in this moment, and then she pulls herself up. That takes strength. It takes courage. That is who Imogen is.

Imogen's monologue has a grand total of eleven irregular lines. This is not surprising considering the fact that she is begging for death in this moment. The first irregular line, "No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter," contains twelve syllables. The next three irregular lines occur together. First, the line "Something's afore't; soft, soft! We'll no defense," contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Since the rhythm falls naturally, the feminine ending does not change. The next line, "Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?" has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The feminine ending is made masculine by utilizing a trochee on the word "scabbard," placing the emphasis on the first syllable where it falls naturally. The next line, "The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending.

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<sup>11</sup> *Cymbeline*: Act III, Scene V

Here the rhythm falls naturally, so the feminine ending does not change. The next six irregular lines also happen back to back. The line five lines: "Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools Believe false teachers; though those that are betray'd Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor Stands in worse case of woe. And thou, Posthumous, thou that didst set up," all have eleven syllables a feminine ending that cannot be changed. The line: "My disobedience 'gainst the king my father," has twelve syllables. The final line, "When I desire it too," is a shared line with Pisanio. He interrupts her pleading commands to tell her that he has not slept since he received the letter.

The line "No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter," has a substantial transition in it. Imogen moves from commanding Pisanio to kill her, to explaining that she cannot do it herself because she is too religious. This signifies an important tactic change for the actor. She moves from commanding to imploring in five words. That is a significant shift. The line: "Something's afore't; soft, soft! We'll no defense," is continuing her plea, and she even offers words of comfort to Pisanio. "Soft, soft," tells him that it is okay, and she will not fight back. Imogen has resigned herself to her death. Next, the line, "Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?" is another significant shift. It ends Imogen's plea, and moves into anger. She tells Pisanio that she will not fight back, but he refuses to act. Imogen then becomes angry at Pisanio's disobedience. This is the first sign of strength from Imogen in this monologue. As ironic as it is, she shows incredible power even when begging for death. The next line, "The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus," tacks onto the end of the previous one. Imogen bemoans the fact that Postuhous' tender words have now been revealed as lies. It is interesting to note that Imogen calls Posthumous by his last name in this line. In this moment she cannot stand to say his name.

The line “Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools,” is in the midst of Imogen’s explosion. She is commanding Pisanio to leave, since he refuses to kill her. She calls him a “corrupter of my faith,” and tells him that he will no longer remain close to her. The next line, “Believe false teachers; though those that are betray’d” is another transition moment, but it is slighter. Imogen is moving from chastising Pisanio, calling him a “corrupter” and a “false teacher,” to arguing that the traitor is worse off than the person they betray. The next two lines complete Imogen’s argument, “Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor Stands in worse case of woe.” I believe that in this moment the traitor is not Posthumous, but Pisanio. Imogen uses this as a threat. She is in pain, and she feels the betrayal, but Pisanio will be worse off if he betrays his order.

The argument that the traitor is Pisanio is supported by the transition in the next line: “And thou, Posthumous, thou that didst set up.” This line has eleven syllables and a feminine ending, and it signifies that Imogen is now switching to discussing Posthumous. Therefore, it is natural to infer that the traitor from the previous lines was not her husband. The feminine ending once again remains unchanged since the rhythm falls naturally. The line, “My disobedience ‘gainst the king my father,” has twelve syllables. These two lines return Imogen to her destroyed, heart-broken emotional state. This is the first time she says her husband’s first name in this monologue. She also admits that he is the reason she disobeyed her father. I believe that Imogen and Cymbeline had a very good relationship before she secretly married Pisanio. She disobeyed her father for Posthumous, and now Posthumous wants her dead. This is destroying her. These lines segue into her crying over Posthumous. The line: “Thou art too slow to do thy master’s bidding,” commands Pisanio to hurry up. She is ready for death, and he is taking far too long.

The final line, “When I desire it too,” is a shared line with Pisanio. He interrupts her pleading commands to tell her that he has not slept since he received the letter.

I hated Imogen’s monologue when I first began working on it. I found her to be weak-willed and boring. One thing I hate is a weak woman on stage. I hate playing one even more. Finding the strength in Imogen takes a bit of searching but it is there. As mentioned earlier, this monologue is about so much more than her husband thinking she cheated on him. Imogen has lost everything. Shakespeare gives us the thoughts and desires of someone who has hit rock bottom, and it is unnerving. I found that the reason I could not connect with Imogen was simply because I was afraid to go there. Imogen’s monologue is powerful because it is a rare glimpse into a soul that has fallen to pieces. This scared me. It is vulnerable but in its vulnerability it is strong. Finding this balance was a particular challenge that I feel I still have not mastered, and may never fully conquer.

Deciding on Imogen’s Laban effort was particularly difficult. I chose to do the majority of the monologue on her knees, since she is literally pleading for death. This limits her movement, but it does not eliminate it. Plus, whether a character is on their knees, moving freely, or bound, they still have an inherent energy to them. The only thing I knew immediately about Imogen was that she was not light. Although she is weak in this moment, her energy and will are strong. This narrowed it down to four possible energies to play with and choose from. The next thing I did was decide whether she was direct or indirect. This was tricky because she could go either way. However, because I knew I wanted to make her a stronger character than she initially seemed, I chose direct. After all, she commands Pisanio to kill her, and I believe she looks him straight in the eye for the majority of the monologue. This narrowed the choices down to two. The final decision that had to be made was whether Imogen was sudden or sustained. It did not

take long for me to decide upon sudden. Sustained has a quality of calmness to it, which is nowhere in this monologue. Imogen has several moments where she turns on a dime and moves from cajoling, to pleading, to commanding, to begging. She is most assuredly not stable. The combination of strong, direct, and sudden makes her a slash.

