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A Critique of the Role of Women in Shakespeare's Plays as Interpreted in the Production of Shakespeare's Women

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**A CRITIQUE OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS
AS INTERPRETED IN THE PRODUCTION
*SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN***

A Master of Fine Art's Thesis

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Master in Fine Arts for Theatre

Lindenwood University

2003

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Prospectus

The strongest difference between William Shakespeare's works and other plays is the strong vitality of the characters of his plays. In most plays—even in novels—those characters that were created were not all alive. If it is a better work, when you first see the characters talking on the stage, or talking on the pages, they will seem real. But if it is a lesser work, they are not as natural. If the skill of the words is not the best, then, when you first read about them, or you see them on the stage for the first time, you will only find that there is more artificiality. Until the end, such works will frustrate people. If the works appear to be excellent, then the fault may not be found and exposed so soon, and may need a generation to pass until, the faults are seen clearly. For example, in some novels, the dramatic elements were very successful for 25 to 30 years after publication. On the other hand, there are few dramatic elements in novels that can still maintain a very high level of interest after a long time.

However, every time that Shakespeare's work is read again, his characters are more alive. They have already been read for almost four hundred years; but the depth of their lives have not been analyzed thoroughly yet. Everyone who is studying Shakespeare has to realize this truth so as to admire the extent of his great knowledge of characters.

Moreover, it's the differences between those characters. No characters are really alike. Here we see a difference between Shakespeare and other playwrights. Similar

characteristics or the defect of lacking independent characteristics show up in ordinary playwrights' works easily, but not in Shakespeare's. In all of the Shakespeare's works, no characters are really alike. Every character is clearly different from every other character and we are satisfied in each persona. This is exactly as same as the conditions of man's world. Everything is real life in Shakespeare's works—all the characters are not puppets or dolls. They are warm and alive men and women with passions.

There is universality in Shakespeare's characters; they are not restricted by the time, the areas and countries. Although in some certain meaning, they belong to England. But for the most extensive meaning, they are not limited to England; they all have the basic same characteristics as same found in humanity. We know that although the country may be different, the heartbeat is the same. Shakespeare's characters are not constrained by customs and the borders. They are following the simple feeling of right and wrong, love and hatred, happiness and pain to validate the values of Shakespeare's works. This emotions of humanity will not be changed ever. It is that constancy which gives rise to my motive of studying the characters under Shakespeare's pen.

Prior to any character analysis, one must realize the process of growing up and the background of William Shakespeare. There is not much information about Shakespeare's life story left, and the information of his early stage is very limited. Later generations may have many controversial issues about him, but there is a wording in unanimity in

recent years. I believe that it is not hard to realize how his work can stand proudly in the history of world literature.

I. The Background of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616). Even though that Shakespeare only lived for 52 years which was not a long life (Harrison 46), he left 37 unfading plays and The Sonnets that won universal praise (Harrison 35). He held the seat of honor as the most famous playwright during the period of the Renaissance of England, which was the period when Queen Elizabeth was in power, and also the period that England was to expand her maritime hegemony. We can even call “the times of Elizabeth” as “the times of Shakespeare” (Brown 186). This is enough to show the degree that Shakespeare was enthroned (figuratively, not in reality) by the people. Today after 400 years, his charm is still increasing.

A. The Period of Childhood

Stratford-Upon-Avon which is located Northwest of London was a prosaic common small town, not as bustling as London, and was not to produce the number of literatures and authors as Cambridge. Moreover it was not as solemn as Church York, a religious sacred place. All of these ordinaries were changed after William Shakespeare was born in 1564 (Harrison 39). The Shakespeare family were farmers for generations,

and they were a tenant-farmers hired by the Arden family. But in order to win Mary Arden's heart, the landlord's daughter, William's father—John—started his gloves business. John Shakespeare pushed his business to the summit by which he rose in life by his own efforts, and he took Mary as wife. William was their third child. John, with a successful business, took up the post of a counselor in the City Government in 1565, and then he became the chief counselor of the political circles, and served concurrently as a local administration official. At this time, seven-year-old William was about the age for school. Due to William's father, as an official of City Government, William enjoyed the preference to study at a local Grammar School for free until he was 16 (Harrison 49). When he was at the Grammar School, he learned Latin, literature, rhetoric and the classic literature of the Greeks, through which he grasped the basic skills of writing and more abundant knowledge (Sams 17-20).

B. After He Finished His Studies

After he finished his studies when he was 16, William was in business at home with his father, but it was William's aspirations, during the spare time of merchandising, to write blank verses which became William's pleasure. Two years later, William

married a woman named Anne Hathaway, who was 8 years older than William with only one sudden advance announcement in church, (the custom was to release a wedding advance announcement for three Sundays continuously in the church they belonged to before the ceremony) it was a surprise to everyone, as a matter of a fact. Anne was pregnant before she got married, so William had to ask for unusual permission to get married as soon as possible from the Bishop. After all, the society was very conservative at the time. Their first daughter—Susanna was born when William was 19, then when William was 21 in 1585 they had twins—Hamnet and Judith (Harrison 51). William was locked up with the family burden; it made William's dreams of plays subside for a time. Eventually he fled from the boring merchandising life and the heavy burden of family life. He went to London, running quickly to the flourishing city, and he opened his own writing career (Harrison 39-40).

C. Left for London

In 1587, William had left his wife and children to his parents, and went to London alone to look for his own goals (Harrison 51). He ached to write plays for the opera troupes and made money to support his family and his parents who stayed in Stratford at

this time. But William was not famous and had no experience while in London for the first time. How could he show his talent? The best way was to join in the opera troupe, and search for the market for his plays afterwards. After he had arrived in London, he first took care of horses for a gentleman who came to the theater to watch the operas. Then he became an actor and played some supporting roles. Around 1588, he revised and reedited classic plays for the theater at the same time. Soon he entered the high society of London and he lived proficiently. At this moment it was the time when English Navy defeated the invincible armadas of Spain and obtained maritime supremacy. Celebrations were everywhere, and a drama performance became an important show. This gave William a good opportunity to stand out conspicuously and to make him become famous. This moment, on the one hand, he proceeded to reedit the ready-made old plays and other playwrights' plays to provide to the theater for rehearsing. And on the other hand, he continued his play writing. Most of the plays he revised were according to the requirements of Humanistic thoughts of the times. He kept the framework of the original story, and then added many fresh vivid thoughts to make the revised plays bright with the glory of Humanism thoughts (Harrison 41).

1. The Early Period

In 1592, William finished his first play, *Henry VI (1H6, 2H6, 3H6)*, and just as he expected, he became famous overnight (Harrison 41). His words were splendid, exaggerated and affected, which obtained a favorable view of the public, and he became a famous playwright. He got rewards for his hard learning. But it did not last long. A pestilence moved into London in 1592, which meant the opera troupe had to stop the performances. As this period of disease spread, William came back to Stratford where he stayed for 5 years and got together with his family and his parents for two winters and summers. At this time, William's status became that of a playwright from an actor in the opera troupe, and he earned a lot of money, and so became gradually wealthy. This also made William's writing turn to comedies and lyrics. The famous *Taming of the Shrew (Shr.)*, *Comedy of Errors (Err.)* and the sonnets were his works finished at this time. Shortly after the opera troupe which William belonged to was regrouped, it was bankrupt because of the bad conditions in London. Therefore, William turned to Lord Chamberlain's Company (which was The Kings' Men afterwards) to seek better development (Brockett 156). Just as expected, he did not let the troupe down. William finished the well known *A Midsummer Nights Dream (MND)* and the touching story

Romeo and Juliet (Rom.) in 1596. He was very famous in the England dramatic circles, and he accumulated huge wealth, and became a country gentleman of Stratford and one of the stockholders of the opera troupe. However, his only son—Hamnet—died because of illness which made William's heart broken (Harrison 56).

2. The Middle Period

Hamnet's death made William's writing style different from the early stages. He turned to writing comedies, and he melded the wonderful time he shared with his son in his mind into his writing. The words he used were much closer to the public, like *Twelfth Night (TN)* and *Merchant of Venice (MV)*, and the style of writing had turned to essay from poetry. The Lord Chamberlain's Company decided to build a new theater—The Globe Theatre—in the south river bank area after second thoughts. William was of course one of the investors. After The Globe Theatre was opened, it made William's income increase day by day. Certainly, William wrote for The Globe Theatre many plays. *Julius Caesar (JC)* and *As You Like It (AYL)* were the works he finished during this period. However, his father died in September, 1601 (Harrison 63). The greatest tragedy of human history, *Hamlet (Ham.)* was finished in 1603 (Harrison 116).

3. The Later Period

The most famous four tragedies—*Othello (Oth.)*, *King Lear (Lr.)*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth (Mac.)* were William's delicate plays that he finished in his later period.

Othello was the beginning of this stage of great writing; they were born under William's pen continuously one after another. In 1607, William's eldest daughter—Susanna—was married to a doctor—John Hall, in Stratford (Harrison 68). Unfortunately, the pestilence ran wild again; William decided to stay in Stratford to write the plays, and not do road shows with the troupe anymore. This gave him more time to write. With a great quantity of famous plays published, like *Anthony and Cleopatra (Ant.)*, *King Lear*, *Winters Tale (WT)*, and *The Tempest (Tmp.)*...etc (Harrison 68), Shakespeare ended the theater activities which he engaged in for decades around 1613, and then he enjoyed his old age in his hometown, Stratford. Shakespeare passed away at home in April 23, 1616 (Harrison 75).

II. The Style of Shakespeare's Writing

Shakespeare lived in a period of big transition when the Feudal System was collapsing and the new Capitalist Class was rising. At that time, the Religion Theology was going to be on the downgrade which was represented in the Middle Age, and the world view of the Capitalist Class as the center for Individualism went deep into the human mind day by day. The Humanism started to occupy a position of dominion in a trend of thought in the society and culture. Shakespeare criticized the cruel darkness of the Feudal System and the imprisonment of humanity confidently with his plays. This reflected strongly the requests of the new Capitalist Class hoping to build a new mode of social relationship and moral thoughts that caused a huge movement disseminating Humanism in England and Europe. Many plays of Shakespeare were lost; there are only 37 plays and 2 long poems and 154 sonnets preserved (Harrison 35). Most of his plays obtained materials from history records, novels, folk legends and old plays...etc. This reflected the reality of history in that the Feudal System was transiting to a Capitalist society, and publicized Humanism and the views of the theory of human nature of the new Capitalist Class. Obtained materials from the old plays, the Middle Age plays of England, and the new culture and the art of Europe; and on the other hand, he observed

life deeply, and analyzed society, and controlled the pulse of the times, which made Shakespeare create so many figures that were as vivid as life. And he described the views of the multicolored social life wildly which made his works famous for the intermingling of sorrow and joy, full of poetry and imagination which brought the integration into a contradiction and full of philosophy of life and spirit of criticizing. His poems were the product of the social life in England and the culture development during the period of the Renaissance mostly. He integrated the true, the good and the beautiful with his own world of Humanism and writing methods to sing the praises of beautiful life and youth, purity and honesty of love and friendship with passion. For confirmation of this, a look at his poetry and see how important the topic of friendship and love are (Harrison 35).

Shakespeare's plays can be separated into three categories: historical play, comedy, and tragedy. He displayed the history of England from historical plays, especially the period of the Rose War. The plays of this category showed that he could make the huge, complicated history data appear on the stage. He used a wild type of writing for his comedies. Some were farces, some were romantic comedies, and some were more serious which are called dark comedies. But the greatest part of Shakespeare was his

tragedies. And he also used wild skills and subject matters for this subject (Kelly vii).

Shakespeare's plays can be distinguished as three stages: 1590-1600, for the most part was the historical plays of England and comedies which were full of optimistic spirit

and clear thoughts. His works of tragedy, dark comedy, and Roman plays mostly

reflected deep contradictions and represented feelings of suspicion from 1601-1608.

After 1608, his works were inclined to compromises and imaginations, such as

tragicomedy and romances (Harrison 164-65).

III. Shakespeare's Thought and the Development of Art

A. The period of historical play and comedy (1590-1600)

In the first decade of Shakespeare's playwrights, he wrote nine historical plays in total. These plays, except for *King John (Jn.)*, Shakespeare is describing the struggles inside the feudal dynasty of 13th century. Other plays were constructed in four part episodes to engage with two contents: *Henry VI, part 1, part 2, part 3 (1H6, 2H6, 3H6)* and *Richard III (R3); Richard II (R2), Henry IV, part 1, part 2 (1H4, 2H4)* and *Henry V (H5)* (Harrison 87-89).

These plays generalized a disordered history of disorder over one hundred years in England from 1377-1485. He described the War of Britain and France, and the civil war in England, and also they celebrated the formation of England as a nation-state, and accused the unjust wars between feudal lords, and also showed a great sympathy about the sufferings of people. The second set play described the irresolution of Richard II. He trusted his favorite courtier, and then his cousin took the opportunity to seize the power and claimed himself as the King (Henry IV) (Kelly 102-3). Although Henry IV put down the civil insurrections twice, he still worried all day long. He was afraid someone with ambitions would seize power like he did once, and the Prince was a pampered son

and he was not to attend to his proper duties. The future of the nation was worried.

Fortunately, the Prince became a new man and ascended the throne as Henry V. He

transferred the contradictions of the country during the war against France and took back

the territories in France. In the next set of plays, he described an England as suffering a

setback because of the internal strife of the nobles during the war of England against

France, and the feudal civil war—the War of Red and White Roses which was caused by

the troubles between the nobles and the civil people were trying to seize power (Kelly

102). During the civil war, King Henry VI was killed having belonged to the Red Rose

Group. The White Rose Group seized power, then, after Edward IV died, and his brother

Richard captured power by cunning, ferocious ways. At last, he was killed by the

opposite party (Harrison 88-9).

Henry IV created an immortal archetype—the comic character, Falstaff. Falstaff

was a poor knight aged over fifty, and he was also a coward who loved to boast, and a

greedy explorer. He was the chief of the rogues; he acted as the occasion dictated a lot,

and fished in troubled water. He denied any kind of ethics, was without conscientious

condemnation, or the heart of sympathy. His happiest thing in life was to show eager

attentiveness to women by a rude, dirty way. And his ideal life was to satisfy his appetite

for food with no limitation. He was a man with a sense of humor; the comic plots and the jokes were full of wit and humor through his words and actions. He thought he was a trusted follower of the Prince; he sat in a public house with drunken eyes all day long, and led a group of young local bullies to cheat, to swindle, and to rob. Once he got the order to enter the battlefield, he became a coward, and never cared about the brave spirit and honor, which a feudal knight should have. He could only play dead on the field, and took credit for other people's achievement by carrying back the enemy's body. In the end of this work, Falstaff was expelled by the "wise and able" King—Henry V. Falstaff was a character who lived around the civilians and as a character those civilians loved to see and hear. A type of "a mercenary without clothes and food" and "a explorer" during the period of the Feudal System collapsing, who had become one of the most successful comic images of Shakespeare's writings.

When Shakespeare's historical play was so popular among the people, he also wrote ten comedies: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona (TGV)*, *Love's Labours Lost (LLL)*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor (Wiv.)*, *Much Ado About Nothing (Ado)*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* (Harrison 164). The last three plays among these show the style of

Shakespeare's writing mostly. These plays are based on the themes of love, friendship, and marriage. But the plots are vivid and usually lifelike and not just like the common plays (Brown 132). The writer proclaimed the feeling conflicts of people and the contradictions in real life by humor, cheerful stroke and poetic lyric. Especially he created a group of actresses exhibiting images of bravery, persistence, wit, humor, and sweetness. They pursued their rights of freedom to choose their spouses, and fought against every kind of evil power unyielding (Spurgeon 259-90).

Twelfth Night describes the risk that the twin brother (Sebastian) and sister (Viola) encountered in the ocean, and how they were stranded to Illyria one after another. The ruler—Duke Orsino proposes to a rich noble lady, Olivia, to marry him, but she refuses (TN 1.4). Viola, masqueraded as a man, pretends to be the Duke's young servant with an alias—Cesario. From this moment on, Viola loved Duke Orsino and she was content to be a love envoy, and ran between Orsino and Olivia. Alike with her twin brother, she solved a sequence of complex and serious love conflicts smoothly. Olivia loved the young servant—Viola—then became Viola's brother's wife; Duke Orsino was suffered a great pain of unreturnable love. After he found his servant was a beautiful girl, and knew the value of her emotion, he married Viola. The complex plot of this play is full of

coincidences, audience involvements, misunderstanding and the comic factors of graft and pretending. And the young girl—Viola—who is the main character in this play is brave, passionate, innocent, and she also shows a character who is unselfish, constant, and faithful in striving for moral integrity and independence, and the right of power in a fight of relationship between man and man.

The Merchant of Venice is famous for the stronger attitude to mock and to criticize society. The rich merchant of Venice, Antonio, in order to help his best friend Bassanio's marriage, borrows money from Shylock, a Jewish usurer (*MV* 1.3). Antonio never takes into account the interest in loaning someone money, and he helps Shylock's daughter to elope. Then Shylock who hates him makes use of an opportunity for revenge. He pretends he will not take the interest, but if Antonio does not pay the money back on time, he will cut one pound of flesh from Antonio (*MV* 1.3). Unluckily, the news of Antonio's merchant ship having an accident spreads widely; Antonio cannot circulate his funds well, so he can not pay the money back. Shylock does not go to the court to accuse, but he wants Antonio to keep his word according to the law clauses. For saving Antonio's life, Bassanio's fiancée, Portia pretends to be a lawyer and appears in court. She honors Shylock's request, as long as the flesh he cuts from Antonio is exactly one

pound, with no extra or less, and moreover, she will not allow bleeding (*MV* 4.1).

Shylock loses the lawsuit because he cannot execute it, and loses his fortune.

Shakespeare successfully created the image of Shylock: a vivid, complex, egoistic usurer. At the same time, Shakespeare defended the Jews who were treated with bias in everything from race to religion through Shylock. He raised the economic issues like overseas trade and usury practicing through the scene of hostility in court (*MV* 4.1), which makes everyone feel the excellent ability with which he manages the materials he uses.

Portia is an ideal woman that Shakespeare created with honest character and talent and honor. She is young, beautiful, and wise, and many people know her name. To face so many proposers asking her to marry them, she takes moral conduct as her first concerning condition instead of pedigree and wealth. She follows her father's teachings to set three cases of gold, silver and lead for the proposers to choose. The Prince of Morocco grabs the gold case and gets the portrait of carrion Death (*MV* 2.7). The Prince of Arragon grabs the silver case and gets the portrait of a blinking idiot (*MV* 2.9). Only the smart, honest Bassanio chooses the plain lead case, then gets the fair Portia's counterfeit (*MV* 3.2). Portia jumps into the poor, young man's arms without the least hesitations. This standard of marriage is a strong challenge against the Feudal system,

and reflects a dignitary sentiment and the beautiful mind of Portia. In the court, when Shylock threatens the court to harm Antonio's life with a due bill, no one knows what they should do. Only Portia sees the fault of the contract and reprocesses the legal explanation to the contract, which holds the cruel intentions of Shylock, a heart filled with vengeance. This adds a beautiful credit to the smart image of Portia (MV 4.1).

Romeo and Juliet, written in this period, was a tragedy of reflecting the conflicts between love, ideal and Feudal pressure (Brown 139). Two families fought against to each other for generations in Verona, Italy. Romeo from the Montague family fell in love at first sight with Juliet of the Capulet family at a party. But the vendetta between the two families stopped their love affair. With the help of Friar Laurence, they held a wedding secretly. Romeo killed Juliet's cousin, Tybalt to revenge his friend. The Prince of Verona—Escalus orders to expel Romeo, and Juliet also faces a plight to marry someone else. The Friar gives her some special medication to let her pretend death, and then sends someone to alert Romeo to come back instantly. But the messenger is delayed. Romeo did not know the truth when he heard Juliet was dead; he comes back to his hometown instantly and quietly, and then he commits suicide for frustrated love next to her. Shortly, Juliet woke up and saw her lover was already dead; she uses the dagger to

kill herself and finish her young life. Seeing the ill effects of a family feud, the two families that have hated each other for centuries made reconciliation at last in front of Romeo and Juliet's coffin. This young, innocent couple, in order to pursue free love, resisted the Feudal powers that hindered their love with death at last. Although the plot belongs to a tragedy, it still full of passion to the real life, attraction to happiness and the confidence in the future of a comedy. The whole play glows with positive mood of optimism; in fact, it is an ode for youth and love. Although the leading roles paid with their lives, the estrangement was eliminated, and the love and the ideal won finally. Romeo and Juliet became immortal typical cases in world literature. The play is full of strong lyric, such as the graceful monologues for Juliet waiting for Romeo:

Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night

Whiter than new snow on a raven's back

Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,

Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,

Take him and cut him out in little stars,

And he will make the face of heaven so fine

That all the world will be in love with night

And pay no worship to the garish sun. (*Rom.* 3.2)

B. The Period of Tragedy (1601-1608)

In this period, Shakespeare's thoughts and art were becoming mature and deep (Harrison 165). It was just in the last phase of Queen Elizabeth's dominion. The relationship between the King's power and the Capitalist Class was getting tense, and the life of Court nobles was disintegrating day by day. Shakespeare saw clearly the wide gap between ideal and reality, and he generalized this as a moral conflict of good and evil. He was against violence and emphasized the affect of rationality. The glory of Romanticism was getting weaker and weaker, but the description of Realism was stronger day by day. The main contents of tragedy are the conflicts between man and society, man and man, and in a man's heart of hearts, which are called an example of "Character Tragedy" and "Social Tragedy" (Spurgeon 309-55).

Hamlet is the most important work of Shakespeare; this play owns and represents the most abundant social contents and philosophic connotations. It shows a perfect art form and a great content of thoughts to display the disillusion of a leading role's

Humanism ideal. And it reflects a writer discovering the life values and meanings.

There was a story spreading about a Denmark Prince who sought revenge for his father in the 12th century. The playwrights of England and France wrote plays about revenging for blood relations in the middle Ages which were based on this story. In 1601, Shakespeare revised it into an excellent tragedy with severe contradicting conflicts and reflecting of the times. That makes this a revenge story with a wide social meaning.