As mentioned before, my biggest struggle with Imogen was making her a character that was strong and interesting, and not whiny or boring. Similarly to what I did with Calpurnia, I began by simply sitting cross legged on the floor, closing my eyes, and saying the text. I did this until I felt like I actually let the words sink in. Imogen uses powerful, haunting language, and if you let it sink in, it can affect you. The next thing I did was move about the room in her physicality while saying the text. When the impulse hit me, I would drop to my knees and deliver the rest of the monologue on the ground. I continued this until I felt that Imogen's circumstances actually sunk in for me. I found this exercise to be helpful in finding the strength within the text, but it was not enough. It took me about thirty minutes to actually sink into Imogen. In my thesis performance, I have about five seconds to switch from Iago to her. I do not have the luxury of repeating the text multiple times until the power of the language comes through for me. Instead, I have to shift to her heightened emotional state in an instant.

To work on making Imogen's devastation believable from the first word, I employed a Meisner acting technique. In Meisner, you imagine a circumstance that could actually happen in your own life that is similar to what your character is going through. You then take the monologue, say the actual text, and then state what is happening in your imagined circumstance. It took some time for me to imagine something that could happen in my life that would make me literally beg someone for death. But, I found it and set to work. I layered Imogen's text with my own circumstance, and soon she blossomed to life. Imagining a situation in which Imogen and I

would act almost exactly the same helped me solidify her strength. There is something incredibly powerful about being willing to throw away the one thing that means the most to us.

## IX. Macbeth

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,



Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.  
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
 Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
 Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
 And take the present horror from the time,  
 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:  
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[A bell rings]

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.  
 Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
 That summons thee to heaven or to hell.<sup>12</sup>

Written in 1606, *Macbeth* is quite possibly Shakespeare's most palpable tragedy. Set in Scotland, *Macbeth* deals with humanity's intrinsic desire for power. Different from Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, Macbeth is conflicted about the actions he commits. Macbeth does not begin the play as a power-hungry usurper. Instead, one might argue that if it were not for the witches, Macbeth would have lived out the rest of his life contented to be a Thane. However, Shakespeare informs the audience from the beginning that the witches have it out for Macbeth. The play opens with the witches planning to meet Macbeth upon the heath. There they prophecy to him that Macbeth will be made Thane of Cawdor and then crowned King. The

<sup>12</sup> *Macbeth*: Act II, Scene I

witches also prophecy that Banquo will produce a line of Scottish Kings, but he will never be King himself. Macbeth initially treats the witches' prophecies with skepticism; until a messenger arrives informing him that he has been made Thane of Cawdor. However, when Duncan announces his son Malcolm as heir, Macbeth becomes tortured by his desire for power. He is then convinced to murder Duncan, and he assumes the Scottish throne. But, he must go to war and commit more murders in order to secure his throne. Eventually the blood takes its toll and Macbeth's mind begins to unravel. The play ends with Macbeth being beheaded in battle, and Malcolm assuming the throne.

Macbeth has many famous monologues throughout the play. One of the most notable is his "Is this a dagger which I see before me" which takes place in Act II Scene I, just before Macbeth kills Duncan. In this moment, Macbeth has just been startled by Banquo and his son Fleance, who are on watch duty. Once they leave him, Macbeth turns to see a dagger floating in midair. He then proceeds to question whether the dagger is real or if it is simply a hallucination caused by the stress of what he is about to go do. This monologue is particularly interesting because it reveals the depth of Macbeth's hesitance to kill Duncan.

There are ten irregular lines in Macbeth's monologue. The first two happen at the very beginning, which is not surprising considering the first moment is Macbeth seeing a floating dagger. The first line, "Is this a dagger which I see before me," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The rhythm falls naturally, so the feminine ending remains unchanged. The second line, "The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee," contains twelve syllables. The next irregular line "A dagger of the mind, a false creation," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Once again, the rhythm falls naturally, so the feminine ending is kept. The next two irregular lines occur together. The line, "As this which now I draw," only has six syllables

and is monosyllabic. The next line, "Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going," has twelve syllables. The next irregular line, "Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses," also has twelve syllables. The line, "The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates," contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. This time, the feminine ending can be changed by utilizing a spondee and placing the emphasis on the second syllable of "witchcraft" and the first syllable of "celebrates." The next irregular line, "With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design," has twelve syllables. The final irregular line, "I go, and it is done; the bell invites me," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The rhythm falls naturally, so the feminine ending remains.

Macbeth sees the dagger for the first time with the line "Is this a dagger which I see before me?" Naturally it is irregular, because random floating daggers are not an everyday occurrence. The second line: "The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee," is the moment where Macbeth reaches for the dagger and cannot take hold of it. Once again, it only seems natural for this line to be irregular, since this is an irregular event. Macbeth is a sane person. Nothing out of the ordinary has happened to him, until the witches appear. If we were to come across a floating dagger, our pattern of speech would be irregular too.

The line, "A dagger of the mind, a false creation," is important because it is the first time that Macbeth tries to explain the dagger. He justifies that it is simply his mind playing a trick on him in the heat. It is a logical idea. A simple illusion is much easier to explain than experiencing a supernatural vision. The line, "As this which now I draw," reiterates just how strongly he sees the dagger. It is not some hazy vision that is barely visible. It is just as real and tangible as the dagger in his sheath. In the following line, "Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going," Macbeth moves from marveling at how real the dagger seems, to actually addressing it. He

literally begins to speak to the dagger. He admits that the dagger is leading him towards Duncan's room, and that he was going to use a weapon like it. It is almost like he is in a trance.

Next, the line "Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses," is the second time that Macbeth tries to explain the floating dagger. It is another quick shift from talking to the dagger to explaining it. Macbeth breaks the trance for a moment to claim that his eyes are simply playing tricks on him, or they are worth all of his senses combined. He is still trying to fight against the vision of the dagger and reason it away. In my opinion, this shows that Macbeth is not entirely crazy. Once again, this is not a normal experience for him. He does not have crazy visions; otherwise this would not be anything new for him. Rather, this monologue is the true beginning of Macbeth's mental downfall and decay.

Macbeth paints a truly eerie picture of the night with the line: "The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates." Those asleep are being plagued by nightmares and the witches are out celebrating. The line, "With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design," taken at face value does not seem all that important. However, Shakespeare actually offers some foreshadowing here. According to Roman tradition, Tarquin murdered the Roman King Servius Tullius and established himself as supreme ruler. His reign induced fear into the country and several senators were put to death. Eventually a small group of senators formed a rebellion against Tarquin and defeated him. Tarquin's reign is most known, however, for the rape of a Roman noblewoman, Lucretia, by his son Sextus. This event is referenced in a few of Shakespeare's other plays and inspired his narrative poem: "*The Rape of Lucrece*." In one line Shakespeare reveals the rest of the plot. Macbeth is finally moving to kill Duncan with the last irregular line: "I go, and it is done; the bell invites me." His hesitation has faded to leave resolve.

Many argue that this is Macbeth's most challenging monologue, and I agree. For me, it was a huge challenge, and it did not even start to come together until about three weeks from the performance date. Similarly to Julia, the same director told me that he had never seen this monologue truly done well. The greatest actors of our time have played Macbeth, and I could not believe I dared to even attempt this monologue. There were several days where I felt defeated before I even started working on him, knowing that I could never measure up to their talent and training. The breakthrough began when I realized I did not have to. I had to sit down and remind myself that I compete with no one other than myself. A friend of mine once told me, "A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms." This had to become my mantra for Macbeth's monologue. I could never measure up to such phenomenal actors as Ian McKellan or Patrick Stewart. But, as long as I continually got better and grew with him, I was doing well. Once I resolved to that, Macbeth began to take shape.

Deciding on Macbeth's Laban tactic took some thought. The first thing I decided upon was that he is indirect. Macbeth is hardly direct with his wife, and when the dagger appears he constantly shifts from focusing on it and addressing it, to trying to reason it away and pretend it is not there. The next thing I decided upon was that Macbeth is strong, not light. No part of this play is an easy moment for Macbeth. He is weighed down by his choices to the point that he hallucinates a dagger. That does not indicate someone whose inherent energy is light, but rather one who bears a heavy burden. The most difficult choice was deciding whether Macbeth is sudden or sustained. Arguments can be made for both, and both interpretations are correct. However, in this moment I wanted to convey Macbeth's trance-like state. I wanted it to seem almost like the fly that is lured in by the bug zapper and cannot resist going to its death. Because of this, I chose to make him sustained. This makes my interpretation of Macbeth a wring.

The biggest obstacle in this monologue is the fact that Macbeth is seeing an object that the audience is not. This is such a challenge for actors that many movie versions of Macbeth will put in a floating dagger so the actor has something they can play off. I do not have the luxury of lowering down a dagger on a spool of fishing line, though I definitely considered it. Instead, I had to truly see the dagger in my mind, so that the audience could see it. This involved determining the type of dagger, the size of the dagger, and its specific location on stage. This helped, but I found that it was not enough. It still was not reading from stage that I was seeing the dagger, even though I truly felt that I was. This is one of the really tricky things about being an actor. You can really feel something, but if it does not read to the audience, what you are feeling does not matter. The actor's job is to make the audience feel, not themselves.

So, I decided that the best way to practice pretending to see a floating dagger was to actually see one. I took some clear fishing line left over from Halloween and a thumb tack and hung a butter knife from the ceiling of my living room. This greatly confused and amused my roommates. I began to practice Macbeth solely to that knife. I will say it was tempting to change the words to, "Is this a butter knife which I see before me," but it did not have quite the same ring to it. I found myself reciting the monologue to the knife every chance I had. It was especially helpful when I would come back to my room after a long day and forget that the knife was even there. Those were the moments where my surprise felt the most genuine, because it was. After working this way for about a week, it proved to be an effective exercise. Macbeth came to life and had improved significantly.