The young Denmark Prince—Hamlet—is a man with Humanism, ideal, boldness, and thoughts. He is also an honest, frank, decent man and with high moral dignity. When he comes back to his country after he finishing his education, he found his country had already become a dark prison. His father was killed by his uncle—Claudius. And Claudius married Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, and took the Crown. Then, his father's specter appears to ask Hamlet to revenge for him (*Ham.* 1.5). Hamlet decides to kill King Claudius, but he has a lot of concerns. Because of that, the desire of revenging becomes a social responsibility gradually: we should change this world full of crimes, heartless and injustice, lies and pretense. To accomplish this holy mission, Hamlet knows he cannot do it on his own, on the other hand, he hates bitterly to compromise with the vicious power. All of these make Hamlet sink into self-analysis of hesitating,

disconsolation and suffering. Right on the moment he made his mind to kill King Claudius, unfortunately, he killed his lover Ophelia's father, Polonius, a fawning Royal Minister unintentionally (*Ham.* 3.4). Sorrowful Ophelia lost her mind for this reason, and drowned in the river (*Ham.* 4.7). Ophelia's brother—Laertes wants revenge for his father and his sister, he stabbed Hamlet with a poison sword in a duel which King Claudius arranged. Then, Hamlet's mother died because she drank the poison wine that Hamlet prepared by mistake (*Ham.* 5.2). Hamlet killed King Claudius before Hamlet died, but the great ideal of Hamlet to change the reality never was realized (*Ham.* 5.2).

Hamlet is an image of Humanism that Shakespeare created meticulously. He is full of passion and confidence to the human, human's tomorrow, in his opinion, human is an "excellent masterpiece", and owns "noble reason", and "great power", with marvelous wisdom, is "the essence of the university, primate of all things." The Humanism education makes him has a great ambition, unfortunately, a sudden radical change makes him suffer so much adversity, and makes his airy, bright, and frank character changed. His father was dead, and his mother married again, the whole country was ruled by treacherous people, and full of foul atmosphere. He is aching to redevelop the society with Humanism thoughts, but realizes it is difficult to accomplish. He thinks so hard and

feels anxious, and that makes his character become unhappy and depressed. Moreover, because he lacks evidence to revenge, and he can not find a perfect timing to revenge, he can not act rashly, and that makes him become more indecisive, and hesitant. There are a large paragraph of monologues reflects his sorrowful, contradictive mood of blaming himself strongly and sadly. On the surface, it was lamentable that he let go an opportunity to act, but in fact, it is a tragic reflection of a wide gap between the power of the enemy and us, and the ideal of Humanism hard to realize. From the third act, his disconsolate mood is overwhelming; the noble ideal and responsibility make him realize that he must resist the irrational fate by actions. Therefore, he takes a series of revenging measures. He recreated King Claudius' crimes by acting, and rewrote a secret letter to destroy King Claudius, and then exiles him to England. Then he uses a conspiracy to kill King Claudius by another's hand. Finally, King Claudius was killed. He relies in these national affairs on his friend—Horatio—a friend who has a common goal like him. All of these showed his bravery, wisdom, calm, care, and superb intelligence. Shakespeare described the change and development of Hamlet's character perfectly.

The Tragedy *Othello* also reflects deep social contradictions of the period of Renaissance. In Venice, a Moor Senior General—Othello—with dark skin married

Desdemona, a noble lady because of love. But they are rejected to by the nobles. The Duke of Venice who is with need of arms sent Othello to resist the invasion of Turk, therefore, he interferes with the marriage. The double-faced, crafty and sinister Ancient, Iago hates Othello because he did not appoint him as a Lieutenant. In order to revenge, he uses a crafty plot to frame up Desdemona as faithless (*Oth.* 3.3). Othello is gullible and hates injustice like poison, and falls into a tremendous grief and indignation and hopelessness. He is so jealous, that he strangled the innocent Desdemona by his own fair hand. And he thinks he did right. Iago's wife, Emilia exposes the truth on the spot. Othello regrets so much and in order to punish himself for the huge mistake he made, he kills himself with his sword.

Othello is a character that the writer confirmed and sympathized with. He is frank, just, sincere and honest, but there is the capacity to cause death that exists in his character. He trusts false surface of things too readily, and lets his emotion control his senses. Although, the love between him and Desdemona defeated the prejudice of races, they can not avoid the dark arrow of drastic people and a tragic end. Iago of the play is an image of one who extremely lives for his own benefits, and plays all kinds of dirty tricks for his personal desire. His life doctrine is "not for love, and not for obligation, but

for his profits.” He sets many traps to injure people; at last he is punished by justice.

King Lear was a historical legend and drew materials from ancient England. The aged, decrepit and muddleheaded King Lear divides the kingdom to his hypocritical eldest daughter, Regan and his second daughter, Goneril. But he expels the little girl, Cordelia, who is honest and frank but does not know how to please the King, to another country (*Lr.* 1.1). Lear only keeps the King’s name and one hundred retainers and arranges to stay in his two daughters’ house to live his old age by turns. No one knows the two daughters reveal their true nature completely after they attained their goals, and they expel their father out of their house, and make King Lear suffer setbacks and homelessness. One night, with storm, thunder and lightning, the lunatic King Lear runs to the open field and shouts his grief and indignation and hopelessness to Heaven. The big paragraph of King Lear’s monologue in a furious storm represents to us a suffering heart. In the meantime, it proclaims the human nature awakening process of a King who was dissimulated by power (*Lr.* 3.2). The little girl knows her father’s experience, and dispatches troops to send a punitive measure to her sisters. Unfortunately, she was killed by mistake (*Lr.* 5.3), and King Lear died in a sorrowful madness (*Lr.* 5.3).

Macbeth was a fine piece of writing to describe characterization in Shakespeare’s

plays. The Scotland General of the King's army—Macbeth—returns in triumph from the battlefield, but he listens to a witch who tells him about the prediction that he can be the King (*Mac.* 1.3). Urged by his ambition and incited by his wife—Lady Macbeth (*Mac.* 1.5)—he takes the opportunity while Duncan, the King is visiting his house; he kills him and seizes the scepter. At last, he is deserted by his followers and killed; his wife, Lady Macbeth died because of schizophrenia (*Mac.* 5.1). The whole play fills the air of terrifying atmosphere. Shakespeare criticized the corrosion of ambition to conscience through the description of a hero—Macbeth—who repeatedly performed outstanding service once and then he became a cruel tyrant. Due to the captivation of the witch and the effect of Lady Macbeth, kindhearted Macbeth desires to achieve a great event, then, his great expectations turn into ambitions. After his ambitions come true, they lead to a new series of crime. Finally, the result goes against the historical trend, and he dies inevitably. In a superstitious, guilty, and terrible atmosphere, Shakespeare let his offenders in his play have deep thought, reflection, and analysis of the heart. The mental change seems to have clear connection to the arrangement of ideas by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to kill the King, which increases the depth of a tragedy.

Besides the above which called the "Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare",

Shakespeare wrote a series of tragedies in this period of time, such as: *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens (Tim.)*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus (Cor.)*. *Timon of Athens* describes a noble called Timon, who is generous and hospitable, happy in doing good, but he spends money like water, and invites many guests and visitors to his house day and night. Although he helps many people break away from a predicament, he cannot tell who is patronizing and who is a friend. Moreover, he spends most money on ruffians and parasites. One day, he spends all his gold, the creditors come to his house, and he sends someone to ask for help to the senior statesmen, nobles and the people who were helped by him. But all the villains who flattered him by every means avoid him like a plague, and force him to ask for help from no one. Then, Timon left the crowd with grief and indignation and lives in a cave alone in privacy. One day, he is digging the tree roots to allay his hunger and found a great pile of gold accidentally. He has had his life full of fickleness of the world. It is a very keen exposition to capitalist money principles!

Athens of the play was beleaguered, the nobles and the Senior Statesmen come to look for brave Timon, and offer him money, power, and position, but Timon's heart turns cold already. Lastly, he became a person who tired of life, and left this world with hatred to the double-faced people.

C. The Period of Romances (1609-1613)

Shakespeare's works of the later period depart from reality and turned to the trend of the fantasy world. He solved the contradictions among the reality by illusion, and his style of writing changed to the imagination of fairy tales, and with a sprightly rhythm. There are works like *Cymbeline* (*Cym.*), *Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, etc (Harrison 165). The plots of these plays were almost same, they all talked about the leading roles suffering catastrophes and accidents at first, then, turning the corner because of some accidental opportunities later; moreover, they might get a lucky break. Although it displayed some expositions about the dark reality, the spirit of forgiveness and understanding penetrated all the plays, healing the old traumas by love, and emphasizing the new hope that could be brought by repentance and reforms. The characters and the backgrounds of the plays were legendary. The motives of the characters seemed absurd, and used a lot of coincidences and accidental events excellently.

The important work of this period was *The Tempest*. Prospero, Duke of Milan has his title of nobility seized by his brother, Antonio, who then takes his only daughter, Miranda to run away to an island, and he relying on magic to become the landlord of the

island. Afterwards, he creates a tempest to force the ships of the King of Naples and the Prince Ferdinand and their companion Antonio to the island. He promotes the marriage of the Prince and Miranda by magic. The final result is Prospero regaining the title of nobility, and forgiving his enemies, and going home. The abstruse illusion, magnificent description, living images and poetic backgrounds make this play became a precedent of the later period play art of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's works were a summit that Western art history can hardly reach. In his plays, he spread up a wide life frame: The royals and the nobles, the poor people of the bottom layer of the social class. Every character in every class were dancing in the play, and owned individual love, hatred, sadness and happiness. Everyone had vivid personality characteristics. Although sinister and wily, and extremely selfish, Macbeth was different from Iago; although devoted to ideals and justice, Othello was different from Hamlet: different characters living in separate typical environments.

Shakespeare's construction of plays was noticed readily by people. Of course there were tragedies and comedies in his plays, but he broke the boundary between tragedies and comedies in actual writing. He was not limited by strict traditional type division, but he displayed a more abundant spirit world of humanity and characters. He

was good at describing a few clues that parallel and stagger each other to advance complex and vivid plot development. He displayed a marvelous sense of urgency in plays through writing techniques, and expedited the rhythm of plot development gradually. This made later generations of readers take notice.

Shakespeare's language was complete poetic. It was soft like murmuring running water, enraged like a fearful storm to let people think over and over again. Shakespeare was good at using analogies, metaphors, and puns. There were used so well that the language of Shakespeare's plays became idioms and allusions in English, which enriched English ornate terms enormously. The blank verse was the main form of the language, and mingled with ancient style poetry, folk rhythm, slang and spry comic prose dialogues. It was various, and abundant, and became the basic material to construct a pattern for Shakespeare's play art.

Shakespeare also wrote one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, generally it is thought to be finished continually in six years from 1592 to 1598. From the first one to the one hundred and twenty-sixth the change of friendship between a poet and a young noble man is explored the one hundred and twenty-seventh to one hundred and fifty-second spoke about telling a poet's love to a dark lady. The images are vivid, and full of rhythm. It

showed an understanding and an ideal of Humanists to the true, the good and the beautiful (Harrison 35).

Shakespeare did not enjoy much honor before he died, and he was not approved of generally in the next two hundred years after he died. In the middle period of 19th century, people rediscovered Shakespeare and formed a new science—the Shakespeare science. However, because Shakespeare came from a civilian family, and without an advanced education, and with little biographical information, it caused some doubts of people about his play writing career; they even tried to find the “real” writer who wrote the Shakespeare’s plays. Actually, there are not enough evidences and materials to overthrow Shakespeare’s copyright. The status of Shakespeare as be a great writer and a dramatist has yet to be disproved.

III. The Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare

Is a character of a play a responsible, real life? The best test is the degree that we know about to this character. If we could know his character completely at a glance—if everyone was sure that we had the ability to make him full visualized—then I am afraid that the character is only an unnatural image. In a real world, we can not know a person's real character completely; no one among us can know completely about his very best friend's character. Every one has a similar depth of character, but even a father, brother, or a birth mother could hardly know a person. A character may seem simple, but not without a kind of infinite complication. Therefore, the character of a play that is known easily—the character of a play that seems perfect in every aspect—was not real. A character like that only shows by appearances. The absolute humanity of Shakespeare's characters got their truth in that no one person could explore their character completely. Every time we meet them, we can always find something new from them, but there are still something deeper that we never see.

However, the works of the middle period of Shakespeare were not as many as his earlier works (Harrison 165). On the other hand, the works left us laughing merrily and cursing angrily in comedies and the critiques of the past Feudal Age of historical plays,

then turned to deep discussion on human nature issues. Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* were the most famous ones of his middle period.

The deepest theory of human nature in Classicism Age was represented totally in Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare. All kinds of tragedies of life were caused by some defects of character without facing management, and continuously accumulated in the self to follow conventions and traditions that then produced a catastrophically consequence naturally at last. This viewpoint of human nature was revealed completely in *Hamlet* which was the successful earliest of the Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare. Through *Hamlet*, Shakespeare is able to transmit information on “Some kind of behavior, temperament, habit, defect...etc, would break through a restraint development to abnormity. The small amount of evilness was enough to cancel all noble character and make people became infamous.” And the defects of different characters were discussed separately in each of Shakespeare’s tragedies.

A. The Tragedies Caused By Irresolution

Hamlet was the first of the Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare. In this tragedy,

the defect of character that Shakespeare arranged was the irresolution and hesitation that occurred by the principle of moral perfection. This character was no serious mistakes committed at a time of peace and prosperity. But when there were many double-faced sinister villains appeared around, if you still insisted in moral perfection and lacked the ability to decide to act caused by too many questions of self criticizing, it would make you and even the other innocent people fall into a dangerous situation beyond redemption.

Hamlet doubted about the processes of a sudden death to his father, a second marriage of his mother to his uncle, and his uncle's inheritance of governance already. He was depressed and unhappy because of these. Then he met his father's spirit, who told him that how big was the evilness he would face. Therefore, Hamlet knew:

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right! (*Ham.* 1.5)

Hamlet faced the responsibility of vengeance that was transferred by his dead father; he knew it was not as simple as bringing the justice to his father. As a Prince, a revenging plan meant a just mission of not letting Denmark be ruled by evil. He also knew the evil was so big that he had to avoid the bad luck that he might be killed by playing the fool first.

In such a dangerous environment, unexpectedly, Hamlet hesitated on action ability.

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion! (*Ham. 2.2*)

When he just finished talking, he turned to criticize and question himself:

May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. . . (*Ham. 2.2*)

And there was another time he stated his mood:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them. . . (*Ham.* 3.1)

He moved around the edge of an action, but does not make a decision.

Who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death. . .
 And enterprises of great pith and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry
 And lose the name of action. . . (*Ham.* 3.1)

Hamlet heartedly hoped the vengeance could satisfy the requirements of nobility and morals, and could stand the judgment after death. But the vengeance itself was not

only with the nobility in giving back justice, but also the agitation of hurting people.

While in the moment of contradiction and weirdness, it was wrong to act, but it was wrong not to act!

. . . To give them seals never, my soul, consent! (*Ham.* 3.2)

Just because of the self expectation, Hamlet continuously missed the opportunities

to revenge and to bring back the justice.

Now, whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven

Scruple of thinking too precisely on the event,

A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward, I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'

Sith I have cause and will

And strength and means

To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:

Witness this army of such mass and charge

Led by a delicate and tender prince,

Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd

Makes mouths at the invisible event,

Exposing what is mortal and unsure

To all that fortune, death and danger dare,

Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great

Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The Imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! (*Ham.* 4.4)

Hamlet missed the opportunities again and again, but the situation he faced was so sinister and crafty. How could his uncle allow him so many hours to finish his self-criticizing heart-searching, and to confirm the moral satisfaction, and to satisfy his revenge for his father, then bring back the justice to Denmark?

Hamlet was never worried about his uncle killing him with a vicious trick and a rapid action. When Hamlet's uncle was finally stabbed to death by Hamlet, he suffered a loss of his lover's (Ophelia) life, Laertes' life and Hamlet's life. The justice was not revealed at all in the whole mission of vengeance.

B. The Tragedies Caused By Jealousy and Suspicion

The theme of *Othello* was about not controlling the jealousy and suspicion in the heart well. There would be no harm done in a peaceful time, but once it was used by sinister villains around, it would become the jealousy of self drifting management and the suspicion of the self devoutly believing, and would cause people to die in injustice.

This jealous and suspicious main character was Othello. His jealousy and suspicion might come from his ambiguous position—as long as he was a Senior General, but he was still a Moor with dark skin. He knew many people refused to obey his orders because of his color of skin.

Othello married a beautiful girl, who was a daughter of a noble, and named Desdemona. Desdemona saw the noble character of Othello's heart from his rugged efforts, so she decided to marry him regardless her father's prohibitions.

Normally, a marriage based on love would be very successful. Unfortunately, there was a sinister villain around Othello who was angry about he being not the one Othello trusted with an important position but Cassio. And he was also jealous about Cassio's rewards, therefore, he decided to plot to murder Othello and Cassio. There was a telling method in the chosen crafty trick of a jealous and sinister person who incited Othello's jealousy. Because of his understanding of his own jealousy, Iago knew well about how to enlarge Othello's jealousy gradually, and then became suspicious and doubtful and then to devoutly believe in his own doubts. As a result, Othello faced a cruel test: Could he control his jealous character and not let it make him a sinister villain like Iago? An unfortunate tragedy was born here—Othello did not become Iago, because he chose to kill himself to bear the consequence of the blame. Nevertheless, he and his wife who loved him very much were completely destroyed due to his jealousy and suspicion that enlarging gradually.

Iago pretended he was for Othello's own good, so he continued to hint Othello's wife, Desdemona was unfaithful.

When devils will the blackest sins put on,

They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,

As I do now. . . (*Oth.* 2.3)

Iago was good at psychological planning. He implied Desdemona had an affair with Cassio, but he pretended as a bright angel instantly:

I do beseech you –

Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague

To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy

Shapes faults that are not—that your wisdom yet,

From one that so imperfectly conceits,

Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble

Out of his scattering and unsure observance.

It were not for your quiet nor your good,

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,

To let you know my thoughts. (*Oth.* 3.3)

The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss

Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;

But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er

Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves! (*Oth.* 3.3)

Othello's jealousy was getting worse in the process of insinuation and persuasion:

. . . Haply, for I am black

And have not those soft parts of conversation

That chamberers have, or for I am declined

Into the vale of years, —yet that's not much—

She's gone. . . (*Oth.* 3.3)

By the world,

I think my wife be honest and think she is not;

I think that thou (Iago) are just and think thou are not.

I'll have some proof. . . (*Oth.* 3.3)

The evidence was so simple! Desdemona did not sense the danger completely and she loved her husband with her whole heart thoroughly. She left a handkerchief behind from Othello by mistake, and Iago took it and put it in Cassio's room. This made an accusation of Desdemona. Desdemona never imagined that her husband would doubt

her, so she said magnanimously:

Alas the day! I never gave him cause. (*Oth.* 3.4)

Emilia was a decent person, but she smelled an uneasy breath:

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;

They are not ever jealous for the cause,

But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster

Begot upon itself, born on itself. (*Oth.* 3.4)

In the end, Othello was seized by his jealousy and doubts thoroughly, and lost control! Iago's wife, a paramour of Desdemona promised Othello:

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,

Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,

Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom. . . (*Oth.* 4.2)

But Othello also doubted Emilia:

. . . She (Emilia) says enough; yet she's a simple bawd

That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore. . . (*Oth.* 4.2)

Finally, Othello strangled Desdemona to death with his own hands. Poor Desdemona did not know what she did wrong till she died.

Emilia got a big surprise that she knew the big mistake was caused by a handkerchief unexpectedly. Then she explained that handkerchief was lost by Desdemona mindlessly, but Iago took it and used it. And she reproved Othello loudly:

. . . what should such a fool

Do with so good a woman? (*Oth.* 5.2)

Othello killed himself, and he said before he died:

. . . then must you speak

Of one that loved not wisely but too well;

Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought. . . (*Oth.* 5.2)

C. The Tragedy of True Love of the Fickleness of the World

The biggest difference of the tragedy of *King Lear* from the other three tragedies was the weak character revealed in the beginning of the play. Not like the other three plays, the weak character expanded to irremediability gradually. The biggest weakness of *King Lear* was his inability to tell what adulation was and what real emotion and honesty was, because he was living in an eminent and noble position for years.

When he felt old, he decided to distribute the country to his three daughters, he

told them:

Since now we will divest us both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state, —
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
 That we our largest bounty may extend
 Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
 Our eldest-born, speak first. (*Lr*: 1.1)

The King, who was flattering by his courtiers and subordinates day by day,
 ignored that the most real feeling was from faithful follower not a smooth talking courtier.
 Just as expected, the third daughter felt awkward:

What shall Cordelia do?
 Love, and silent. (*Lr*: 1.1)

Therefore, the third daughter was treated as a good-for-nothing daughter who did
 not love her father, and she was expelled.

The expelled daughter was without any property and tested the attitudes and
 affections of two Princes who came from neighboring countries and asked for marriage
 individually One of them gave up, and the other still believed the highness of the third

daughter's heart and emotions. So he took her with him.

After the third daughter left, a tragedy happened. When their father owned nothing, he found the emotions of his two daughters changed right away; they detested their father's bad temper, and the excess of servants for their father. The despising and detesting language was without end. At last, King Lear was so angry he left home and became an old man with no fixed abode. At this moment, he started to miss his third daughter, but he was too ashamed to face her. After a long rove life, King Lear became insane because of the pain at his heart.

Later on, through a faithful servant's help, King Lear was finally meeting his third daughter, and he begged for forgiveness of his daughter under a condition of half consciousness and half madness. His daughter forgave him and he was hugged by his daughter, wherein a broken-heart was comforted. Who knew the plot would take a sudden turn and then develop rapidly? A war happened among the three daughters right away, and the third daughter failed and was captured. In spite of the first and the second daughters, dead because of their heartlessness, the country was controlled by one of his son-in-laws who was just. Nevertheless, the third daughter was strangled to death, and King Lear died because of his heart was broken. A big tragedy of the plot was in the end.

To King Lear, the moment that he shared with his third daughter in the prison was a most pleasing moment. He said:

Come, let's away to prison:

We two along will sing like birds i' the cage:

When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,

And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,

And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh

At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues

Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,

Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out. . . (*Lr*. 5.3)

King Lear finally found a true love that he could own without depending on an additional wealth externally. This was what he could not see and understand forever in those years when he controlled the country.

Shakespeare weaved in a character as a contrast before King Lear was going to meet his third daughter. He was a father and a Minister in the Palace, he believed his love child's one-side words, so he misjudged, and he thought his real son was trying to do harm to him, which caused the good-for-nothing love child to harm the filial real son.

The filial son tried to protect himself, so he played the fool and suffered setbacks in a wilderness. When this Minister knew he believed a lie by mistake, his eyes were already blind because of a punishment which was framed up by his love child.