X. Queen Margaret

Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,  
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,  
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.  
What! was it you that would be England's king?  
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament,  
And made a preachment of your high descent?  
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?  
The wanton Edward, and the lusty George?  
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,  
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice  
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?  
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?  
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood  
That valiant Clifford, with his rapier's point,  
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;  
And if thine eyes can water for his death,  
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.  
Alas poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,  
I should lament thy miserable state.  
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.  
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails  
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?

Why art thou patient, man? thou shouldst be mad;  
 And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.  
 Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.  
 Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport:  
 York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.  
 A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:  
 Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!  
 Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,  
 And this is he was his adopted heir.  
 But how is it that great Plantagenet  
 Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?  
 As I bethink me, you should not be king  
 Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.  
 And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,  
 And rob his temples of the diadem,  
 Now in his life, against your holy oath?  
 O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable!  
 Off with the crown, and with the crown his head;  
 And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.<sup>13</sup>

Queen Margaret is one of the most powerful female characters in all of Shakespeare, and yet few people know about her. Most people will say that Falstaff appears in the most Shakespearean plays. However, most people are wrong. In fact, it is Queen Margaret who holds

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<sup>13</sup> *III Henry VI: Act I, Scene IV*



that title, appearing in four: *I Henry VI*, *II Henry VI*, *III Henry VI*, and *Richard III*. Shakespeare grows her from the young, beautiful daughter of a French lord in *I Henry VI*, to the strong, powerful Queen in *III Henry VI*, to the broken, mad woman in *Richard III*. She is, in my opinion, one of the most fascinating characters Shakespeare has ever written. Her character arc is so powerful it stems over four plays, and is a blood-filled power struggle. She is truly captivating.

Queen Margaret first appears at the end of *I Henry VI*. Suffolk woos her for Henry, and she agrees to marry the English King sealing an English/French alliance. In *II Henry VI* Margaret begins her transformation into the strong queen seen in *III Henry VI*. Two major rebellions against King Henry's throne arise during this time. The Duke of York asserts that he is the rightful King, since King Henry's grandfather usurped the crown from a Plantagenet. The War of Roses between the Yorks and the Lancasters begins. Secondly, the Cade rebellion occurs during this time. Jack Cade, a peasant, claims that he is the rightful heir, and he incites a rebellion. In addition to this turmoil, Margaret's lover, Suffolk, is beheaded. She is so grieved that she weeps and cradles his severed head in the court. Cade's rebellion is defeated, but York's continues into *III Henry VI*.

The third part of *Henry VI* is when Margaret is strongest. Henry, who has shown himself to be a weak king, relents the throne to York. It is Margaret who rallies the troops and continues to fight. In Act I she captures York on the battle field. Instead of simply having him killed, she makes a mockery of him. Margaret reveals that she had Clifford kill York's youngest son, Rutland. In addition to this, she dipped a napkin in Rutland's blood and gives it to York to dry his tears. Then, in an almost Biblical turn of events, Margaret commands a crown to be fashioned and put on York's head. After mocking him, and inciting her soldiers, she orders a slow death for York. This is not the same woman from *I Henry VI*. She has become a queen and a leader.

However, Margaret's success does not last, and she is eventually defeated by York's sons. As a result, her beloved son, Edward, is killed in front of her. She then literally begs for them to kill her as well. However, as aforementioned she lasts until *Richard III*, turning into an unstable elderly woman.

This monologue is one of my personal favorites in all of Shakespeare. For a refreshing change a woman has a long monologue that is not about love or men, but rather where she is asserting power. Margaret is depicted as a heroine leading soldiers into battle. In this moment, she is not simply punishing York, but making a spectacle of him in front of her soldiers. She is inciting them against York, and letting them know what happens to those who stand against her. She is poised, fierce, and intimidating.

A modern day Queen Margaret can be found, I believe, in Cersei Lannister from *Game of Thrones*. They are both renowned for their beauty, are married to kings that they deem to be weak, and are unhappy with their marriages. Because of this, each of them takes on a lover, but Margaret's affair is not incestuous. They both choose to have others do their dirty work for them. Neither of them gets their hands dirty; their power is in their words. Margaret and Cersei exhibit poise and grace, but are incredibly dangerous, much like a snake. Perhaps their greatest common denominator is their motivation. Both Margaret and Cersei's greatest motivators are their children. Margaret's ultimate desire is to get her son, Edward, back on the throne. She knows that if she fails, he will die. Cersei's goal is to keep her son on the throne, fully knowing that if they are usurped he will die. Most mothers can then understand the lengths these women go to. Margaret is not simply some crazed, power hungry woman. She is fighting for her son's birthright, and more importantly, his life.

Queen Margaret's monologue has six irregular lines out of forty one. Having so few irregular lines signifies that she is retaining control and power. The first irregular line, "Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The emphases fall naturally, so the feminine ending remains. The next irregular line, "Alas poor York! But that I hate thee deadly," also contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The emphasis falls naturally on "deadly" so the feminine ending cannot be changed. The line, "Why are thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad," has eleven syllables and feminine ending that cannot change as well. The next irregular line, "And will you pale your head in Henry's glory," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Once again, the emphasis falls naturally on the last word, so the feminine ending remains. The final irregular line, "O, tis a fault too too unpardonable," contains eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Again the rhythm falls naturally, so the feminine ending remains. I find it to be quite apropos that Queen Margaret's irregular lines retain their feminine endings.

The line, "Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland," is crucial, because Margaret is not only taunting him, but is about to reveal that York's beloved son has been killed. Margaret is reveling in the fact that she gets to reveal Rutland's death to York before she has York killed. The line, "Alas poor York! But that I hate thee deadly," serves as a transition from revealing the stained napkin, back to mocking York in his sad state. In the line, "Why are thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad," Margaret is a bit frustrated with York's stoic attitude. She wants the satisfaction of hearing him sob over his son, but he is not giving her what she wants. So, Margaret chooses to continue to mock him until he does. The line, "And will you pale your head in Henry's glory," is a significant transition. Margaret has finished with her mocking of York, and in this line she moves to rebuking him with composed anger. The final irregular line, "O, tis

a fault too too unpardonable,” transitions to Margaret’s sentence on York. Here she states that what he has done cannot be forgiven. Because of the ferocity of this line York’s death sentence does not come as a surprise.

Margaret’s monologue is one of my favorites in the entire piece. She is another dream role of mine and I find her to be an incredibly compelling character. She is strong, bold, and fearsome. But, she is not a villain and she is not without love. This is what makes Shakespeare so great. He can make a character who has a twelve year old boy killed and then dips a napkin in his blood to give to his father, be relatable, understandable, and even admirable. We relate to her because she has to be fearless and strong for her son. People who are motivated by love can often commit even more horrifying acts than those who are motivated by hate.

This particular monologue is a lot of fun to work on because Margaret is such a strong character. The challenge in this monologue is properly conveying and doing justice to her strength. Margaret has a palpable energy and presence on stage. She is the kind of woman who can silence a room simply by how she enters it. Discovering that kind of potent energy and inherent strength is challenging. Once again, I began by deciding on her Laban energy. Margaret was one of the few characters whose energies I chose quickly. I knew that she was direct. She is not playing around in this moment and she looks York dead in the eye when she speaks to him. I also knew that she was sustained. She is calm, slow, and in complete control of what is happening. She does not need to speak quickly. She will relish in her victory and drag out the mocking of York. The final choice was the only one I debated on. I struggled deciding whether she was strong or light. This choice could be argued either way. I heavily considered making her light because she is enjoying this moment and gloating in her victory. However, I found that when I performed the monologue I preferred it when she was weighted down and rooted. Even

though she is sustained and in control, Margaret is fiercely angry at York. This is the man who caused the rebellion and is trying to take her son's birthright from him. Anger is not a light emotion, even when it is controlled. Anger will always weigh heavy on the person who carries it. Plus, it is difficult to imagine a mother whose child is being threatened having a light energy. So, I chose to make Margaret a press, similar to Iago.

The challenge then became about making their physicalities different. Margaret and Iago could not look similar, even if they had the same Laban classification. For me, Margaret's version of a press is more grand and graceful. She is more than just a soldier, she is a queen, and in this moment she is not going to let York forget that. I believe that Margaret will hold herself with all of her grace and physical bearing in mind. She moves slowly, deliberately, and gracefully. Developing this movement took a lot of time, thought, and trial-and-error. I would take an hour and lock myself away in a room, and just move my body in different ways that were all consistent with the press energy. However, this did not work as well as it did for some of the other monologues, because I felt like I needed to see myself. So, I would stand in front of my full length mirror and try out various postures. I would tilt my chin up or down, raise my eye brows, stick my nose out, puff up my chest, etc. Then it simply became a matter of what seemed to work.

I decided that she leads her body with her chin, tilting her nose up just slightly. This adds a sense of pride to her. I pulled my shoulders back and made sure my posture was as perfect as it could possibly be. This added to the sense of pride and made her more regal. She now began to hold herself like a queen. I then made my eyes level and narrowed them a bit, as if I was evaluating something. For me, this slight change gave her the look of anger she needed. After deciding on these things, I went back to moving about the room. This time was palpably

different. She moved with the control and grace of a predator on the hunt. As I started speaking the text her voice had become noticeably different. It was more controlled, and therefore more threatening. She had become the queen.

## XI. Richard III

I'll hear no more: die, prophet, in thy speech:  
What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster  
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.  
See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death!  
O, may such purple tears be always shed  
From those that wish the downfall of our house!  
If any spark of life be yet remaining,  
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither,  
I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.  
Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;  
For I have often heard my mother say  
I came into the world with my legs forward:  
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,  
And seek their ruin that usurpt our right?  
The midwife wonder'd; and the women cried,  
'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'  
And so I was; which plainly signified

That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.  
 Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,  
 Let hell make crookt my mind to answer it.  
 I have no brother, I am like no brother;  
 And this word 'love,' which greybeards call divine,  
 Be resident in men like one another,  
 And not in me: I am myself alone.-  
 Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light:  
 But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;  
 For I will buzz abroad such prophecies,  
 That Edward shall be fearful of his life;  
 And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.  
 King Henry and the prince his son are gone:  
 Clarence thy turn is next, and then the rest;  
 Counting myself but bad till I be best.-  
 I'll throw my body in another room,  
 And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.<sup>14</sup>

Richard III is one of Shakespeare's most infamous characters. It is difficult to even know where to begin with him. He is often seen as a creature of pure evil. However, he can be interpreted many different ways. This monologue comes from the end of *III Henry VI*. During this play Richard has lost his father and his youngest brother. At this point, the Yorkist rebellion

<sup>14</sup> *III Henry VI*: Act V, Scene VI.

has been successful, and Richard's brother Edward is on the throne. Richard vehemently supported his father's claim to the throne, and is even mentioned in Margaret's monologue to York "Where's that valiant, crook-backed prodigy, Dicky, your boy, that with his grumbling voice was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?"