Therefore, Shakespeare represented two contrasts of two groups of characters. A person was playing the fool and a person who was really insane; a blinded person and a person of good sense. Through the contrasts of the groups, there were many brilliant admonitions showed in the dialogues:

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;

I stumbled when I saw: full oft 'tis seen,

Our means secure us, and our mere defects

Prove our commodities. . . (*Lr*: 4.1)

Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,

Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. (*Lr*: 4.1)

The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,

That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling

Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:

So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,

And woes by wrong imaginations lose

The knowledge of themselves. (*Lr*: 4.6)

With the death of the third daughter King Lear experienced the true love without depending on the wealth or power of the world, learning more over, that true love was so rare that it could not exist in the snobbish world.

King Lear contained more social value and critiques and was stronger than other three Great Tragedies. And the true love of the fickleness of the world could hardly be seen in the world.

D. A Tragedy Caused By Liberate Ambitions

Macbeth was the last finished play of the Four Great Tragedies. The character description was bigger than the three ones, and maturer, bitter, and straighter. The theme of discussion—a road of a man to commit an unforgivable crime only from the beginning of a wishing hope—was a very heart-shaking story.

Macbeth was a General, who had made much of his abilities and talent, but on the

way home after they won a war, he met a witch, and she predicted that Macbeth would be the King of a country soon:

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

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

All hail, Macbeth! Thou shalt be king hereafter! (*Mac.* 1.3)

After he returned to his country, he found that he was promoted as Sir Cawdor in reality. That the prediction came true made him covet the other prediction—became a King of a country—then, the ambition occurred in his heart of hearts right away. An ordeal he encountered was: How to deal with the ambition that occurred from the prediction!

Before Macbeth met the witch, he had such a feeling alike and said it uneasily:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen. (*Mac.* 1.3)

Indeed, when you use your ambition correctly, it is vigorous; when you use it poorly, it is a den of devastation.

Meanwhile, when the witch predicted, she also predicted there would be a descendant of a General, Banquo, who would be a King for generations.

Macbeth asked Banquo:

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the than Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them? (*Mac.* 1.3)

Banquo answered resolutely:

That trusted home
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you. (*Mac.* 1.3)

Macbeth could not answer as resolutely as Banquo. He hesitated:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not. (*Mac.* 1.3)

At this moment, a wild fancy to kill was obviously occurring.

Unfortunately, Macbeth's wife was much more relentless than Macbeth to face the sins.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,

That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou 'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. 'Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal. (*Mac.* 1.5)

Therefore, Lady Macbeth played the role of pressing Macbeth.

Macbeth killed the King Duncan in a reception, and Duncan's son fled to another country. Macbeth got wealth and special position, and got the crown just as the prediction said. But he lost the most valuable thing of his life: A peaceful heart.

Whence is that knocking?

How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,
Making the green one red. (*Mac.* 2.2)

Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of. (*Mac.* 2.3)

The relentless Lady Macbeth was not scared at all:

My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (*Mac.* 2.2)

Then, Banquo continued to face the test of the prediction:

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,

Thou play'st most foully for't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from-them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? (*Mac.* 3.1)

But Banquo would not let himself be found out; he seized his evil intention before it happened:

But hush! no more. (*Mac.* 3.1)

The lack of confirmation from Banquo was exactly the reason that made Macbeth to feel uneasy:

Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act in safety. There is none but he

Whose being I do fear. . . (*Mac.* 3.1)

After Macbeth committed evils, he started to fear decent people and then became an enemy against the decent people. He thought about witch's prediction:

. . . They hail'd him father to a line of kings:

Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,

And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,

Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,

No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,

For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;

For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;

Put rancours in the vessel of my peace

Only for them; and mine eternal jewel

Given to the common enemy of man,

To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!

Rather than so, come fate into the list.

And champion me to the utterance! (*Mac.* 3.1)

This paragraph of monologue that describing the road of Macbeth was so real and bitter because it showed the sort of dark side of human nature from a small circumambulation to step on a road of unforgivable and monstrous crime finally!

Shakespeare showed a dissatisfied vacancy after they seized the Crown through the dialogues between Macbeth and his wife. The vacancy made them suspicious.

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;

Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:

Unsafe the while, that we

Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,

And make our faces vizards to our hearts,

Disguising what they are. (*Mac.* 3.2)

That was why they were not satisfied. The vacancy was the other reason that they have to kill Banquo. Macbeth's wife said:

Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content:

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,

Of sorriest fancies your companions making,

Using those thoughts which should indeed have died

With them they think on? Things without all remedy

Should be without regard: what's done is done. (*Mac.* 3.2)

Macbeth said:

We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:

She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice

Remains in danger of her former tooth. (*Mac.* 3.2)

Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy. (*Mac.* 3.2)

Hence, Macbeth ordered an assassin to kill Banquo. Banquo's children fled to another country.

When Macbeth heard that Banquo's children were not dead, and the prediction might have a chance to come true, this made him uneasier and more annoyed:

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,

As broad and general as the casing air:

But now I am cabin'd, crib'd, confined, bound in

To saucy doubts and fears... (*Mac.* 3.4)

Erosion of the sin and uneasiness about the prediction made Macbeth almost become mad. At a party with nobles, he saw a spirit of Banquo and was frightened and spoke in disorder. That made all the nobles suspicious. Macbeth was depraved totally. He went to the witch and wanted to know about the details of the prediction so that he could counteract it! She confirmed again that Banquo's descendants would be a King for generations.

Macbeth could not restraint his frightened heart, henceforward; he started a tyrant

life to kill innocent people indiscriminately. Any one kind of suspicion that might endanger his throne, he would eradicate. Therefore, more and more nobles betrayed him and left him.

Lady Macbeth got a mad illness, some kind of sleepwalking in the middle of the night, and she always talked about secrets that never ever should be discussed carelessly:

Yet here's a spot. (*Mac.* 5.1)

What, will these hands ne'er be clean? (*Mac.* 5.1)

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of

Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. (*Mac.* 5.1)

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. —

I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

(*Mac.* 5.1)

This madness, not only the doctor but the maid knew:

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged. (*Mac.* 5.1)

Even the doctor shook his head and said:

Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:
My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak. (*Mac.* 5.1)

At last, the tyrant Macbeth killed at random and caused a war from the followers that deserted him, and Macbeth died in the war. Banquo's child really got the Crown.

Macbeth's small ambition bred a crime that would regret at last, and made him suffer.

Although, this play added the color of Fatalism more than the former three plays due to the witch's prediction Shakespeare described not the resistance to the destiny of Macbeth, but the dark side of Macbeth that went to the devil because of his ambition, and

the guilty feeling after he committed a crime but choose to corrupt more instead of showing penitence. The process of description of desiring for cleansing, guilty feelings, and committing more crimes to repress the guilty feeling was very successful.

Shakespeare was an absolute talent with an excellent skill to describe the main roles on character of Four Great Tragedies. But we can not ignore that all sorts of faults of character Shakespeare put into a dangerous environment. He knew the defect of character at a peace time was only a weakness of life; but as long as it was in a dangerous environment, the weakness would be a lethal weapon.

Therefore, Hamlet had to face a crafty uncle who killed without batting an eyelid, Othello had to face a villain, Iago who used crafty tricks a lot. King Lear had to face his two daughters who were hardhearted and denied their family, and moreover, Shakespeare added a witch who represented a vicious power for the evil nature in Macbeth.

Despite the fact that Shakespeare wrote every tragedy with an end in which evil will be recompensed with evil, the character weaknesses of the leading role could not resist evil, and let tragedy happened. The most miserable one of the Four Great Tragedies was the death of good people, and justice all gone. A story with such plots was deep of course, but how sad it was.

Hence, we see Shakespeare adequately displayed an illusion of an attempt of Shakespeare for self-comforting from his the last play "*The Tempest*."

The main character of *The Tempest*—Prospero—went through all the vicissitudes of life and he was aged. He was the same in that he encountered a huge evil which was the Crown seized by his brother, and injuries incurred by his brother. Fortunately, he had a loyal courtier to help him in the dark, and he and his daughter survived and lived on a waste island. That was just like Hamlet, Othello, King Lear or Banquo who survived catastrophes.

On the other hand, Shakespeare made a tragic reversion in the last play of his life. He made the main character a just and sympathetic character with powerful white magic, just like God. He made his brother and his servants float to an island, and made them encounter tests by his white magic, and offered a chance for them to repent; even more, he made the Prince who fell in love with his daughter experience the practice of a practicing mind.

When his brother was lectured and felt suffering and mad after he recalled the past crimes, he said:

... Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,

Yet with my nobler reason gaitist my fury
 Do I take part: the rarer action is
 In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
 The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
 Not a frown further. Go release them. . . (*Tmp.* 5.1)

After Prospero met his brother, he said:

. . . Would even infect my month, I do forgive
 Thy rankest fault, all of them; and require
 My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,
 Thou must restore. . . (*Tmp.* 5.1)

Obviously, Shakespeare made the leading role as an image of a perfect man on purpose to satisfy his pessimistic condition after wrote a tragedy. When the loyal servants prayed on the island while the experience lasting: “All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us, Out of this fearful country! (*Tmp.* 5.1)” Prospero appeared. Therefore, a satisfaction turned up that Shakespeare wanted the most: The wicked person repented, good persons survived, and the justice returned; and the most important was the weakness got reparation—Prospero became a

perfect man without character defects.

. . . Where he himself lost, Prospero his dukedom

In a poor isle and all of us ourselves

When no man was his own. (*Tmp.* 5.1)

All the pity of the Four Great Tragedies was made up in *The Tempest*.

The Tempest was a dream of Shakespeare; it was a satisfactory aspiration after he wrote tragedies during the middle and the later period.

Shakespeare also knew it was a dream, through Prospero he said:

. . . We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep. . . (*Tmp.* 4.1)

Shakespeare's dream became another kind of theory of human nature in later generations—which was the Times of Romance. There were so many optimistic expectations overly about the human nature in the Times of Romance; and to construct “a perfect man” to accomplish the “justice” that the Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare could not reach became an important theme of literary works of Times in the Romance.

IV. The Female Characters in Shakespeare's Play

The reason that Shakespeare's plays endure is the unique character, in his plays. The features with a rich image could always impress the readers and spectators. And this is the one of the main reasons Shakespeare's plays are worth while to study; the image of the main characters is one aspect for researching. People can never forget the melancholy Prince, Hamlet; and people must remember the miser, Shylock, and Romeos' blind love for Juliet, and the ambitious Macbeth. Here, we pay close attention to Shakespeare's female characters including Cordelia of *King Lear*; Lady Macbeth of *Macbeth*; Ophelia of *Hamlet*; and Desdemona of *Othello*.

A. Cordelia of *King Lear*

King Lear is one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies, and hold an important place. Cordelia did not come on the stage or talk very much, but the people were impressed by her very deep. Cordelia was the third daughter of King Lear; she was the favorite one. Her virtue was represented by a tune of the irreverence for King Lear. Her virtue kept her out of the trap that King Lear lured her into. She was not a frivolous girl; even when she was talking, she always talked in a low voice and made her speech brief and short. Therefore, she stood fast to be honest, and not debasing herself for carrying favor with people. On the other hand, she used a gentle way to comfort her father which was impossible for her to do it. She was not a popular person. She was stubborn and arrogant. She was self-assured for having more sincerity than her two sisters who were popular, so she treated others rudely through her arrogance. She did not know that her father needed to hear something that could comfort him from his daughters, and he just

only needed that tender touch. But she did not do that, she told her father the truth that her father did not like to hear. She insisted to be honest, which was a big mistake. The flaw of Cordelia was that she loved her relatives not as much as she loved herself. She could not tell a lie for him, so she did not love him as he deserved to be loved.

In the play, King Lear gave an “affection test” to his daughters, Goneril and Regan, who were trying their best to flatter and toady to their father, and said:

I love you more than words can wield the matter (*Kr.* 1.1)

... that I profess

Myself an enemy to all other joys,

Which the most precious square of sense possesses;

And find I am along felicitate

In your dear highness' love. (*Kr.* 1.1)

And Cordelia said:

Love, and be silent. (*Kr.* 1.1)

Only because she believed,

I am sure, my love's

More richer than my tongue. (*Kr.* 1.1)

Under the request that King Lear asked his daughters, Cordelia insisted on her own principles, and never said anything with adulation. Although she was good at first, “But now her price is fall'n.” (*Kr.* 1.1) and “that little seeming substance” (*Kr.* 1.1)

your best object,

The argument of your praise, balm of your age,

Most best, most dearest (*Kr.* 1.1)

In King Lear's eyes.

In the end, when she married and lived in France, she did not get a blessing from Lear, just because she

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue

As I am glad I have not, though not to have it (*Kr.* 1.1)

Because of that, people could see a real image of young lady who did not abuse affection but was full of love. When we are condemning how stupid Lear was, and the miserable destiny that Cordelia had, we can feel the noble character of a Princess' heart who never said "something with adulation", and devoted her love unselfishly and saintly which Shakespeare created. Cordelia sacrificed herself with deep affection, and devoted quietly and unselfishly.

B. Lady Macbeth of *Macbeth*

When we mentioned the tragedy, *Macbeth*, it would make people associate with a gloomy gray atmosphere. The whole play opened up in a kind of gloomy scene all the time. After Macbeth told his wife about the witch's prediction, Lady Macbeth acted like a hunter, and she showed a greed face at once. When Macbeth was hesitating, she pushed Macbeth into a sinful chasm, and incited Macbeth into the unforgivable crime. Even more, she prayed for malevolence, badness, ruthlessness for her soul which only seizing the Crown purposefully and determinedly. When Lady Macbeth was inciting Macbeth, she said:

. . . I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out. . . (*Mac.* 1.7)

A woman like her was so cruel to her own child; furthermore, the relation between King Duncan and them was like the monarch and his subjects. And she happened to meet a person like Macbeth—who yearned for fame, profits and power so much, but without stability and could not control himself. When these two people combined together, and encountered a little temptation, the craftiness that they camouflaged ordinarily appeared! This situation was much more obvious with Lady Macbeth. She did not show an attitude that she was condemned by conscience at all when she was planning a scheme to murder King Duncan; she advanced the murder scheme with confidence... How could a woman be so vicious? More than that, her acting skill was even better. Lady Macbeth said to Duncan:

All our service
In every point twice done and then done double
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith

Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,

And the late dignities heap'd up to them,

We rest your hermits. (*Mac.* 1.6)

She was planning to kill Duncan, a show that she played a loyal courtier was truly remarkable! She lied to kind King Duncan, who regarded them as important and never feel ashamed. It should be a real ugly face of humanity under a condition to put profit above conscience! Lady Macbeth felt free from all inhibitions to commit a murder regardless the old comradeship. How cold-blood and cruel she was! People constructed a society, and the profits among the social relationship made people to do something by hook just for their own existence and development. For example, Lady Macbeth slipped the crime of the couple in the end of the play! The writer, Shakespeare, said: "Lady Macbeth's maid found she had somnambulism, when she sleepwalking, she always rubbed and washed her hands and felt shivering and terrible to declare what happened to King Duncan." Maybe we can explain in this way: because she killed King Duncan she caused a guilty feeling, and she could not sleep at nights, and felt anxiety, nervousness and fear. The state of mind recounted that she was condemned by her conscience so much. But think deeper, was that a true? It did not match the behavior

when she was planning to murder King Duncan!

Under Shakespeare's description, she was a person with sinister and cruel character! Since she used a sinister trick to obtain the purpose and let the couple to have an affluent flourishing life and existed well; and no one could threaten their existence of the time. Then, she should be sit back and relax! Why did she condemn by her conscience? Obviously, it was a thought that the writer wanted to comfort the readers. Shakespeare tried to tell us: person like her or him, even she or he owned more fame, profits and power, as long as she or he grabbed by force, they would never feel at ease, they would suffer more than the victims.

We can listen to her brave and inspiring words:

... Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. . . (*Mac.* 1.5)

... Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. . . (*Mac.* 1.5)

Even she committed an act of violence; she could still say that calm and composed:

My hands are of your colour; but I shame

To wear a heart so white. (*Mac.* 2.2)

Therefore, a vivid image of a “witch” was full of life. However, a “witch” would say unexpectedly:

Nought’s had, all’s spent,

Where our desire is got without content:

‘Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy. (*Mac.* 3.2)

Although, there was infinite sadness at her heart.

Naturally, there was the scene of Lady Macbeth “sleepwalking.” At this moment, the reason that Lady Macbeth continuously rubbed her hands was try to wash out the murder sin in her mind. But the “witch” was trapped by her own “witchcraft.” The result of Lady Macbeth was an inevitable effect.

Shakespeare created such an evil lady conscientiously, but he dropped a hint indistinctly that Lady Macbeth still owned conscience. It was rare for Shakespeare to create a female image like this.

C. Ophelia of *Hamlet*

Hamlet, it is an eternity tragedy. When we talked about *Hamlet*, it always makes people to associate with “To be, or not to be: that is the question” . . . (*Ham.* 3.1)

However, when we pay attention to the destiny of the Prince of Denmark, let us

see the misfortune of Ophelia.

Ophelia, the naïve lovely girl did not show up too much in the whole story. It is just that we do not know the name of “Ophelia”, on the other hand, we know it well. For example, we could not find the owner of the name, “Ophelia”, but the name mentioned by other people all the time, and the name always curled up in our head. Hence, did Ophelia exist or not, it was truly effect the development of the whole story.

Hamlet loved Ophelia very much; otherwise, he could not write an exaggerative poem like that when he pretended he was insane:

Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love. (*Ham.* 2.2)

In this poem, the terms of wild enthusiasm and excitement that he used also fit in with Hamlet’s thinking and appearance in “madness.” We can realize that Ophelia’s life was good or bad, happy or unhappy effected Hamlet closely. Only the thing that we feel sad was maybe there was “relationship” existed between Hamlet and Ophelia, but it was not as important as “vengeance,” which was the remote cause of a misfortune of Ophelia and this tragedy.

We can know the attitude of Ophelia to her father and her brother was respectful,

even if it was a blind obedience from the response of Ophelia to her father, Polonius. (Such as Ophelia told her father about the vow that Hamlet told to her, but her father thought there must be another ulterior motives behind the vow. And on the basis of protecting his daughter, he strictly forbade her to see Hamlet.) To face a so strict speech from her father, the response of Ophelia was, "I shall obey, my lord (*Ham.* 1.3)." Ophelia loved Hamlet, at least, Hamlet; the handsome Prince must occupied an important position in her heart. But we did not expect that Ophelia's response was not defend or retort about the strong and criticized speech of her father and her brother, she just took it all and obeyed. We can never accept that from a modern point of view of women, even if there is someone opposes, and even if you are not so sure about your lover's thoughts; you will be the active one to close to him, to understand him actively; even more, you will chase him instead of accepting the arrangements lying down that other people arranged for you. We believe that there must be a huge pressure in Ophelia's mind. From the beginning of Hamlet courting, her father and her brothers reject him. Hamlet's madness (Ophelia did not know it was a trick of Hamlet) and to the final that her dearest father was killed by her lover. Everything that alarmed, had no choice, frightened, miserable, fortune or misfortune, the sweet girl accepted quietly without complaint, curses, she did not even

think about to try to resist. How can we ask a girl like her, so passive and suffered a wrong and she hid feelings behind her heart would not collapse? The pressure of spirit is too huge to imagine. It made an angel who was pure and did nothing to harm people went mad and drowned and made her life rest with such a miserable ending. It seems that, "repress" and "accept" was the only thing that a girl can do, and no exception at all times and in all countries. And it is doubtless, that is prejudice, oppression and unfair. Of course, maybe submissive and kindhearted was one of Ophelia's characters, and maybe it was a kind of make of the society to women at that time.

In a story mixed with scheme and hatred, the existence of Ophelia was a clear stream surely. And her love and kindness always brought us comforting and hope. The death of the girl, maybe it was not fair to her, but we believe that it was the best arrangement and confession of Shakespeare to all of the characters and the story from the whole story! Ophelia's pure love was not worth mentioning between Hamlet's vengeance and feeling of gratitude and resentment, and then it was only the timing to be sacrificed. Actually, after Hamlet killed Ophelia's father by mistake, she had no relatives and she was suffered in a high pressure of melancholy. If we can say in a scene of tragedy that Claudius' death was a retribution for his sin, then, Ophelia's death was so

innocent since it was her destiny, Shakespeare reflected the miserable experience of the similar women of a specified time at the same time.

D. Desdemona of *Othello*

Since the famous tragedy—*Othello* was presented to the public, we did not know how many people's hearts were shocked by the tragedy that the conflict between the leading role, Othello and Iago led to the result of killing his wife and himself. And the tragedy made so many kind people of many countries touched and cried. When people hated how Iago vicious and evil he was, and felt sad for Othello was lied, people sympathized with Desdemona's innocent death.

How brave Desdemona was when she was chasing for the love with Othello! She appealed her affection to Othello publicly in front of the courtiers, she said:

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
 My downright violence and storm of fortunes
 May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued
 Even to the very quality of my lord:
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
 And to his honour and his valiant parts
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate. . . (*Oth.* 1.3)

Desdemona threw the shy of a young girl away, and she deserted the prejudice of races and common customs; and she was confident and honest and passionate to express clearly in front of everyone and actively to bring up an idea that she wanted to war with her husband, and to share joys and sorrows with her husband in Cyprus. All of these

showed the brave behaviors and noble character of Desdemona as a new woman of the Capitalist Class.

Desdemona was brave because of love; she was full of blind love; after she got married; she became a sweet and kind dutiful wife and a loving mother and obeyed her husband's volition because she could not break away from the constraint of feudal moral ethics. Despite Othello condemned her and insulted her without a reason, even he hit her rudely in front of the Emissary of Venice, and she still grinned and bore it, and yielded all the time. When he condemned her as a "strumpet (*Oth.* 4.2)", she only imputed it to "It is my wretched (*Oth.* 4.2)", and she always said:

. . . my love doth so approve him,
that even his stubbornness, his cheques, his frowns—
Prithee, unpin me —have grace and favour in them. (*Oth.* 4.3)

But her tolerance did not bring her for the love of her husband; on the contrary, it caused the deeper doubt of her husband, even that caused she was killed at last.

And Desdemona, an innocent and pure girl, became a sacrifice in a keen conflict between Othello and Iago.

King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet and *Othello* are called the Four Great Tragedies of Shakespeare; the four women were just only a silhouette of the female characters in Shakespeare writing.

E. Other Plays

Besides the Four Great Tragedies, the deepness of sadness of Shakespeare's women was deeper and deeper in tragedies, and the laughter was getting more and more cheerful in comedies. In the age to stress the traditional feudal breath of a treatment of

females as inferior to males, Shakespeare did not describe the faithful wives and did not face the doubt of their husbands were having an affair with sad pitiful tears but with a steady and rational attitude to expound the true meaning of a perfect relationship between husband and wife to her husband.