Immediately after killing Margaret's son, Richard leaves for the Tower of London with the intention of killing the overthrown King Henry. Richard chats briefly with Henry, but is quickly driven to anger by Henry's taunts about his deformities. This soliloquy occurs after he has killed Henry. Richard reveals that Henry's taunts were correct. He was born with many physical deformities, and he will be the monster everyone believes he is. In this moment Richard officially breaks with his family: "I have no brother, I am like no brother." He also reveals his plan to kill his brother George: "Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light: but I will sort a pitchy day for thee; for I will buzz abroad such prophecies, that Edward shall be fearful of his life; and then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death." In this moment Richard discloses to the audience that he will make himself King and will kill any who stand in his way. This monologue occurs at the end of *III Henry VI* and consequently sets up the plot of *Richard III*.

Shakespeare is not known for his historical accuracy, and Richard is no different. Shakespeare's histories are often politically motivated. It is important to keep in mind that Queen Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII, is the one who fought and killed Richard. The demonization of Richard was most likely a political move on Shakespeare's part, much like the villainization of Joan of Arc in *I Henry VI*. Shakespeare attributes multiple deaths to Richard including, but not limited to, Henry, Buckingham, his brother George, and his nephews. However, George was



sentenced to death for treason by his brother, King Edward.<sup>15</sup> King Henry's death could possibly be attributed to Richard, although most contemporary scholars deny this. I do believe, however, that Richard was likely responsible for the death of his nephews, The Princes in the Tower. But he was not the monster depicted by Shakespeare. The actor's struggle once again is to strike a balance between the historical Richard and Shakespeare's Richard.

One of the great things about Shakespeare's depiction of Richard III is that he still gives insight into Richard's motives and insecurities. Richard reveals that he has been treated as a monster from the day he was born: "The midwife wonder'd; and the women cried, 'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!' And so I was; which plainly signified that I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog." Richard was the skeleton in his family's closet, except he was alive. Even when Margaret references him in her monologue to York she refers to him as a "crook backed prodigy." Note that she does not use proper English and state: WHO "with his grumbling voice was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies." No, she calls Richard "that." He is not a person; he is a creature. Richard chooses to become what he has always been told he is. A wonderful insight into Richard comes just before the major battle in *Richard III*. In Act V scene III Richard awakes from a nightmare in turmoil. He states, "Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good that I myself have done unto myself? O, no! Alas, *I rather hate myself for hateful deeds committed by myself...* I am a villain...I shall despair. *There is no creature loves me*, and if I die no soul will pity me. And wherefore should they, since that *I myself find in myself no pity to myself.*"<sup>16</sup> Richard reveals a great deal about himself in this moment. He is plagued by guilt and grief. In this moment Shakespeare does the unthinkable: he reveals that Richard has a conscience.

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<sup>15</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence (English Noble)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 13 Mar. 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Italics added.

Richard's monologue contains a total of seven irregular lines. Considering the fact that there are thirty-two lines total this is not very many. This shows that Richard is more composed than most people would be right after they have committed murder. The first two irregular lines happen in the beginning. The lines, "What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster, Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted," both have eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The emphases fall naturally on the words "Lancaster" and "mounted" so the feminine endings cannot be changed. The next irregular line, "Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The feminine ending can be made masculine by making the word "thither" a spondee. This is the only feminine ending in the entire monologue that can be made masculine. The lines: "I came into the world with my legs forward...Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so...I have no brother, I am like no brother...Be resident in men like one another," all have eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The rhythm falls naturally on each one so the feminine ending cannot be changed.

The first two lines, "What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster, sink in the ground," are both dripping with sarcasm and anger. Although Richard did come to the tower to kill Henry, Henry pushed him to anger by making fun of his physicality. The irregularity of these first lines emphasizes Richard's anger in the beginning. In the line, "Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither," Richard is making sure that Henry is fully dead. Not only that, he states he is sending Henry to hell, and that he should make sure they know who sent him. This is a chilling and powerful line and its irregularity only serves to emphasize it. The next irregular line, "I came into the world with my legs forward," reveals a bit about Richard's home life. His mother repeatedly told him and others that he was born breech. Before the development of modern science, superstitions abounded about breech babies. Most people believed them to be cursed and

evil.<sup>17</sup> This means that Richard's mother often reminded him that he was born bad. In the next irregular line, "Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so," Richard decides to become what he has always been told he is. Here, Richard chooses to become what he believes God chose to make him. He has been told his entire life that he is cursed and evil, so he will give in and be what everybody says he is.

The line, "I have no brother, I am like no brother," is haunting. Here, Richard disowns his family. He states that he does not have a brother and that he is not a brother. He is choosing to go against his family in this moment. Considering the fact that they constantly reminded him of his deformities and what they represented, it is hard to blame him. In the final irregular line: "Be resident in men like one another," Richard states that he wants other men to love, but not himself. This line in particular, states his desire for other men to feel love. It is tricky to understand exactly why Richard calls for love to be present in other men. I believe he wants other men to have love because it will make it easier for him to manipulate them. If other people love, but not him, he has nothing to lose. They, however, do.

Richard III is the character that intimidated me the most when beginning this process. Not only has he been played by some of the greatest actors alive today, he is one of the most intricate characters in all of Shakespeare. There is a lot to live up to when it comes to him, and several specific challenges. I seriously doubted my ability to pull him off. But, he was one of the characters that I knew I wanted to use, because I knew he would challenge me. Trying to play Richard III as a twenty-two year old woman who looks about as intimidating as a rabbit

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<sup>17</sup> Franklin, Rosalind. *Baby Lore: Superstitions and Old Wives Tales from the World over Related to Pregnancy, Birth and Babycare*. Liskeard: Diggory, 2006. Print. 97.

frolicking around in a field of daisies, is distinctly challenging. So for me, the first step was working on his physical bearing.

A specific challenge with the character of Richard was discovering his physicality. Shakespeare writes Richard as a mutant who was born with teeth, and has a humpback, lame leg, and shriveled arm. This is meant as an outward symbol of Richard's twisted mind. However in 2013 Richard III's body was discovered underneath a parking lot in England. Upon exhumation it was revealed that Richard did not have a lame leg or shriveled arm. Both his legs and arms were of equal strength. However, his spine had a deep curve in it, indicating that he suffered from scoliosis. The difficulty with portraying Richard is that Shakespeare described him as being severely physically deformed and a fearsome warrior. It would be difficult to believe that a man with a crippled leg and shriveled hand could be a fury on the battlefield. Plus, we now know how Richard III would have looked historically. But, I believe it is important to give credence to how Shakespeare wrote him. Because of this, I struggled to strike a middle ground with Richard; one where he remained physically deformed, but also capable of battle.

After trying several different physicalities, I decided to get rid of the lame leg. Not only was it a hindrance to maneuvering the stage, but for me the lame leg is the least believable aspect of Richard's deformities. After researching scoliosis, I decided push the left side of my rib cage out and lift my left shoulder, in order to make it look like my spine was curved. After much debate, I decided to keep the idea of the shriveled arm. So, I curled my left arm onto my chest and gnarled my hand. I felt that the shriveled arm made him even more intimidating, because it meant he was a better warrior with one hand than most men were with two. After deciding upon his physicality, I chose his Laban effort. After much deliberation, I decided that Richard III was a press, just like Queen Margaret and Iago. I could not justify changing him to anything that was

not direct, strong, and sustained. Fortunately, his physical deformities distinguish him enough from his two press counter-parts, that I was not worried about having yet another press in the performance.

Another specific challenge with Richard was finding the places where he could seem human, if only for a second. I think that many actors fall into a trap by portraying Richard as a creature of pure evil. I think this is a copout. Shakespeare is better than that. He does not write one dimensional characters who are simply evil. Richard is not simply pure evil, and it was important to me to find at least one brief moment in this monologue where that could be shown. I decided that the most natural line to reveal some of Richard's humanity is: "I that have neither pity, love, nor fear." I think he has a double meaning there where he states that he does not feel pity or love, nor does he receive it. I believe this is supported when Richard informs the audience that his mother repeatedly told him about his breech birth and how the women cried out in fear when he was born. That Richard is an evil character can hardly be argued, but I believe there is humanity written into him and it is important to show that.

## XII. Prospero

Be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air.  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself—

Yea, all which it inherit—shall dissolve,  
 And like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made on, and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep.<sup>18</sup>

Commonly attributed as Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest* was written around 1610.

*The Tempest* strikes a resoundingly different chord than most of Shakespeare's plays. Centering around the loving father, Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, it is a wonderfully nostalgic work. The play opens with a vicious storm causing a ship carrying the characters Alonso, Ferdinand, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Stephano, and Trinculo onto Prospero's island. Prospero reveals to his daughter Miranda that he used to be the Duke of Milan until his brother, Antonio and the King of Naples, Alonso, betrayed and banished him. Prospero also divulges that he has magical powers, and caused the storm that wrecked the ship. As the play continues, Prospero utilizes his favorite spirit, Ariel, to pester the sailors, namely Antonio and Alonso. Miranda, who has only ever known her father, meets the handsome Ferdinand and they fall in love. Like most fathers when their daughters begin to date, Prospero is not too keen on Ferdinand at first. However, as the play continues Miranda's happiness with Ferdinand makes Prospero happy, and he warms up to Ferdinand. The sailors begin to plot against Prospero's life, and Ariel overhears and informs him. Using his spirits, Prospero foils the plan and brings Antonio and Alonso before him. Prospero forgives them, and reveals that Ferdinand and Miranda have been married. Prospero is then restored to his dukedom and the group plans to sail for Italy the next day. The play ends with Prospero delivering an epilogue that apologizes for his wrong doing and asks for the audience's applause.