The usage of the metaphor “a water drop” contrasted to “sea” was the most famous scene in the play of *The Comedy of Errors*: Two brothers were both named Antipholus, and twins both named Dromio took two parts because of a ship accident, and they were separated into two different cities. Two Antipholus, one lived in with a servant named Dromio and got married and start a career in Ephesus; one stayed in Syracuse, he came to Ephesus for business, and made a crowd of jokes. Ephesus Antipholus’ wife, Adriana was confused by the twin, she thought her husband did not love her any more, she said:

That thou art thus estranged from thyself?

Thyself I call it, being strange to me,

That, undividable, incorporate,

Am better than thy dear self’s better part.

Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!

From now, my love, as easy mayest thou fall

A drop of water in the breaking gulf,

And take unmingled that same drop again,

Without addition or diminishing,

As take from me thyself and not me too. (*Err.* 2.2)

Later in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, faced her lover, Proteus who vowed but did not come back from a travel to a distant place. Julia with anxiety was rather to pretend as a man to go for heating the burning out love than stayed at home and tore all day.

Although the ending stopped with a comic ending, but facing the dying love vow, Julia's talks revealed a deep sorrow:

Behold her that gave aim to all the oaths,

And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heard.

How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!

O Perteus, let this habit make thee blush!

Be thou ashamed that I have took upon me

Such an immodest raiment, if shame live

In a disguise of love:

It is the lesser blot, modesty, finds,

Women to change their shapes than men their minds. (*TGV* 5.4)

In *Love's Labours Lost*, there were four pretty girls who came from France and laughing and talking happily and made several men that "vowed" to suffer from their mistakes. However, Ferdinand, King of Navarre forced his courtiers to make a vow to be an ascetic for three years, then the bird that brought love came. There was a difference in this play was the ending, it did not end up with a happy ending:

Our wooing doth not end like an old play;

Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy

Might well have made our sport a comedy. (*LLL* 5.2)

These lively girls teased those men so badly and they gave them one year to improve their defects, and then they would measure the ending of this love game. That teased a lot of the traditional position of male came to first but the female came to second in a love play.

A clown, John Falstaff, was still a supporting role in *Henry IV*. But he became a leading role in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He thought he was amorous and tried to tease the married women in Windsor, however, he was mocked by the women. Sometimes he was stuffed in a laundry basket and thrown into the Times River; sometimes he was dressed up as an old lady and beaten cruelly by a jealous husband who

came to find the evidence of adultery. These smart and witty women laughed so loud ebullient and made the small town, Windsor vivid and colorful.

The new image of a woman to make people felt fresh was Portia, a character in *The Merchant of Venice*. She was going to inherit a big fortune, but she let her marriage be decided by three boxes. Whoever picked the one with her portrait, she would marry him. Shakespeare arranged three boxes to choose the husband in this play to reveal the sorrow of the women of the Feudal Age could not have the rights to decide their own marriage. When she was watching Bassanio, the one she crushed on to picked up the right box terribly and frighten, Portia and the spectators were released. *The Merchant of Venice* in an old translation title was "One Pound of Meat," that means Antonio a merchant of Venice who borrowed for his friend, Bassanio, from the Jew, Shylock. And if he could not pay the debt in a deadline, he had to let Shylock to cut one pound of meat from Antonio to balance. The climax of this play was Antonio's merchant marines were all destroyed and he could not pay the debt, then he was caught to the court. When the moment that the knife, which used to cut Antonio's flesh, was going to fall, everyone could not find a way to solve. Fortunately, Portia who dressed up like a man and solved the crisis with her witty wisdom.

They were separated by a ship accident, too. The twins in *Twelfth Night*, the sister of the twins, Viola who lived in a different city and dressed up like a man and named Cesario and loved the Duke Orsino, however, Orsino loved the Countess Olivia only she loved Viola who dressed up like a man. This wrong love had a perfect ending because the brother of the twins, Sebastian turned up. Nevertheless, the meaning of the sex switching was full of wit and humor, and that became a focus for play writing for the researchers who focus on the sex issues of future generations. Viola, in order to close to be the Duke she loved and dressed like a man and Olivia disregarded the restraint that a woman should have in that Age, she gave a ring to the one she loved by mistake initiatively—Viola/ Cesario. Both were so brave to chase for their love, and compared with Orsino who past love through his servant, which revealed a brave and remarkable spirit they had.

The Tempest, a romance he wrote in his later period, was very special. There were two female characters in this play, maybe it was a display of the writer's ideal woman image; one was pure innocent far away from the world, another was a spirit who could summon wind and rain. Even if their life was controlled by the wizard—Duke of Milan, Prospero from the beginning, but till the end, just as the characters got their own

life from the writer; they were free and flew to sky.

Specially, there was not much exceptions of the results of the female leading roles could survive in Shakespeare's plays. Lady Macbeth suicided, Desdemona was stabbed to death by Othello, Cordelia—the King Lear's daughter died in a prison, and Ophelia went mad and drowned... If we said the death was a period of tragedies, then, before this period, there would be no destiny of a female leading role as miserable as Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* (*Tit.*). And she was not even a leading role; she could only be a supporting role if we count by her shares. However, the revenge play could continue was all because of her "sacrifice".

Lavinia could be said as a sacrifice in this blood cruel revenge play: She was watched by her enemy at the start, and took as a price with her virginity to make reprisals to her father; then, her hands were chopped, and her tongue was cut to make her could not to tell the truth. Her husband was killed, Lavinia could not write nor speak, therefore, and the one she could only rely on was her father. However, when her father finished his plan to revenge, a gift for her to wash out the humiliation that she would face forever was her death:

. . . Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee;

And, with thy shame, thy father's sorrow die . . . (*Tit.* 5.3)

Thus, Lavinia, could not even to shout a voice was stabbed to death by her father.

No one knew if Lavinia “herself” wanted to live on in degradation in the world—her father did not ask her. But we all knew as clear as Shakespeare, Titus who thought the family honor came first would never ask. His will was his children's will, there were no exceptions. He could not see she was alive because as long as she lived for one day, Titus would remember the humiliation.

Romeo and Juliet, a famous play that belonged to the earlier stage writing, people were mourning for a young couple who died a tragic death—result of two families conflict. Coincidence had a different ending under the writer's arrangement, the rancor could be settled or both of them could be died together. These two families were finally shook hands and made it up, but they paid a big cost, too. There was no reason that Juliet had to die, maybe she could like Hero of *Much Ado About Nothing*, revived from death—but, there was no rule s for a ending of live or dead, the writer gave the right to the chink of time—once you made up for the missing link too late, then, all you could do was to hand it to destiny. Therefore, the mail that was “supposed” to be handed Romeo to did not delivered because of the epidemic; the Padre was “supposed” to arrived the

mausoleum that Juliet was going to be awake earlier than Romeo, but he fell several times and made the thing went wrong. Juliet would never live without Romeo, now she had to die then. Even if Romeo did not bring the knife with him, maybe she would bump herself against the walls to death.

“To die for love” was not only Juliet, but glamorous Egypt Queen, Cleopatra—from the beginning that all the spectators never thought that as a glamorous Queen like her was skittish and steered by the wind, and she would never to devote her life and died for Antony who lost his power! *Antony and Cleopatra* was the most “beautiful” one which took Roman history as background of Shakespeare. After Julius Caesar died, the three kings that occupied the world were: Marc Antony, Octavius, Caesar and Lepidus, the playwright specially revealed the conflict between the former two. And Antony in *Julius Caesar* once was eloquent in facing the crowd and so brave on the battlefield became a captive in a beautiful woman’s arms in *Antony and Cleopatra*. He did think about to escape, however, he could not refuse a beautiful woman. Therefore, we can see how Antony split up and fought in politics and individual affection from this play.

However, everyone would doubt about the dead scene that Shakespeare arranged

for Cleopatra; after all, she died because “beauty” out and out. Cleopatra did not follow Antony and died right away, on the contrary, she yielded obedience to Octavius. Caesar and sounded out his purposes; she imagined how Caesar would treat her, then she felt terrified:

. . . I will not wait pinion'd at your master's court;
 Nor once be chastised with the sober eye
 Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
 And show me to the shouting varletry
 Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
 Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
 Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies
 Blow me into abhorring! rather make
 My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
 And hang me up in chains! (*Ant.* 5.2)

The things that she wanted to keep were not only her abundant flesh, but also reputation—she would never allow her enemy to step on her. Therefore, she took the opportunity that Caesar's servant did not notice; she sent someone to send a poisonous

from Nile, and then, she put it on her chest and died.

The latest one of Shakespeare's four Roman Tragedies was *Coriolanus*: The leading role—Caius Marcius led troops to against Volscians and protect Rome, when he came back from a triumphant return and became a hero, it was very close for him to qualify for his mother, Volumnia's expectation on him—became a ruler of Rome City (2.1) Because of his own pride and the hinder from the Guards with schemes, Marcius lost not only the high position that he almost got, and he was exiled at the same time. As a result, he went and sought help from the enemy, and attacked all the way back to his motherland. Volumnia kneeled down and tears stopped this war, meanwhile, she also lost the only hope to live in the world. Her heroic son became a corpse with treason in the end. For this reason, the only one female leading role of a tragedy was survived, although she was alive, but she lived like dead.

Every female character that Shakespeare created in his plays was with a colorful sketch. Although, the time did not stand on a same moral ethics as them and the constraints of the dogmas stumbled them tightly; eventually, they stood a woman's position and spoke out the thoughts for women through a female voice/female dress up on the stage (the theater of the Age of Shakespeare only allowed men to be on the stage;

hence the female roles were portrayed by males.)

V. *About Shakespeare's Women*

Conceived and arranged by Libby Appel and Michael Flachman, all of the play's text is taken directly from the works of William Shakespeare. Eleven actors make up the ensemble: six women and five men. (This number could easily vary.) Two main characters, a Male Narrator and a Female Narrator, contend with each other as they tell the story of this long night's party. These two Narrators play introductory, guiding, and observing roles in most of the scenes, but they will each take a significant role in two of the scenes.

The action of the play takes place in a foyer or main lobby outside an elegant ballroom. A champagne supper and formal dance are taking place offstage. The party begins early in the evening, and the play progresses from the beginning stages of the festivities, to the late hours of the night when people are tired and nerves are raw, and finally to the clear, bright light of morning as the dance ends and everyone goes home.

An evening of laughter, love and heartache with the great women of Shakespeare's plays. In this performance of rollicking comedy and searing drama, the women stand center stage: Ophelia, Juliet, Beatrice, Viola, Rosalind, Cleopatra, Portia, Kate, Lady Macbeth and others. Frailty, thy name is woman? Hardly. Laugh and cry with

Shakespeare's women in their "infinite variety."

A. Playwrights of Shakespeare's Women

1. Libby Appel

Libby Appel was named the Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in November 1995, after serving as the Artistic Director of the Indiana Repertory theatre for four years. Prior to her tenure at IRT, Libby spent three years as one of the nation's most sought-after freelance directors. She has directed more than 50 plays at more than 20 professional theatre companies. she has served as Dean and Artistic Director at the School of Thearte at the California Institute of the Arts, and has also held teaching positions at California State University-Long Beach and at the Goodman Theatre and School of Drama. Her widely-known actor training techniques are outlined in her book, *Mast Characterization: An Acting Process*, and a video she created and produced, *Inter/Face: The Actor and the Mask*. She is the co-author, with Michael Flachmann, of two plays, *Shakespeare's Women* and *Shakespeare's Lovers*. Libby received her B.A. from the University of Michigan, where she was Phi Beta Kappa, and her M.A. from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Her directing credits from the Oregon Shakespeare

Theatre Festival include: *King Lear*, *The Magic Fire* (World Premiere, 1997), *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Breaking the Silence*, *Enrico IV* (The Emperor), and *The Seagull*. At the Indiana Reportory Theatre, she directed *The Tempest*, *Angel Street*, *Yerma*, *Miss Ever's Boys*, *Hamlet*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Holiday Memoirs*, and *Broadway Bound*. Other theatres where she has directed include: Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Syracuse Stage, New Mexico Repertory, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, San Jose Repertory, and the Utah, Colorado, and Kern Shakespeare Festivals (Appel "Libby Appel")

2. Michael Flachmann

Michael Flachmann, Professor of English and Director of University Honors Programs at California State University, Bakersfield, earned his B.A. at the University of the South, his M.A. at the University of Virginia, and his doctorate at the University of Chicago. He has written eight books—most recently *Beware the Cat: The First English Novel* (Huntington Library Press), *The Image of Idleness: England's First Epistolary Novel*, *Shakespeare's Lovers*, *Shakespeare's Women*, *Teaching Excellence*, and *The Prose*

Reader: *Essays for Thinking, Reading and Writing* (with his wife, Kim Flachmann, now in its fifth edition) —and over eighty articles in such journals as *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Studies in English Literature*, *English Literary Renaissance*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, *Studies in Philology*, and others. He has also worked for many years in professional theatre, serving as dramaturg for over sixty Shakespearean productions at such prominent west-coast theatres as the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the La Jolla Playhouse, California Institute of the Arts, and the Utah Shakespearean Festival (where he has been company dramaturg since 1986). In 1993 he was selected Outstanding Professor for the entire twenty-campus California State University System, in 1995 he was named "U.S. Professor of the Year" by the Carnegie Foundation in Washington, D.C., and in 1999 he was given a \$20,000 Wang Family Excellence Award for outstanding undergraduate teaching in the CSU. Flachmann's avocations include Judo, a sport in which he is a fourth degree black belt, and tennis (Flachmann "Michael Flachmann").

B. Commentary

1. Act I: Frailty, Thy Name is Woman

Act I of *Shakespeare's Women* begins as the play's two Narrators, a man and a

woman, meet each other. He tries unsuccessfully to pick her up, and she rejects him scornfully. After her abrupt exit, the stage is filled with a succession of men from different plays who have had unhappy relationships with women: Benedick bemoans his treatment by Beatrice; Othello indicts Desdemona; Egeus complains about his daughter, Hermia; Hamlet rails against his mother; and Proteus laments his love for Julia. Next, several couples enter from the ballroom; in each pair of lovers, the man receives disdainful treatment from the woman: Hero and Don Pedro, Margaret and Balthasar, Ursula and Antonio, and Beatrice and Benedick. Outraged by these demonstrations of female cruelty, the Male Narrator offers to show the Female Narrator a number of longer scenes from Shakespeare's plays to prove his contention that women are indeed characterized by frailty, anger, and infidelity (Appel 143).

The first scene presented by the Male Narrator is taken from (1.2) of *King Lear*, in which the aged king divides his lands and revenues among his three grown daughters. Lear has ruled Britain for all of his adult life and has become accustomed to the pomp and ceremony that accompany his high position. He had decided, therefore, to abdicate the throne in a formal, elaborate courtly ceremony during which each of his three daughters must publicly proclaim her love for him. He will then divide the kingdom among the three

accordingly as a reward for their love. As this scene begins, Cordelia's two older sisters, Goneril and Regan, have each finished long and hypocritical speeches in praise of their father. When Lear turns to Cordelia, his shy and soft-spoken youngest daughter, she is unable (or unwilling) to provide the same courtly flattery offered by her sisters. As a result, Lear disowns her in a fit of anger and embarrassment. Although the Male Narrator clearly sees Cordelia's action as a negative example of female disobedience, this scene begins Shakespeare's *Women* on an ironic note: Cordelia, like many of the women presented in act I of this play, has an inner strength and honesty that make her much more admirable than culpable (143).

The Male Narrator next introduces a scene from *Hamlet* (3.4) involving Hamlet and his mother, Gertrude. At this point in the play, Hamlet knows that his father has been murdered by Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, who subsequently married Gertrude only a brief time after the death of her first husband. Bitter and angry, the young man confronts his mother with her "incestuous" behavior, rails against the indecent speed of her remarriage, and compares Claudius unfavorably with Gertrude's former husband. Although much fascinating scholarly debate has been devoted to Gertrude's relationship with Claudius and to Hamlet's intense reaction to her remarriage, at least one conclusion is clear: Both

Hamlet and the Male Narrator find Gertrude's actions highly reprehensible (143).

This scene pitting mother against son dovetails into the next, from *Measure for Measure* (3.1), in which a young man and his sister argue over a matter of life or death. Claudio has been convicted of "fornication" (impregnating his fiancée prior to their marriage), which is a crime punishable by death in Vienna. Attempting to save him, his sister, a chaste young woman named Isabella who is about to become a nun, pleads with Angelo, the Lord Deputy, who alone has the power to reduce Claudio's sentence. In a grotesque turn of events, Angelo propositions Isabella and offers the woman her brother's freedom in return for her virginity. In this scene, Isabella explains Angelo's obscene proposal to Claudio and recoils violently at her brother's request that she go through with the bargain in order to save his life. "Is't not a kind of incest," she asks, "to take life / From thine own sister's shame?" Because of her religious beliefs, Isabella reasons that committing such a sin on earth would condemn her to everlasting death in hell (144-45).

Moving from this seemingly cold and insensitive young woman, the Male Narrator next presents a scene from the delightful *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1), which chronicles the unrequited love of Helena for Demetrius. At the start of this comedy, four young Athenians set out for the woods in order to escape the tyranny of life in the city:

Hermia, in love with Lysander; Lysander, who loves Hermia; Demetrius, who also loves Hermia; and Helena, who loves Demetrius. In this scene, Demetrius has followed Hermia and Lysander into the woods, while Helena has followed Demetrius. Although he scorns her, Helena still dotes on Demetrius and follows him doggedly. Her steadfast devotion to her man becomes an ironic compliment to her sex despite the Male Narrator's obvious view of her as a silly, fawning woman (145).

Moving from one female type to another, we next meet the famous Kate from *The Taming of the Shrew* (2.1). She is one of two daughters of Baptista Minola, a wealthy landowner in Padua. Bianca, the youngest, adopts a sweet, docile disposition, while Kate, her elder sister, is infamous for her angry, shrewish behavior. The father resolves not to marry off the younger till a husband can be found for Kate—a prospect that confounds Bianca's many suitors till they locate a rather brash fellow, Petruchio, who is initially interested in wooing Kate because of her father's money. In this classic scene, Kate and Petruchio confront each other for the first time, each alternating between extremes of witty wordplay, physical violence, genuine sensual attraction, and raw sexual energy. In Kate, as in other women presented so far by the Male Narrator, the initial appearance gives way to a far different reality beneath: Her reputed shrewishness turns to intellectual

curiosity, excitement, and then emotional involvement in the wake of Petruchio's unconventional behavior (145).

Following Kate and Petruchio onstage are two interesting characters from *The Merchant of Venice* (1.2)—Portia, a wealthy young woman, and Nerissa, her witty maid. They are lamenting a provision in Portia's father's will that forbids her daughter from marrying unless one of her suitors chooses correctly from among three similar caskets: one of gold, another of silver, and a third of lead. In this fast-moving, humorous scene, Nerissa names her mistress' various suitors, and Portia describes each one in scornful, comic detail. Under the facade of this venial gossip, however, lurks a darker, less Christian side of Portia that seems to surface later in her persecution of the Jewish moneylender, Shylock. In this scene, though, the Male Narrator is content simply to present Portia as a giddy, crafty female “curbed by the will of a dead father.” (145-46)

After a brief narrative bridge, we shift to another comic scene—this one from Shakespeare's beloved *Twelfth Night* (1.5)—in which we meet Viola, a bright, attractive young woman who has been shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria. Forced by necessity to seek her fortune in this strange land, she disguises herself as a boy and joins the service of the wealthy Duke Orsino. Viola soon falls secretly in love with her new master, then finds

herself in the uncomfortable position of being sent as a love emissary between Orsino and the Lady Olivia. In this scene, Viola (still in disguise) travels to Olivia's mansion, where she meets Malvolio, Olivia's pompous steward, and Maria, her maid. Orsino's declaration of love is soon rejected by Olivia, who seems to take more of an interest in Viola's masculine appearance than she did in the Duke's proposal. In a play so preoccupied with role reversals and sexual identity, Olivia's attraction to Viola brings a different aspect of femininity to *Shakespeare's Women*, and appears to support the Male Narrator's claim that men are habitually abused by women (146).

This scene from *Twelfth Night* is followed immediately by Sonnet 61, a vivid description of jealousy in love, which is delivered by the Male Narrator out of his frustration with the women he has encountered this evening. Acting the role of Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* (3.2), the Male Narrator chooses his wife, Hermione, as the target of his rage and accuses her of two heinous crimes: adultery and conspiracy to murder her husband. Surrounded by her male accusers, Hermione offers a long and impassioned defense of her innocence. Her trial, in effect, serves as an emblem of the extent to which women have been on trial during the entire first act of *Shakespeare's Women*. Like her female counterparts in other plays, she acquits herself well of the charges against her.

Most of the examples of culpable females set forth by the Male Narrator, in fact, have proved themselves to be honorable and virtuous by their behavior in these scenes. The Male Narrator's final line, "Frailty, thy name is woman," is thus an ironic coda to the first act of this play and suggests that female weakness, like beauty, often exists principally in the mind of the beholder (146-47).

2. Act II: Her Infinite Variety

Act II of *Shakespeare's Women* begins in the early hours of the morning. The party has ended, though the guests still remain—each one looking more tired and disheveled than the next. As the Male Narrator staggers onstage, he is met by a litany of voices defending women. The Female Narrator comes onstage and declares, "Now is my turn to speak." Urged on by the chorus of females, she promises to present her view of Shakespeare's women that illustrates their "infinite variety." (147)

The first scene she introduces, taken from *As You Like It* (3.2), brings onstage Rosalind, one of Shakespeare's most famous heroines. Like Viola, whom we met earlier, Rosalind is masquerading as a boy for her safety. Alone in the Forest of Arden with Orlando, a man she secretly fancies, Rosalind offers to remedy his love-sick behavior by

tutoring him about love. "I would cure you," she says, "if you would but call me 'Rosalind' and come every day ... to woo me." The Female Narrator obviously admires Rosalind's strength of purpose and skill in deceiving Orlando, whom the heroine later marries. (147)

We next meet Helena, from *All's Well That Ends Well*, who appears in two successive scenes from that play. In the first (1.1), she defends herself admirably against Parolles, a rakish young man who attempts to make her give up her old-fashioned notion of virginity. Virgins, he argues, can never bring forth girl children (whom he calls "future virgins"); they are, therefore, "enemies" to virginity because they will never give birth to it. The following scene (2.5) brings together Helena and Bertram, a noble young gentleman who has been forced to marry her against his will. In this strained meeting between the two, Bertram, who is angry and disdainful, tells the obedient Helena that he must leave her immediately (147).

Helena's example of steadfast devotion gives way to a more fragile and unstable image of female virtue as we encounter Ophelia in two scenes from *Hamlet*. In (2.1), she explains Hamlet's odd behavior to Polonius, her overbearing, meddling father, who misinterprets the prince's actions as love-madness. In (3.1), we see this irrational behavior

in action as Hamlet, alone with Ophelia, accuses her unjustly of representing all the major sins and follies womankind has been charged with over the centuries. Ophelia still senses that Hamlet loves her, however, and she prays aloud for the return of his sanity. After Hamlet's angry exit, Ophelia bemoans in soliloquy the loss of her love and the degeneration of Hamlet's mind (147-48).

Following Ophelia's departure, Portia appears and delivers her famous "quality of mercy" speech from *The Merchant of Venice* (4.1), in which she urges Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, to release the merchant Antonio from repaying his "bond" of a pound of flesh. Portia's depiction of feminine strength and Christian mercy shifts in the next scene to the formidable presence of Lady Macbeth, a woman of indomitable courage. In this scene from the beginning of the play (1.7), Lady Macbeth encourages her husband to kill Duncan, the King of Scotland, who is a guest in their castle. Since Macbeth is next in line to the throne, Duncan's death will bring him the crown and untold wealth. The shrewd and calculating manner in which Lady Macbeth manipulates her husband offers an intriguing commentary on male-female sexual inversion in this play, the force of prophecy, and the power of evil in life (148).

A poignant song from *Twelfth Night*, "O Mistress Mine," leads us from the

sweetness and brevity of love into the bitter unhappiness of a complex, heartrending scene from *Richard III* (4.4). As the evening has progressed into the early morning hours, the sense of despair has deepened as a result of the misunderstandings between men and women at the party. Three noble women mourn the sorrows of death: Queen Elizabeth, wife to King Edward IV and mother to Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York (both murdered by Richard III); Margaret, widow of King Henry VI, now a pitiful hag who speaks horrible prophecies; and the Duchess of York, mother of Edward IV, Clarence, and Gloucester (who later becomes Richard III). In this scene, the three women grieve through "keening": a stately lamentation for the dead delivered in loud, wailing voices. As the mourning continues, in quieter, more hushed tones, the Queen from *Richard II* appears with her Lady-in-Waiting (3.4), and the two of them discuss her sorrow over the impending deposition of her husband, the king, by the usurper Bolingbroke (148-49).

The next woman presented by the Female Narrator is Desdemona, from the tragedy *Othello*, who sinks into confusion and profound despair in two successive scenes from that play. In the first (4.2), she asks the treacherous Iago for help in regaining the favor of her husband, Othello, who incorrectly believes his wife has been unfaithful to

him. The second, (4.3), introduces Emilia, Desdemona's faithful servant and confidant, whose worldly, matter-of-fact attitude toward sex and marriage contrasts sharply with Desdemona's naive innocence and trusting spirit. In this second scene, Emilia helps her mistress prepare herself physically for bed and emotionally for the return of her jealous husband (149).

The sad strains of Desdemona's "Willow" song and the young woman's desperate plight seem suddenly to invigorate the Female Narrator. Just as the Male Narrator took on the role of Leontes at the end of the first act of Shakespeare's *Women*, now the Female Narrator, in the climactic scene of this play, becomes the vibrant and high-spirited Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who holds every man at the party in her power. This classic scene from *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.5) pits the passionate "serpent of the Nile" against a lowly and nervous Roman messenger who must bring her news of Antony's marriage to Octavia, Caesar's sister. Enraged by his report, Cleopatra threatens to have the trembling messenger "whipped with wire and stewed in brine, / Smarting in ling'ring pickle" for bringing such a loathsome message. "Though it be honest," she finally says defiantly, "it is never good / To bring bad news." (149)

Immediately following this scene is another in which Cleopatra is described by

three Romans—Maecenas, Enobarbus, and Agrippa—in the most sensual, adoring terms possible (2.2). The central speech by Enobarbus, well known to all lovers of Shakespeare, begins with an account of her barge, which “Burnt on the water ... like a burnished throne,” and ends with an admiring look at the lady herself: “Other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies.” In her own way, Cleopatra embodies all the various vices and virtues, triumphs and tragedies of the entire range of females we have met in Shakespeare’s *Women*. She is womanhood itself: “Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety.” (149)

The Female Narrator’s defense of women has reached an important climax in her portrayal of Cleopatra, and all that remains in *Shakespeare’s Women* is to bring together the men and women of the play into some kind of joyful resolution. This is accomplished in the last two scenes presented by the actors, which bring union and harmony out of the discord between the sexes. After Sonnet 130, which urges honest, unembellished praise of womankind, we are introduced to Shakespeare’s most famous lovers, Romeo and Juliet. In this scene from early in the play (2.2), Romeo, having just met Juliet at a masked ball given by her family, courageously climbs over her garden wall and speaks to her as she gazes out her balcony window. The lines that follow present some of the purest, most

beautiful poetry ever written. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the love (and death) of these two young people ends the feud between their families and brings hope and reconciliation to their world. Similarly, in *Shakespeare's Women*, the positive image of these two famous lovers helps to rejoin the warring male and female factions in the play (150).

The final scene in *Shakespeare's Women*, which ends appropriately as it began, is taken from *King Lear* (4.7), when Cordelia is reunited with her aged father. Since her rejection in act I of that play, Cordelia has been to France and returned with an army to defend her father's claim to the throne. During that time, Lear has been cruelly turned away by Goneril and Regan and forced to wander naked in the howling storm.

Accompanied only by a trusted servant (Kent), a fool, and a madman, Lear comes to terms with his own humanity and mortality as he fights the elements. In this scene, Lear has been taken to safety, and he has slept soundly for the first time in many days. As he awakens, Cordelia greets him lovingly. In fact, their reconciliation and the exquisite lines of poetry that follow serve as an emblem that brings together all the different sets of lovers in *Shakespeare's Women*: Romeo and Juliet, Bertram and Helena, Benedick and Beatrice, and the Male Narrator and Female Narrator. At the conclusion of the play, the many characters join together in celebration of Shakespeare's women and their

regenerative effects upon all of mankind (150).

VI. *Shakespeare's Women* production at Lindenwood University 2003

A. The Style of the Entirety

The style of the entirety of a play and the originality of design are the designers wish to control the most and the most difficult to learn from it. The difficulty is there is no steady mode to provided to consult or to imitate. Accord to the same script, no two people will design an identical style at all.

In this show, we integrate many of Shakespeare's plays masterly, and represent it on the stage completely. It is quite a challenge in designing. In order to integrate the conceptions of every department, the designer uses communication and coordination to reach the common goal of the entire unity adequately and provide a solid to foundation. This representation can be counted as a successful design work.

Below, let us to realize the basic design ideas and conceptions separately to stage design, light design and costume design.

1. The Ideas of the Stage Design

Noble and elegant are the first impressions of Shakespeare's women, and also a basic idea of stage design. The designers endeavor to the best of their ability to create a

stage that qualifies actual reality. All things are represented actually in front of people. On the preliminary design chart, they already control the whole style and space usage to build a real scene of a picture. The whole stage mostly is black, and the furniture must be kept in minimum amount. Then, according to the contents of the play, to study of the time and the background of the story is done thoroughly. First, the designer endeavors to draw up a fluent movement line and acting zone into relationship with the roles' characters and the movement. Then, to produce a reasonable space set in support of the director to transmit the idea of the play to spectators.

The focal point of stage design is to provide space for the performers to act; space is the focus of design. Through different levels and solid platforms, steps and a balcony, the whole stage combines with irregular geometric figures and traditional Gothic arches that creates a more romantic and more elegant aura. The use the lines of marble and golden lines on the floor symbolize grace to set off the background of the times in the play. The set, then, exhibits a location of the play, and show the status of the characters' and the moods and intentions in the world of the play. (Appendix C.1.a.)

In the whole plot development, the playwrights combines masterly many parts of Shakespeare's plays, and takes the female parts as the main part of the whole play to

display exquisitely the mood of a female character's heart and the changes of heart and struggles. The whole play must work as a whole and not become fragmented because of its different parts. The set must represent this fluently. Always stay in a period of painting realistically. Then, different locations matched up by light design can make the character parts more colorful.

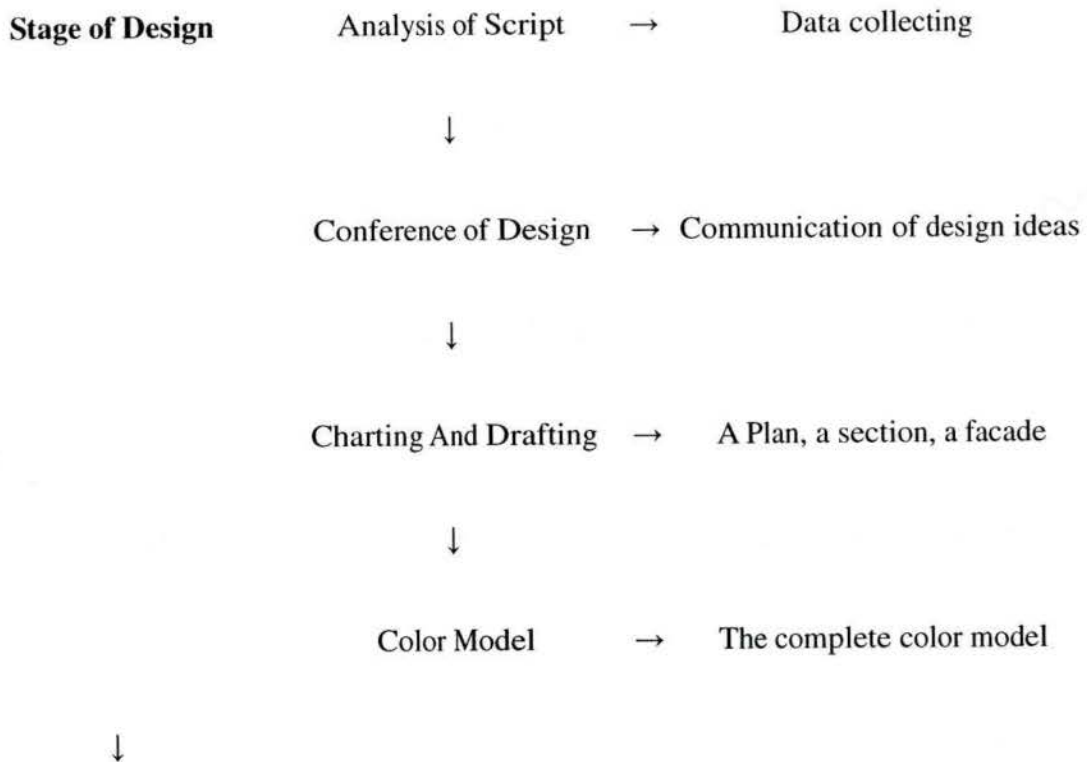
The whole space of the stage is set in a vast hotel lobby, so it is basically about the aura and foundation of the public place. The set integrates the whole space as a luxurious scene by steps, and uses black and golden lines to increase the vision effectiveness and give people a noble elegant feeling. In order to strengthen the noble elegant effectiveness, the choice was made to use black and grey marble lines and to collocate with other golden lines on floor to unify the whole stage with other features and create a more elegant and steady atmosphere. (Appendix C.1.c.)

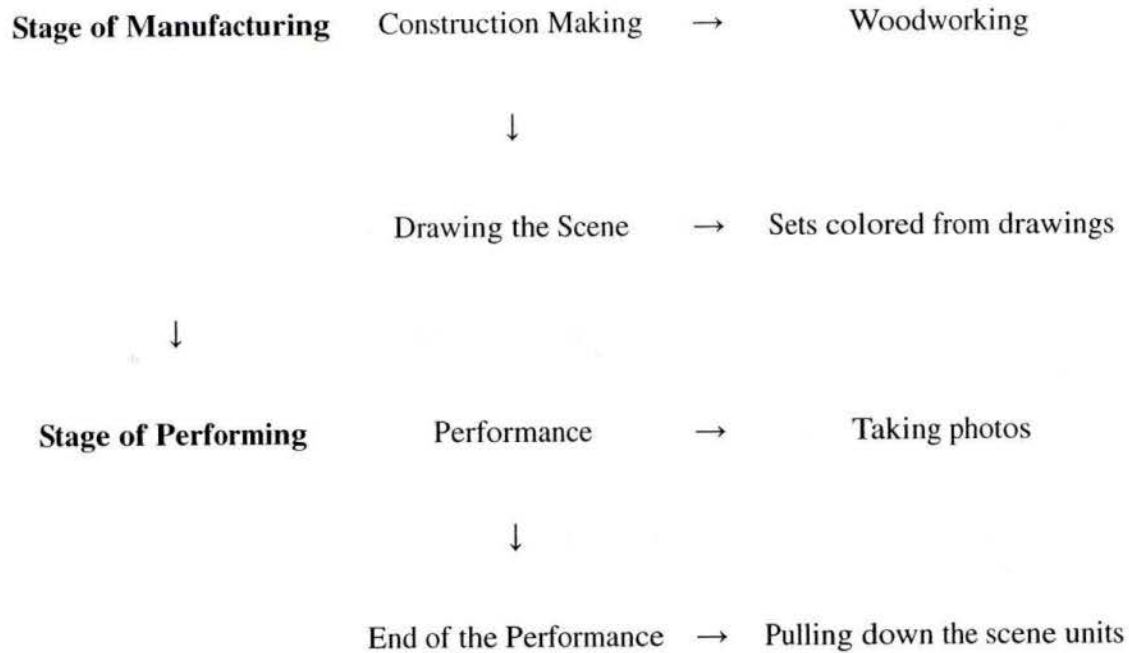
In the process of design, through long discussions with the thoughts of the director, and in consider action of the standpoint of actors and director's, ideas some changes and corrections on the design plan are made. How to design a stage that much closer to the ideal for actors and the director in a more effective space is the main reason for correction. Stage design is to design the stage developing a kind of visual effectiveness, which is

decided based on performance style of the play contents and the ideas of the director.

Comparatively, the director should own an imaginal thinking mode like designers to try to fathom the whole picture of stage, and to be familiar with languages from the designer, and collaborate with each other on the design. After communication with each other, they will begin to search many pictures of indoor scenes and all kinds of movies. The process is quite interesting, and the stage design will be more clear-cut. And then, finalize the plan to proceed to manufacture. (Appendix C.1.a.-d.)

The procedure of stage manufacturing is approximately as follows: (Appendix C.1.-3.)





2. The Idea of Lighting Design

Visibility is the most basic function of lighting the stage. We can barely realize clearly what we can not see; therefore, more stage visibility is a most basic element. The visibility of light is not only decided on strength of the light. There are more variable elements, such as the contrast, the size, the color and the switching that can affect the visibility.

We will not use a traditional environment to display this script in light design, but use a non-realistic way to display it. The light can be separated into several controllable areas, but there will no big changes of light. The designer wants the director to use the

abundant dramatic plots to color the scenes, since the costuming is mainly in black, and use heavy back light to let the actor to stand out from the back walls. The backlight is close to violet and the front light is close to rose, which will make actors more vivid.

There are some special area light for the front of the stage and for every step and the central area, which variously reveal the focus of sight for the main performance area. Basically, there will not be a big difference in colors, following the design direction to show the unity feeling of vision on the stage; to build a place with elegant and remarkable atmosphere.

A whole picture is constructed from the combination of stage design and light. The component of light can be shaped as an object. We can use soft edge to play on the entire stage, and make the stage light well mixed, and reveal every object evenly. Or we can let the light specialize in the middle area to reveal some certain actor's position on stage, or only to shine on one single object. The component of light has to disclose the actors, objects, and scenes with their unique importance and balance the picture as a unified vision. The concepts of lighting components including: Balance, imbalance, symmetrical, asymmetrical, simple, complex, abstract, geometry, and etc. Combined, light design and stage design skillful set off the marble lines of black and gray and the

golden lines more elegantly. The geometry of the steps becomes more intense under the assistance of the light design, which is the focus for the whole design. (Appendix D.1.)

3. The Idea of Costume Design

Besides good actors and a good director, a good play needs basically the costume.

Costume is the element that affects the actors and is received by the spectators most directly. The costume will affect the actions and limbs of the actors directly, and also transmits a hint of a role's character and peculiarities. Good costume designing is not necessarily reliant on cost, as long as you can obtain the central gist and the pith of the play to help the actors to bring out the roles, and help the spectators to understand the story. This can be called good costume designing.

In this play, the space-time is set in the present age. Therefore, there are not many troubles about historical textual research on costume designing. And the social class belongs to the high society. Because it is a formal dance occasion, all the actors are wearing formal clothes; the actors are wearing Western style clothes, and the actresses are wearing evening dresses to display an excellent and noble temperament.

The idea of costume the design is based on the formal clothes that fit in with time

and space setting, according to ages, positions and character to arrange clothing and accessories with colors and strips, then choose modern cut to avert some feeling of distance brought to the spectators by the performance, good costume design can make the audience concentrate on the story and feel they are in the story.

The actors act on the stage. Everyone's costume has to display balance within the vision to transmit a unifying element and idea; even to arrange it with the scenic colors of the stage. Color coordination is a very important link of the process of costume designing. Therefore, the clothing of actors is black suits mainly, and to show a stable, attractive, depressed, deep but solid emotion, and to transpire the noble and elegant breadth of the whole character. (Appendix E.1.) The part of the actresses is in accordance with culottes, dresses, and evening dresses with straps and a low chest line ...etc. To represent brightness, steadfastness, and dusk with high brightness but low color, there are more changes in costume cut to reveal the peculiarities of women. This play uses women as the main characters and makes their roles on the stage brighter and more vivid. (Appendix E.2.)

VII. Performance for *Shakespeare's Women*

A. Photo 01



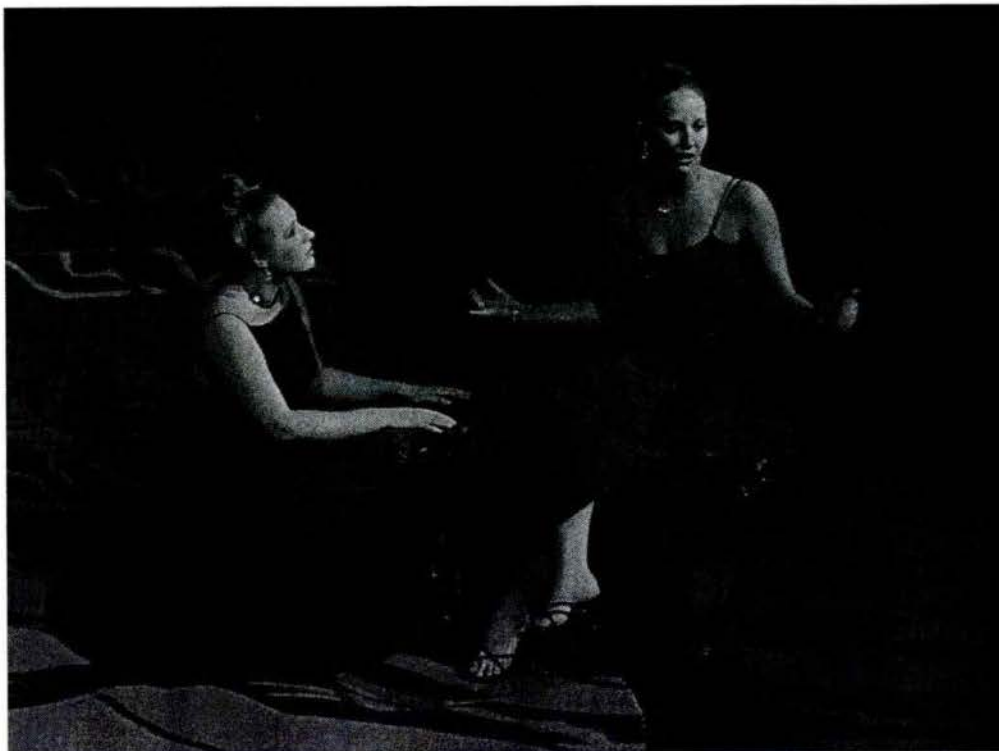
Photo 02



B. Photo 03



Photo 04



C. Photo 05



Photo 06



D. Photo 07

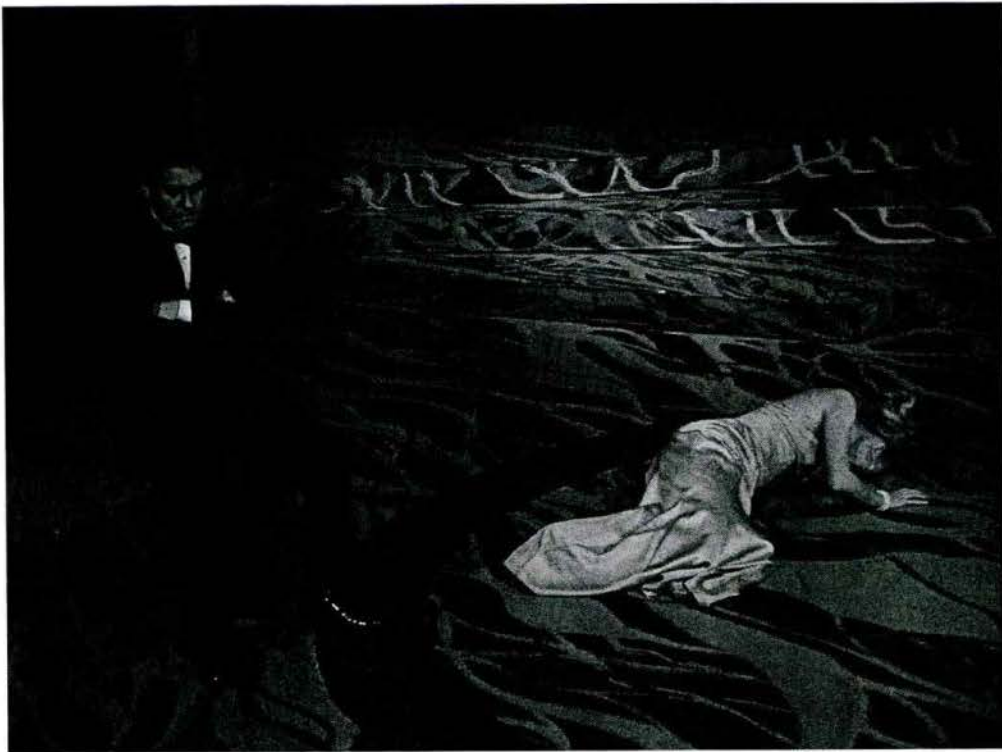
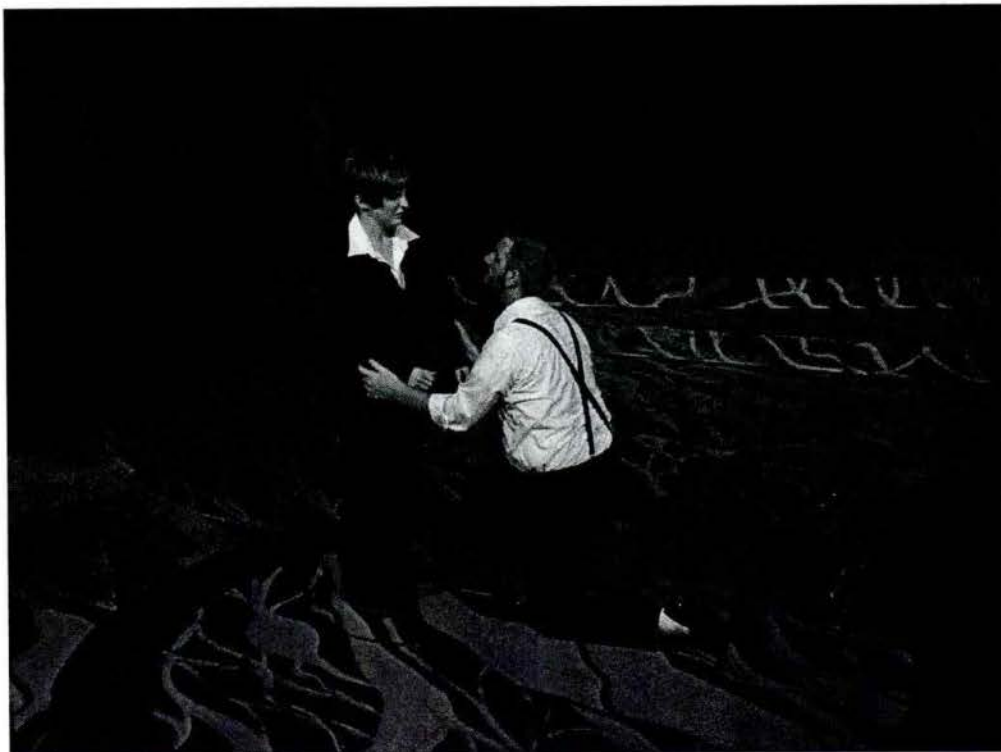


Photo 08



E. Photo 09

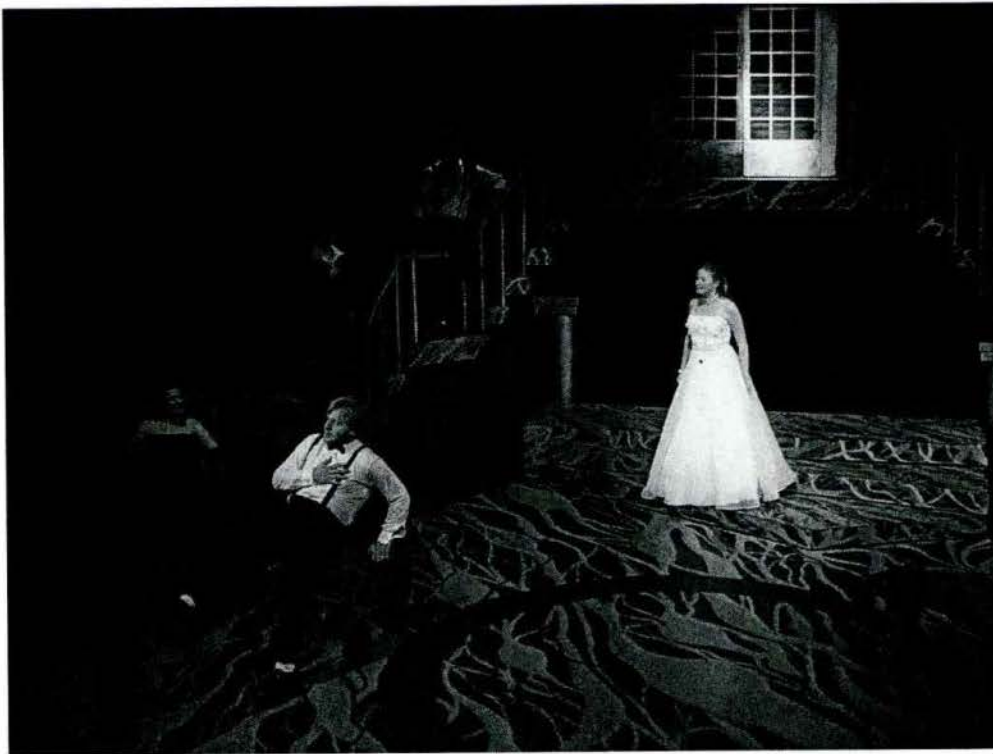


Photo 10



F. Photo 11

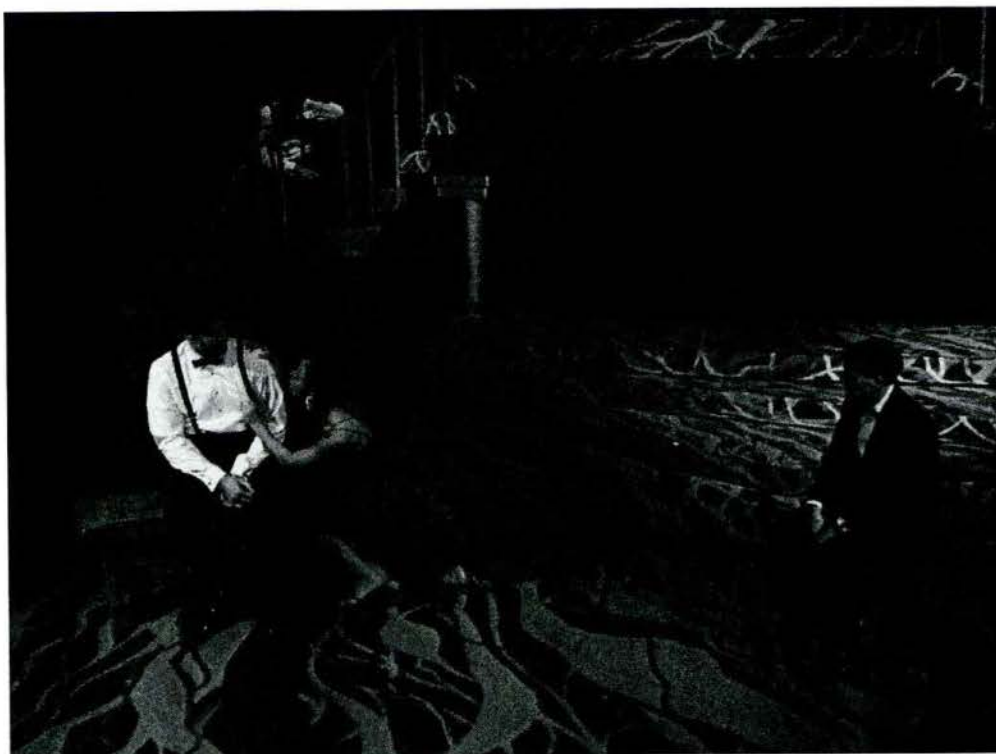
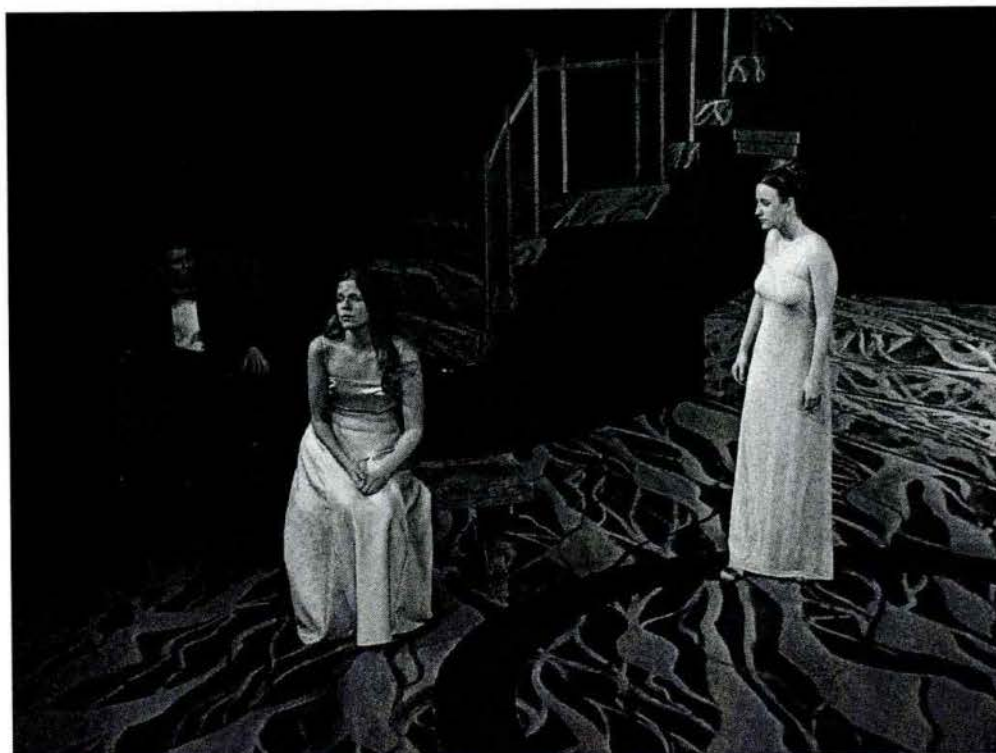


Photo 12



G. Photo 13



Photo 14



H. Photo 15



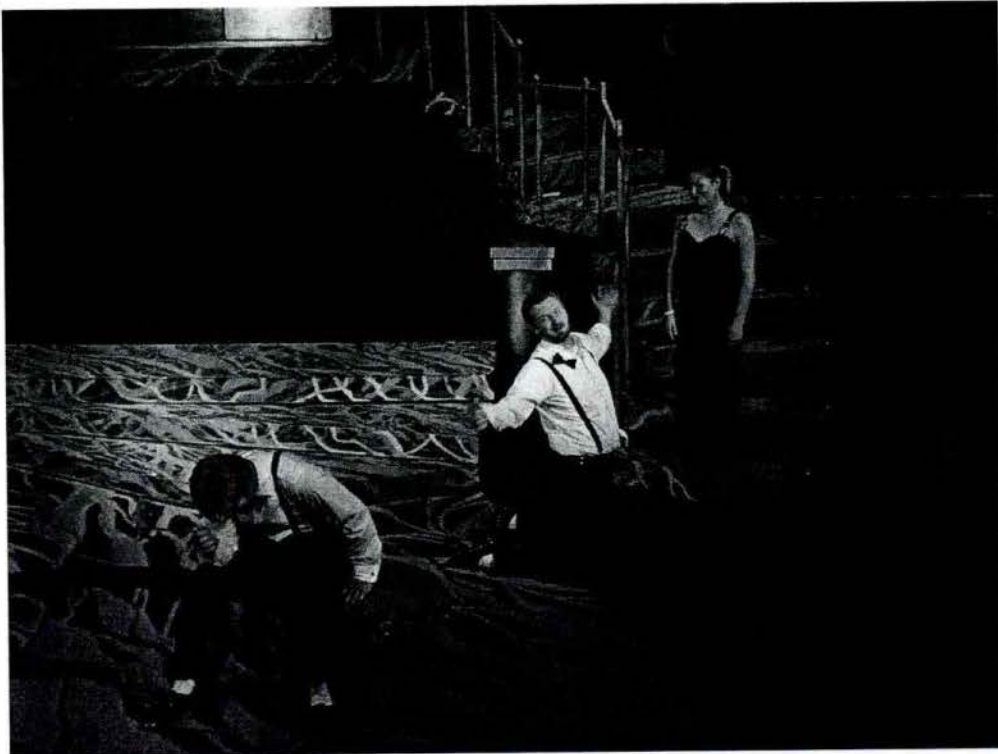
Photo 16



I. Photo 17



Photo 18



J. Photo 19



Photo 20



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Appendix A
Rehearsal Schedule

Shakespeare's Women
Rehearsal Schedule, 2003

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scene</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Actors</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Tuesday 2/25	Read-through Opening Scene	6:30 - 8:30 8:30 - 10:00	Cast Cast	Analysis/Pre-block
Wednesday 2/26				
(Melissa)	King Lear I.i Hamlet III.iv Midsummer II.i Measure III.i Taming	6:00 - 6:45 6:45 - 7:30 7:30 - 8:30 8:30 - 9:15 9:15 - 10:00	Anthony/Sara M. Sarah G/Simon Natashia/John Matt B/Stephanie Laura/Dustin	Analysis/Pre-block
(John)	As You Like All's Well Hamlet II/III Antony Macbeth	6:00 - 6:45 6:45 - 7:30 7:30 - 8:30 8:30 - 9:15 9:15 - 10:00	Amanda/Dustin John/Natashia Matt/Kim/Simon Deanna/Matt/Jamie Matt/Deanna	Script Analysis
Thursday 2/27				
(Melissa)	Merchant I.i Twelfth Night Sonnet 61 Winter's Tale III.ii	6:00 - 6:45 6:45 - 8:00 8:00 - 8:30 8:30 - 10:00	Heather/Jamie Matt B/Amanda/Kim/Brooke Dustin/Matt K Natashia/Matt K	Analysis/Pre-block

(John)	All's Well	6:00 - 6:45	John/Natashia/Simon	Script Analysis
	Antony	6:45 - 7:30	Anthony/John/Joe	
	Richard III	7:30 - 8:15	Stephanie/Heather/Laura	
	Othello	8:15 - 9:00	Amanda/Laura	
	Romeo & Juliet	9:00 - 10:00	Sara M/Joe	
Friday	2/28			
(John)	Opening Scene	6:00 - 6:45	All Women	Pre-block
	As You Like III.ii	6:45 - 8:00	Dustin/Amanda	
	All's Well I.i	8:00 - 8:45	John/Natashia	
	All's Well II.v	8:45 - 10:00	John/Natashia/Simon	
Sunday	3/2			
(Melissa)	Opening	10:00 - 11:30	Cast	Analysis/Pre-block
	Lear	11:30 - 12:30	Anthony/Sara M	
	Hamlet	12:30 - 2:00	Sara G/Simon	
	Measure	2:00 - 3:15	Matt B/Stephanie	
	Winter's Tale	3:15 - 4:30	Natashia/Matt K	
	Merchant	5:15 - 6:30	Heather/Jamie	
	Midsummer	6:30 - 8:00	Natashia/John	
	Orsino	8:00 - 8:45	Joe/Amanda	
	Twelfth Night	8:45 - 10:00	Matt B/Amanda/Kim/Brooke	
(John)	Merchant	Noon - 1:00	Heather	Analysis/Pre-block Work Work
	Macbeth	1:00 - 2:30	Matt/Deanna	
	Richard III	2:30 - 3:15	Stephanie/Heather/Laura	
	Othello	3:15 - 5:15	Laura/Amanda	
	Sonnet 130	5:15 - 6:00	Dustin	
	Hamlet II	6:00 - 6:45	Matt/Kim	

		Hamlet III	6:45 - 8:00	Simon/Kim	
		Richard II	8:00 - 8:45	Sara/Kim/Heather	
		Antony II	8:45 - 10:00	Matt/Deanna/Jamie	
Monday,	3/3				
(Melissa)		Shrew	4:00 - 6:00	Laura/Dustin	Work/Polish
		Measure	6:00 - 8:00	Stephanie/Matt B	
		Hamlet	8:00 - 10:00	Sarah G/Simon	
(John)		Merchant	1:30 - 2:30	Heather	Work/Polish
Tuesday	3/4				
(John)		Antony II	5:30 - 6:45	Anthony/John/Joe	Work/Polish
		Romeo & Juliet	6:45 - 8:00	Sarah/Joe	
		Lear/Closing Scene	8:00 - 10:00	Cast	
Wednesday	3/5				
(Melissa)		Merchant	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Jamie/Heather	Work/Polish
		Lear	8:00 - 9:00	Sara M/Anthony	
		Midsummer	9:00 - 10:00	John/Natashia	
(John)		Opening Scene	6:00 - 7:00	Women/Matt K	
		As You Like It	7:00 - 8:30	Amanda/Dustin Macbeth	
			8:30 - 10:00	Deanna/Matt	

Thursday 3/6

(Melissa)	Sonnet	7:30 - 8:30	Jonathon	Work/Polish
	Twelfth Night	8:30 - 10:00	Kim/Amanda/Matt B/Brooke	
(John)	Merchant	2:00 - 3:00	Heather	
	Othello	6:00 - 7:30	Laura/Amanda	
	Richard III	7:30 - 8:45	Stephanie/Heather/Laura	
	Antony	8:45 - 10:00		

Friday 3/7

(Melissa)	Opening	5:00 - 6:30	Cast	Work/Polish
	Shrew	6:30 - 8:00	Dustin/Laura/Anthony	
	Winter's Tale	8:00 - 10:00	Mark/Natashia/Matt	
(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		
	All's Well	6:30 - 8:00	John/Natashia/Simon/Deanna	
	Hamlet	8:00 - 9:15	Kim/Matt/Matt K/Deanna/2 nd Female	
	Antony	9:15 - 10:00	Anthony/John/Joe	

Sunday 3/9

(Melissa)	Opening	10:00 - 11:30	Cast	Work/Polish	
	Lear	11:30 - 12:30	Sara M/Anthony		
	Hamlet	12:30 - 2:00	Sara G/Simon		
	Measure	4:00 - 5:30	Matt B/Stephanie		
	Midsummer	6:00 - 7:30	Natashia/John		
	Winter's Tale	7:30 - 8:30	Natashia/Matt K		
	Shrew	8:30 - 10:00	Laura/Dustin		

(John)	Sonnet 130	Noon - 12:45	Dustin
	Romeo & Juliet	12:45 - 2:00	Sara M/Joe
	Lear/Closing Scene	2:00 - 4:00	Cast
	As You Like It	4:00 - 5:30	Amanda/Dustin
	Othello	5:30 - 6:30	Laura Amanda
	Hamlet	6:30 - 7:45	Simon/Kim
	Richard II	7:45 - 8:30	Sara/Kim/Heather
	Macbeth	8:30 - 9:15	Matt/Deanna/Stephanie/Laura
	Antony	9:15 - 10:00	Matt/Deanna/Jamie

Monday 3/10 *LINE CALL**LINE CALL**LINE CALL*.....

(Melissa)	Opening Scene	4:00 - 6:00	Cast	Work/Polish
	Measure	6:00 - 8:00	Matt B/Stephanie	
	Twelfth Night	8:00 - 10:00	Kim/Amanda	

(John)	Merchant	2:00 - 3:00	Heather
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Tuesday 3/11

(Melissa)	Merchant	7:30 - 8:30	Jamie/Heather	Work/Polish
	Hamlet	8:30 - 10:00	Sarah G/Simon	

(John)	All's Well	6:00 - 7:15	John/Natashia/Deanna/Simon
	Hamlet	7:15 - 8:30	Kim/Matt/Matt K/Deanna/Simon
	Antony	8:30 - 9:15	John/Anthony/Joe
	Richard III	9:15 - 10:00	Stephanie/Heather/Laura

Wednesday 3/12

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Romeo & Juliet	5:30 - 7:00	Sara M/Joe	
	As You Like	7:00 - 8:00	Amaudu/Dustin	
	Antony	8:00 - 9:00	Anthony/John/Joe/Matt K	
	Opening Scene	9:00 - 10:00	Matt K/Women	
(Melissa)	Lear	7:00 - 8:00	Anthony/Sara M/John	
	Hamlet	8:00 - 9:00	Sarah G/Simon	
	Midsummer	9:00 - 10:00	Natashia/John	

Thursday 3/13

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Lear	6:00 - 7:00	Sara M/Anthony/John/Deanna	
	All's Well	7:00 - 8:00	John/Natashia	
	All's Well	8:00 - 9:00	John/Natashia/Simon	
	Richard II	9:00 - 10:00	Sarah G/Kim/Heather	
(Melissa)	Shrew	7:30 - 9:00	Laura/Dustin	
	Merchant	9:00 - 10:00	Heather/Jamie	

Friday 3/14

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Hamlet	6:00 - 7:00	Simon/Kini/Matt B/Matt KfDeanna	
	Hamlet	7:00 - 8:00	Simon/Kim/Deanna	
	Romeo & Juliet	8:00 - 9:00	Sara M/Joe	
	Macbeth	9:00 - 10:00	Matt K/Deanna/Narrators/Stephanie/Laura	

(Melissa)	Winter's Tale	7:00 - 8:00	Natashia/Mark N/Matt K
	Twelfth Night	8:00 - 9:00	Amanda/Brooke/Kim/Matt B
	Sonnet	9:00 - 10:00	Jonathon

Sunday 3/16 *LINES* *LINES* *LINES*

Block Narrators/Polish Scenes/Run Show

(Melissa)	Opening Scene	10:00 - 11:00	Cast	Work/Polish
	Block Narrators	11:00 - 12:00	Matt/Deanna	
	Measure	12:00 - 1:30	Matt B/Stephanie	

(John)	Block Narrators	12:00 - 1:30	Deanna/Matt
	Lear/Closing	1:30 - 2:30	Cast

Run Through	2:30 - 4:30	Cast
Selected Scenes	4:00 - 10:00	Cast

Monday 3/17

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Lear	6:00 - 7:00	Sara M/Anthony/John	
	Othello	7:00 - 8:00	Laura/Amanda	
	Richard II	8:00 - 9:00	Sarah G/Kim/Heather	
	Antony	9:00 - 10:00	Deanna/Matt K/Jamie/Male Narrator	

(Melissa)	Opening Scene	4:00- 6:00	Cast
	Shrew	6:00 - 7:00	Laura/Dustin
	Midsummer	7:00 - 8:00	Natashia/John
	Winter's Tale	8:00 - 9:00	Mark N/Natashia/Matt K
	Twelfth Night	9:00 - 10:00	Amanda/Brooke/Kim/Matt B/Joe

Tuesday 3/18

(John)	As You Like	5:30 - 6:45	Amanda/Dustin	Work/Polish
	All's Well	6:45 - 8:00	John/Natashia/Female Narrator	
	All's Well	8:00 - 9:00	John/Natashia/Simon, 1-3 Females	
	Opening Scene	9:00 - 10:00	Matt K/All Women	
(Melissa)	Merchant	8:00 - 9:00	Heather/Jamie	
	Sonnet	9:00 - 10:00	Jonathon	

Wednesday 3/19

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Othello	6:00 - 7:30		
	Lear	7:30 - 8:30	Laura/Amanda	
	Antony	8:30 - 10:00	Sara M/John/Anthony Jamie/Deanna/Matt K/Anthony/John/Joe/Male N. Heather/Jamie	
(Melissa)	Merchant	10:00 - 11:00		
	Winter's Tale	7:30 - 8:30	Mark N/Natashia/MattK	
	Hamlet	8:30 - 10:00	Sarah G/Simon	

Thursday 3/20

(John)	OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
	Hamlet	6:00 - 7:30		
	Richard III	7:30 - 8:30	Kim/John/Female and Male Narrators/Simon	
	Macbeth	8:30 - 10:00	Stephanie/Heather/Laura Matt K/Deanna/Narrators/Stephanie/Laura	
(Melissa)	Sonnet	7:30 - 8:00	Jonathon	
	Midsummer	8:00 - 9:00	Natashia/John	

		Measure	9:00- 10:00	Matt B/Stephanie	
Friday	3/21				
(John)		OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
		Romeo & Juliet	6:00 - 7:30	Sara M/Joe	
		Richard II	7:30 - 8:30	Sarah G/Kim/Heather	
		Closing Scene	8:30 -10:00	All Cast	
(Melissa)		Lear	7:30 - 8:30	Sara M/John/Anthony	
Sunday	3/23				
		<i>Run</i>	<i>Polish Scenes</i>	<i>Run</i>	<i>Polish Scenes</i>
		Opening Scene	10:00 -12:00	Cast	
		Run Through	12:00 - 2:30	Cast	
		Selected Scenes	2:30 - 5:00	Cast	
		Run Through	7:00 - 10:00	Cast	
Monday	3/24				
(John)		OPEN	1:00 - 3:00		Work/Polish
		As You Like	6:00 - 7:30	Araanda/Dustin	
		All's Well	7:30 - 9:00	John/Natashia/Simon/Deanna/1-3 Females	
		Opening Scene	9:00 - 10:00	MattK/All Women	

(Melissa)		Lear Hamlet Shrew Twelfth Night	4:00 - 5:00 5:00 - 6:30 6:30 - 7:30 7:30 - 9:00	Anthony/Sara M/John Sarah G/Simon Laura/Dustin Matt B/Amanda/Kim/Brooke	
Tuesday	3/25				
(John)		Othello Richard III Hamlet	6:00 - 7:00 7:00 - 8:30 8:30 - 10:00	Laura/Amanda/Narrators/Jamie Stephanie/Heather/Laura Kim/Simon/John/Narrators/2 nd Female	Work/Polish
(Melissa)		Measure Midsummer Winter's Tale	2:30 - 4:00 8:00 - 9:00 9:00 - 10:00	Stephanie/Matt B Natashia/John Mark N/Matt K/Natashia	
Wednesday	3/26				
(John)		OPEN Romeo & Juliet Lear Antony	1:00 - 3:00 5:30 - 7:00 7:00 - 8:00 8:00 - 10:00	Sara M/Joe Sara M/Anthony/John Matt K/Deanna/Jamie/Anthony-9pm/John/Joe	Work/Polish
(Melissa)		Merchant Hamlet Lear	10:00 - 11:00 7:00 - 8:00 8:00 - 9:00	Heather Jamie Sarah G/Simon Sara M/Anthony/John	
Thursday	3/27	Selected Scenes Run Through	6:00 - 7:00 7:30	Cast Cast	

Friday	3/28	Dry Tech/Run	6:00	Cast	
Sunday	3/30	<i>Run Show</i>	<i>Polish Scenes</i>	<i>Run Show</i>	<i>Polish Scenes</i>
		Cue to Cue w/lights	Noon	Cast	
Monday	3/31	Run Show/Dress			
Tuesday	4/1	Run Show/Dress <i>Preview</i>			
Wednesday	4/2	Run Show/Casual			

Performances:

<i>April 3,4,5</i>	<i>7:30 p.m.</i>
<i>April 7,8</i>	<i>10:00 am matinee</i>
<i>April 10,11,12</i>	<i>7:30 p.m.</i>

Appendix B
Audition and Rehearsal

1. Audition Information

AUDITIONS

FOR

Shakespeare's Women

Tuesday, February 4
6-9:30pm Lucc

**Auditions will consist of the presentation of a classic
comedic or dramatic monologue (1 minute or less)
and cold readings from the script.**

All Lindenwood students are invited to audition.

**Production dates for Shakespeare's Women are April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 at 7:30pm
With special school matinees on April 7 and 8 at 10:00am**

**Call Marsha Parker at 636/949-4906 if you need additional information about
auditions.**

2. Audition Sheet

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Alternate Number: _____

Age: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____

If you could be cast in your dream part, in any play, what part would you want?

Parts Auditioning For: _____

How many parts will you be open to accepting? (1-4) _____

Will You Accept Any Part? Yes _____ No _____

Will You Cut or Color Your Hair If Needed? Yes _____ No _____

Will You Shave or Grow Facial Hair If Needed (Men)? Yes _____ No _____

Do you have any special talents? _____

Who do you think is smarter ... the professor from Gilligan's Island or MacGyver?

Previous Acting Experience: _____

Previous Experience with Shakespeare's Plays: _____

Do you know who was originally wanted for the role of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz?

Tentative Rehearsal Schedules:

Sunday, Day and Evening

Monday, Day and Evening

Tuesday-Friday 6:30-10

Some Saturdays

Your Class Schedule:

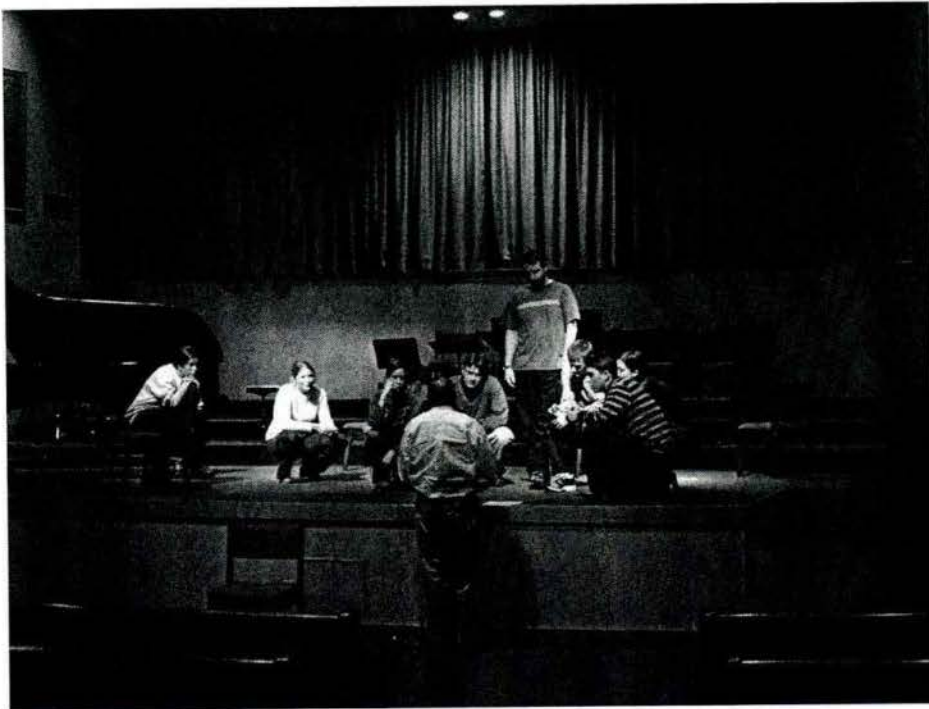
Will you be able to rehearse over Spring Break? Yes _____ No _____

Any Other Conflicts:

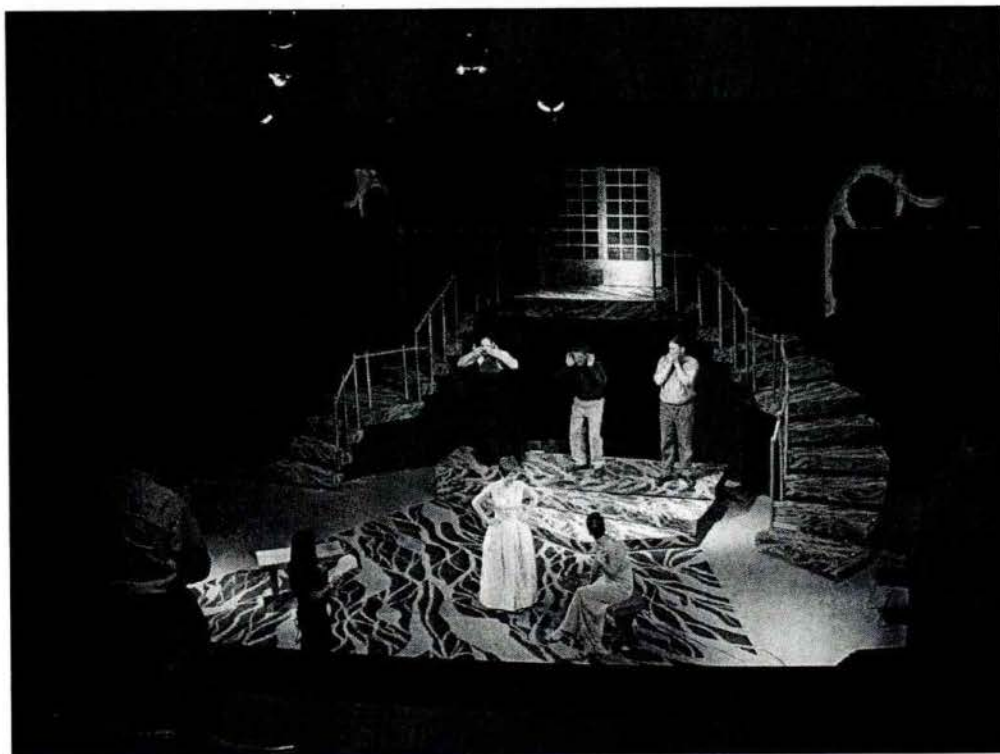
What was Mr. Rogers career before he became your friendly neighbor?

Physical Limitations We Should Know About:

3. Auditions for Shakespeare's Women



4. Rehearsal for Shakespeare's Women





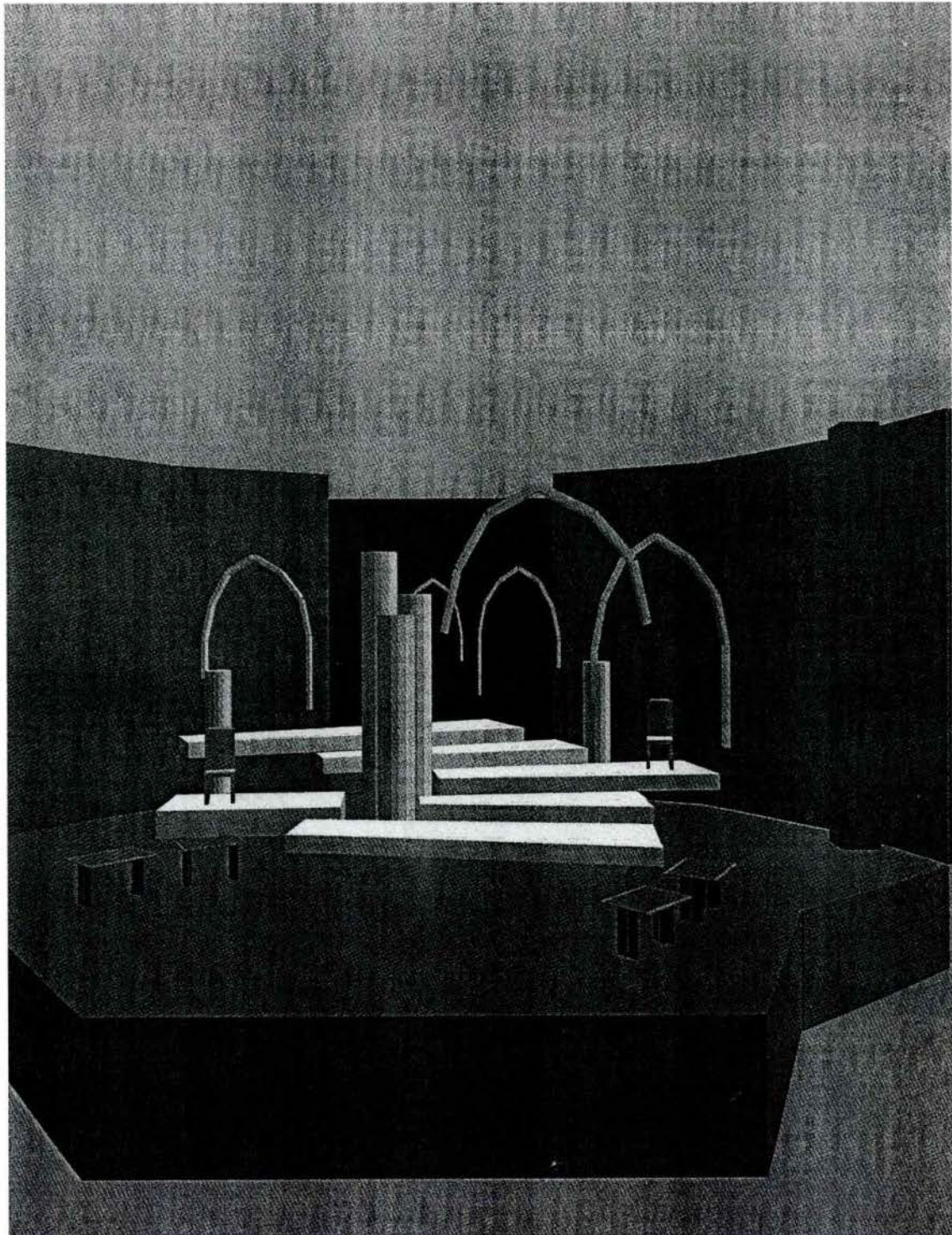
Appendix C
Stage Design

1. Production Sketch

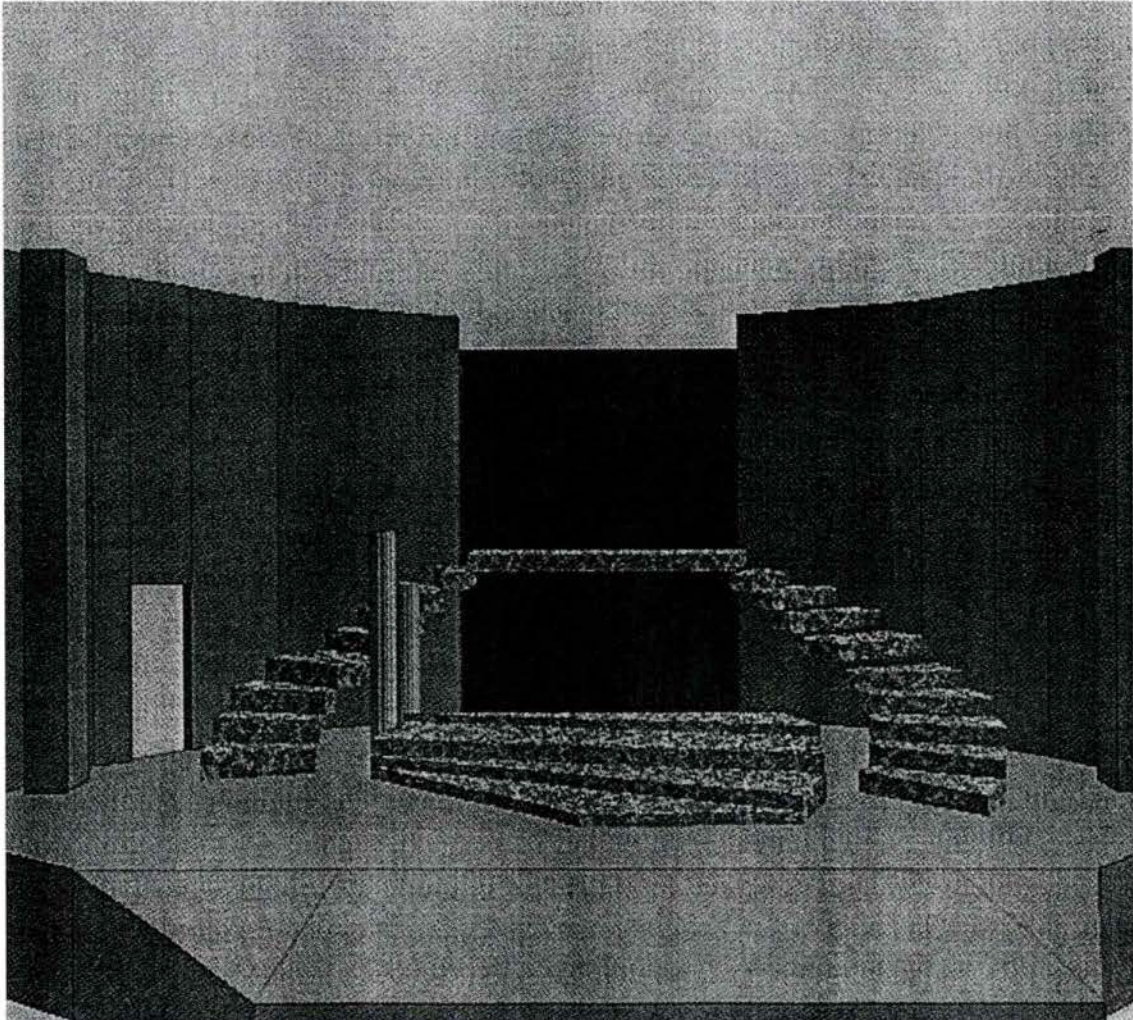
a. Sketch 01



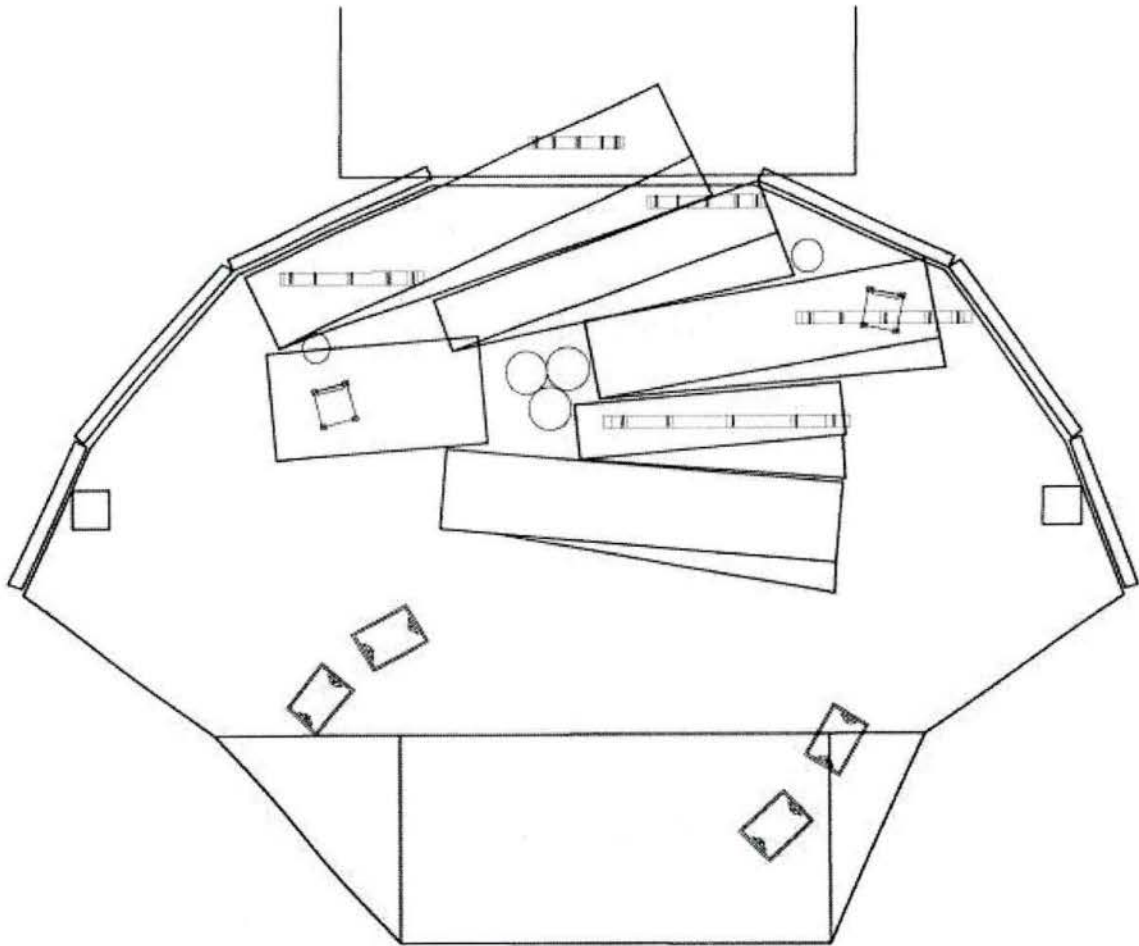
b. Sketch 02



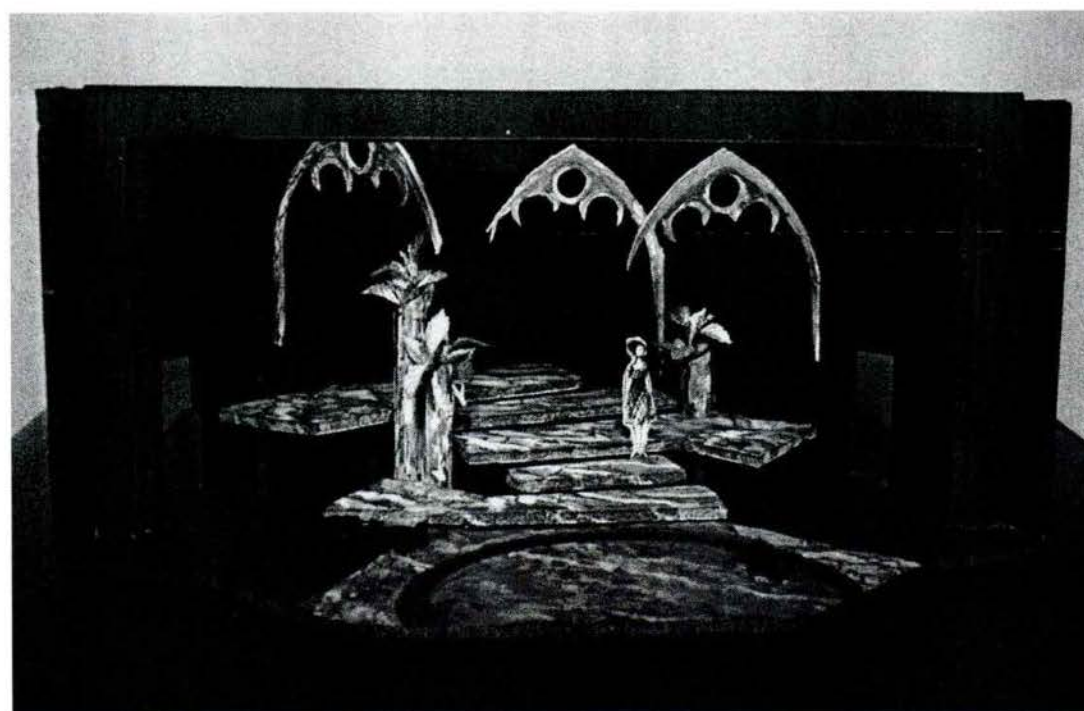
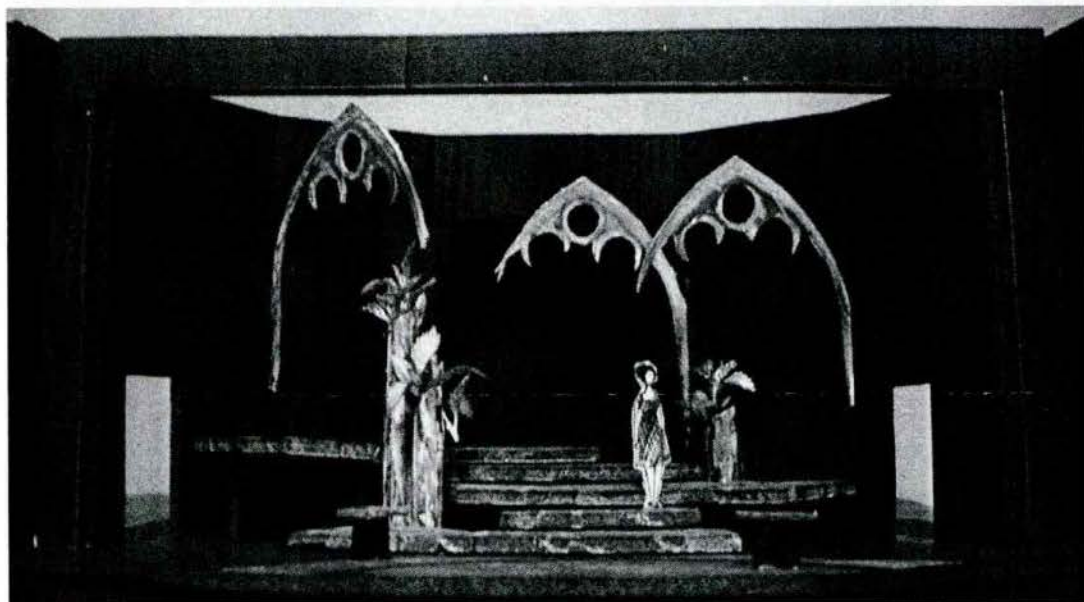
c. Sketch 03

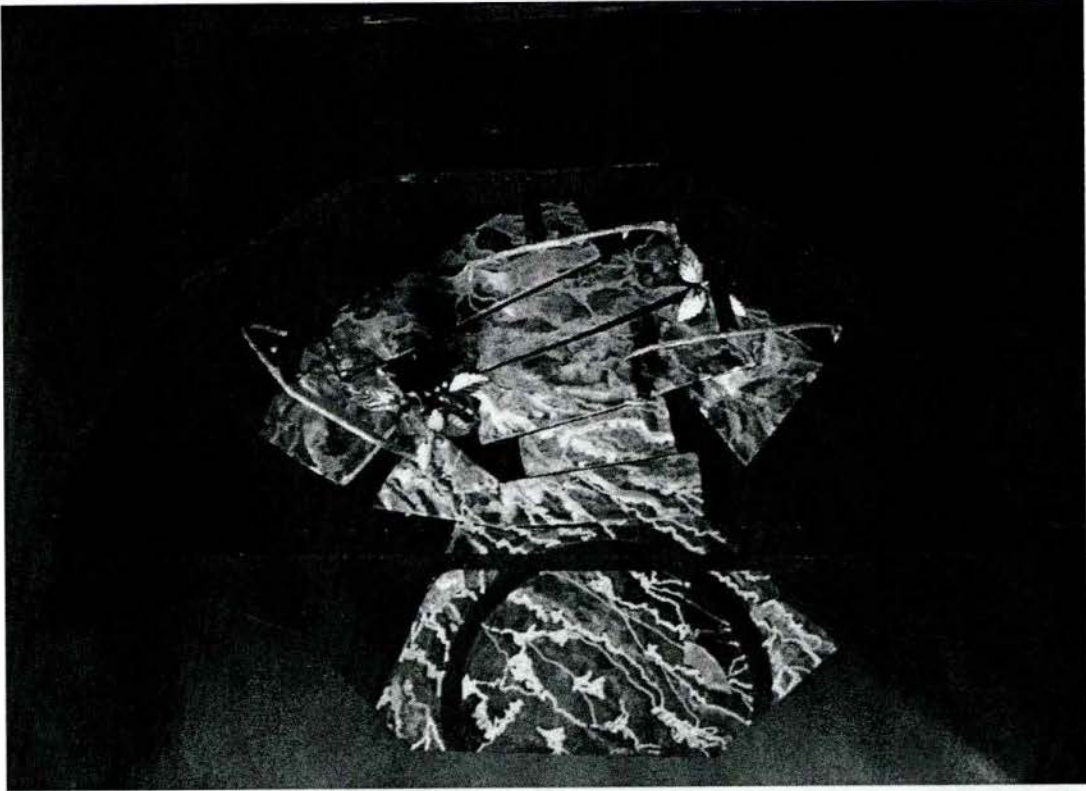


d. Ground Plan



2. Stage Model

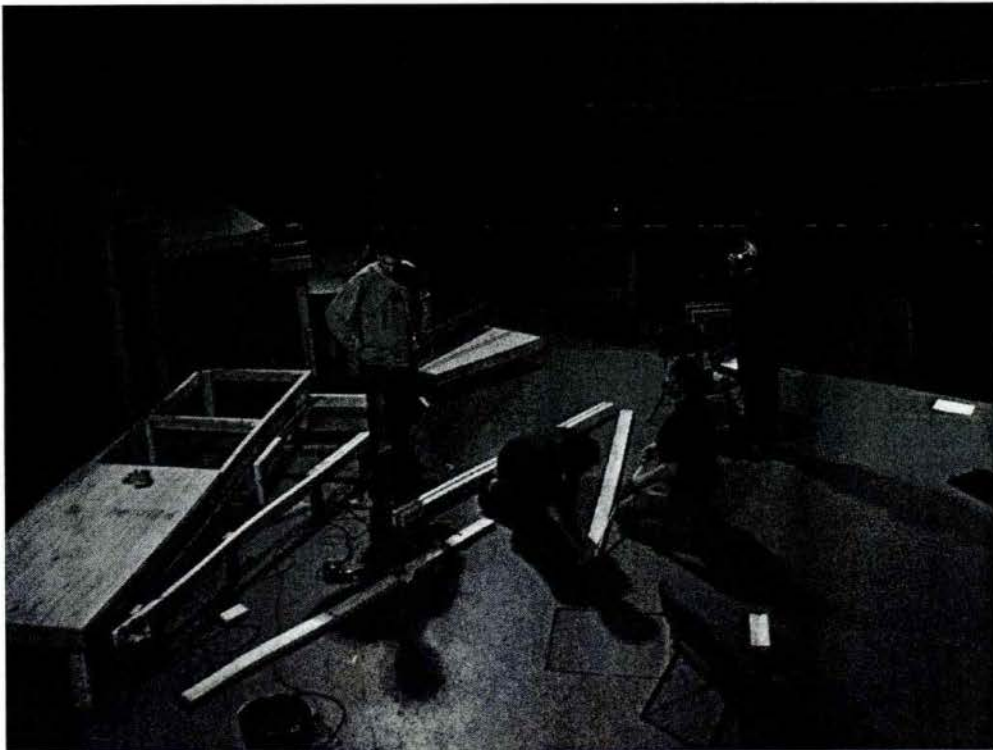
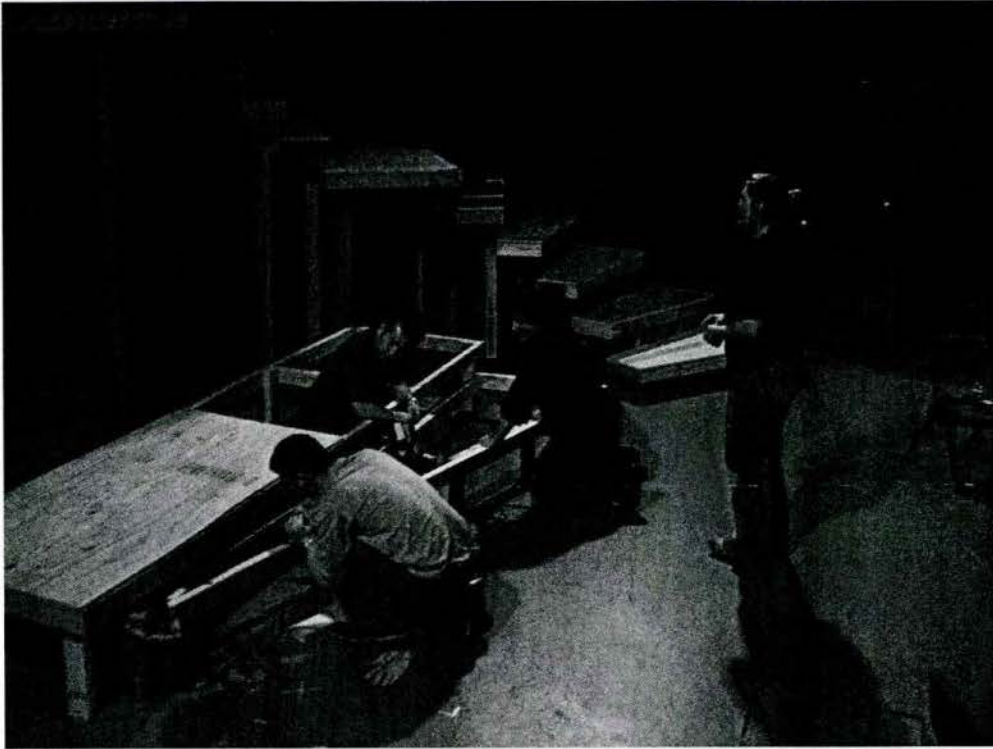


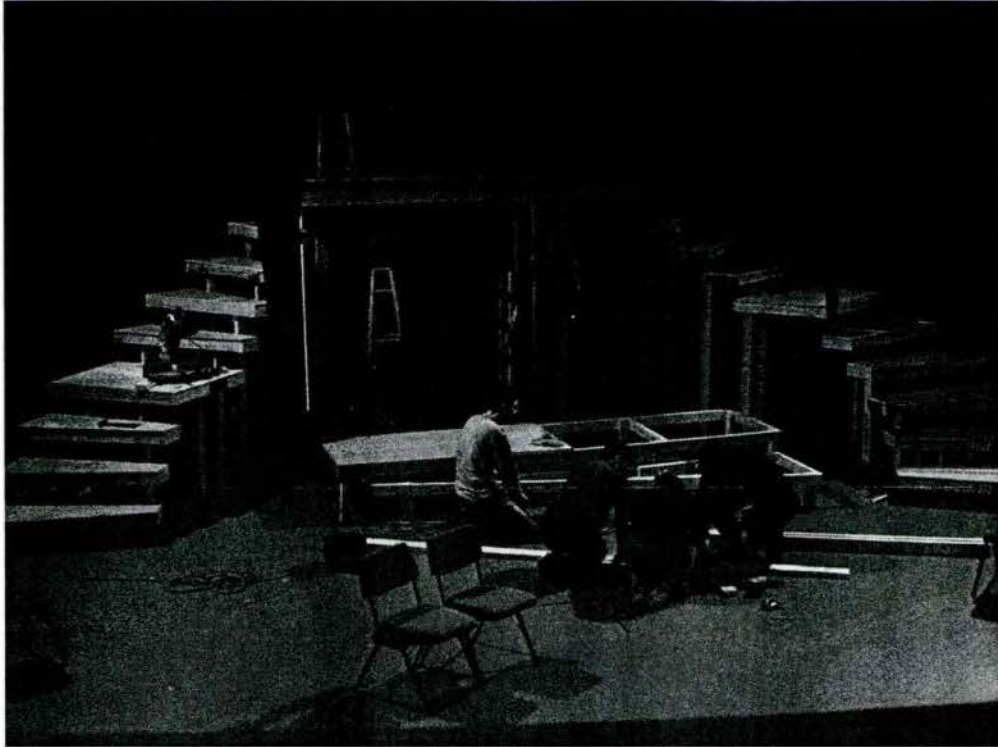




3. Stage Manufacturing

a. Construction Making



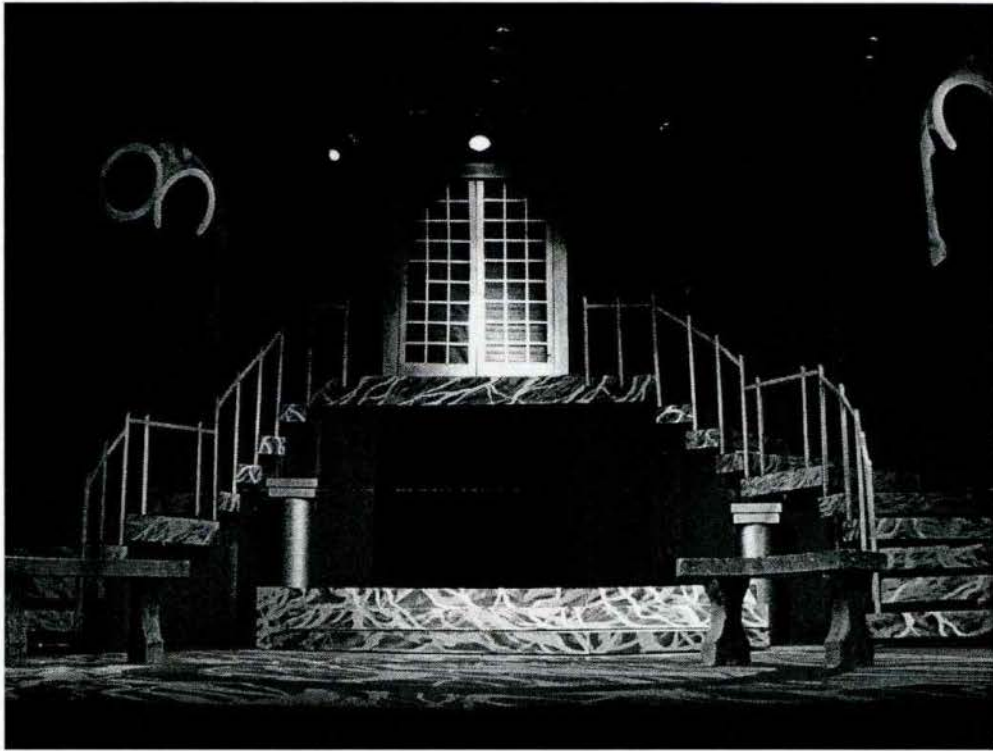


b. Drawing the Scene

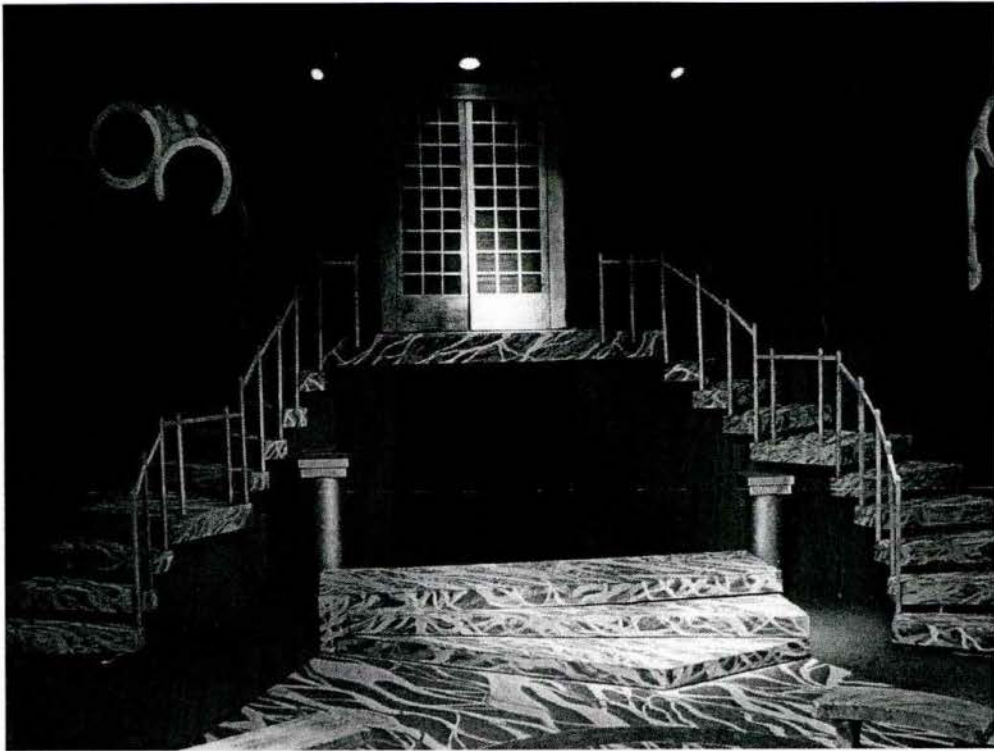




c. Stage of Performing

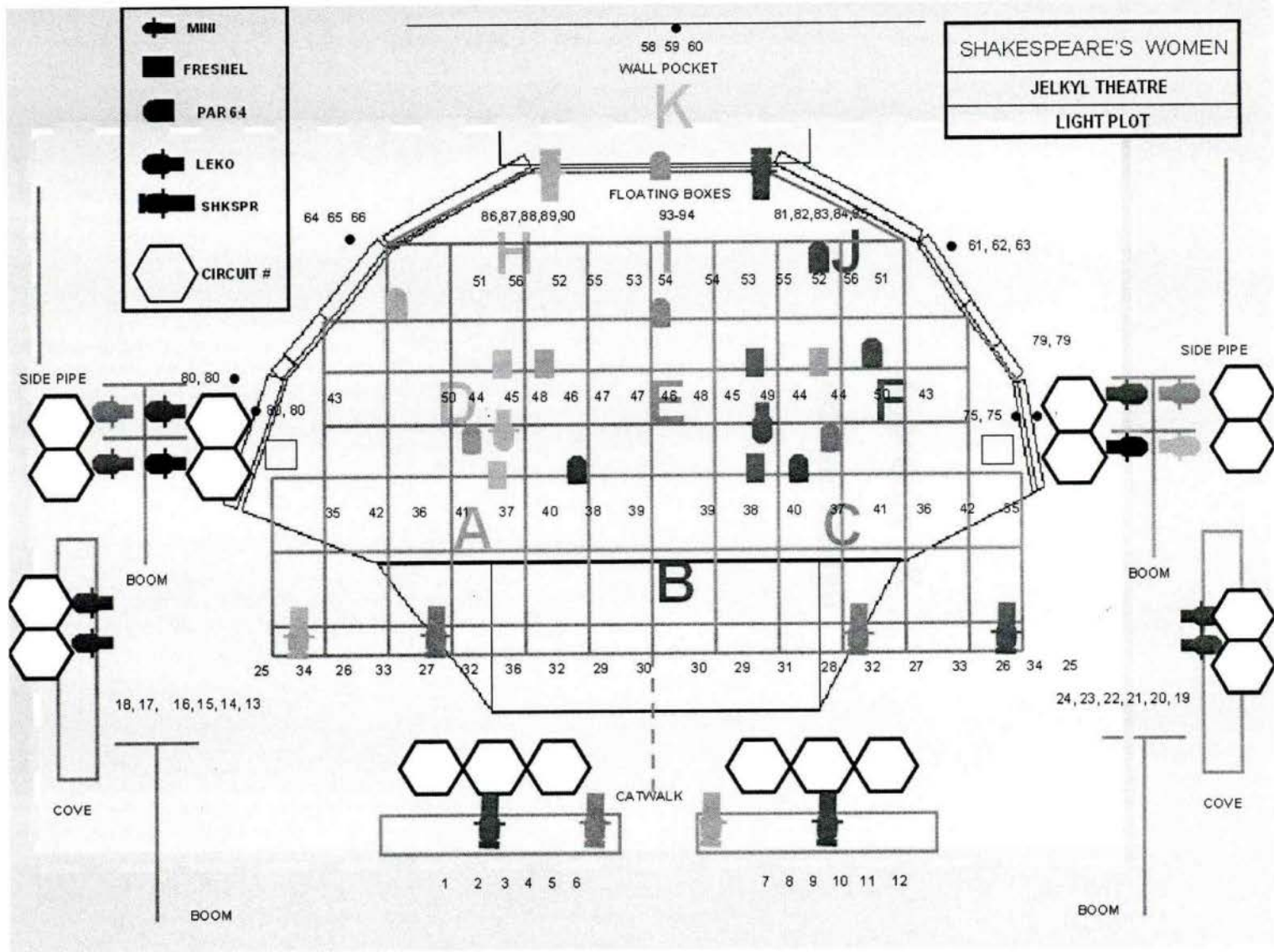






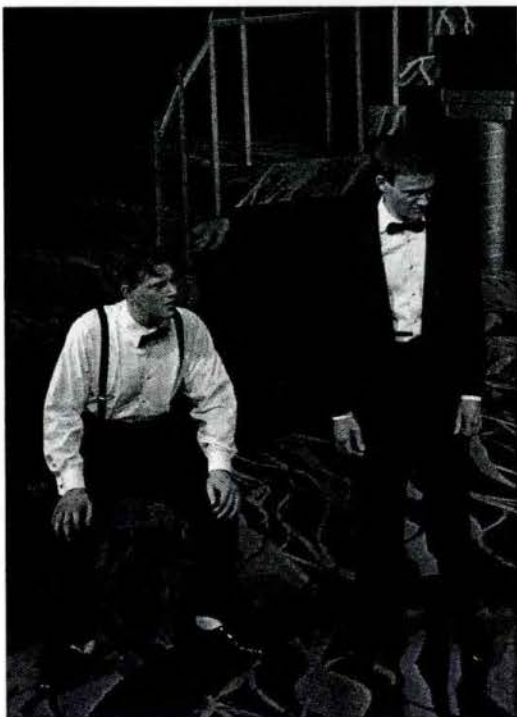