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<sup>18</sup> *The Tempest*: Act IV, Scene I.

This monologue is delivered specifically to Ferdinand in Act IV Scene I. Prospero summoned several spirits to perform a masque for Ferdinand and Miranda to celebrate their impending marriage. Prospero dismisses the spirits quickly when he remembers the plot against his life. Upon seeing Ferdinand's concern, he offers words of comfort to him: "Be cheerful, sir, our revels now are ended." Although Prospero is given to fits throughout the majority of the play, he is redeemed by his unconditional love for Miranda. His biggest motivator is taking care of her. Although he does it in ways that are a bit unconventional it is easy to find sympathy and respect for him. He is also heavily motivated by his love of knowledge.

Prospero's monologue has a total of four irregular lines, which is a lot considering it only has twelve lines total. This means that thirty percent of this monologue is irregular. The first irregular line, "Our revels now are ended. These our actors," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. The stress falls natural on "actors" so the feminine ending cannot be changed. The next two irregular lines happen back to back. First, the line, "And, like the baseless fabric of this vision," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Much like before, the rhythm falls naturally so the feminine ending cannot be changed. The following line, "The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces," has eleven syllables and a feminine ending as well. By employing a dactyl and placing emphasis on "the" and the first syllable of "gorgeous," the feminine ending can be made masculine. The final irregular line, "And, like this insubstantial pageant faded," also has eleven syllables and a feminine ending. Once again, the emphases fall naturally, so the feminine ending remains.

In the first irregular line, "Our revels now are ended. These are actors," Prospero tells Ferdinand not to be sad that the masque is over. This line is significant because he is offering comfort to Ferdinand. Throughout the majority of the play Prospero puts Ferdinand through hell.

This is a very sweet moment between Prospero and his new son in law. In the line, “And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,” Prospero states that this has all been a façade. This line transitions into Prospero musing about the fact that everything will eventually fade. The following line, “The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,” begins a section of beautiful imagery. Prospero begins to list off all of the beautiful structures that will eventually fade, including the earth. The line, “And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,” continues the thought that everything will eventually fade, just like his masque. He even calls his masque “insubstantial,” giving this line a bit of a sad feeling.

For the sake of my thesis performance, Prospero’s monologue is very similar to the beginning one. It is being taken out of its original context and applied to my thesis. Therefore, it should serve as no surprise that similar problems arose with both of them. This monologue serves to wrap up the performance. The final moments of any show absolutely have to be strong. Otherwise, you have just ruined what you spent months working on. I did not foresee Prospero posing many problems, and compared to several of the other characters, he did not. However, because of this he was often put on the back burner during my rehearsals, and did not end up truly being worked on and developed until about three weeks before the performance. Which was still enough time since the monologue is quite short.

Once again, I started working on Prospero by deciding his Laban effort. I decided almost immediately that he was light, indirect, and sustained; making him a float. Although the character of Prospero has some heavyhearted moments in giving away his daughter, he is light hearted in the context of my thesis. He is happily telling the audience that the performance is over, and they no longer have to be sad after enduring Iago, Imogen, Macbeth, Queen Margaret, and Richard III all in a row. I also decided that he was indirect, because he speaks in riddles and



metaphors. He takes twelve lines to say that the earth will eventually fade away, which he could have said in about four or less. Finally, although I do not think Prospero necessarily speaks slowly, he is not in any kind of a rush. He does not make quick changes in emotion in this monologue. Instead, it feels steady and sustained. The craziness has all already happened. His job is to just wrap up the performance in a neat little bow.

Ironically, I had the exact opposite problem with Prospero's language than I did with the Chorus. Instead of trying to make it grandiose, Prospero's monologue initially fell flat. There was little connection and little emotion. However, I chose to solve these two different problems in the same way. I paraphrased the text and made it about my own performance. Instead of referring to the masque, the "revels" referred to my show. "These our actors," referred to the characters portrayed during the performance, instead of the spirits. As I worked this way, I began to realize just how emotional and exciting this monologue is. It ends the performance that I have been work-shopping for about nine months. It is a big deal! It is emotional because the performance and the actors all fade away. For me, that is the most beautiful part of theatre. It is temporary, fleeting. That is why it is so powerful, because everyone in the audience knows that it will come to an end, and it will leave no physical trace of itself behind.

### XIII. Conclusion

Shakespeare was a master of the human condition like no one else before or since. From his star-crossed lovers, to his scheming villains, to his brave heroines, to his clowns he captivates us. He seems to peer into our own souls and mirror their thoughts and feelings on stage. That is why his works are so fascinating to watch, and sometimes so frightening. We are held captive by the fact that he places mirrors of our unmasked selves on display for the world to see. He

understood humanity better than most of us understand ourselves. This is why he is timeless. I have strived to do a few of his most splendid characters some semblance of justice. Although many before me have written far more eloquently about Shakespeare, I have strived to do him justice as well. This project has brought me great joy and great strife. I am saddened by its end, but I am also happy for it, because it just means the beginning of a new project. As the great bard says: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women are merely players."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII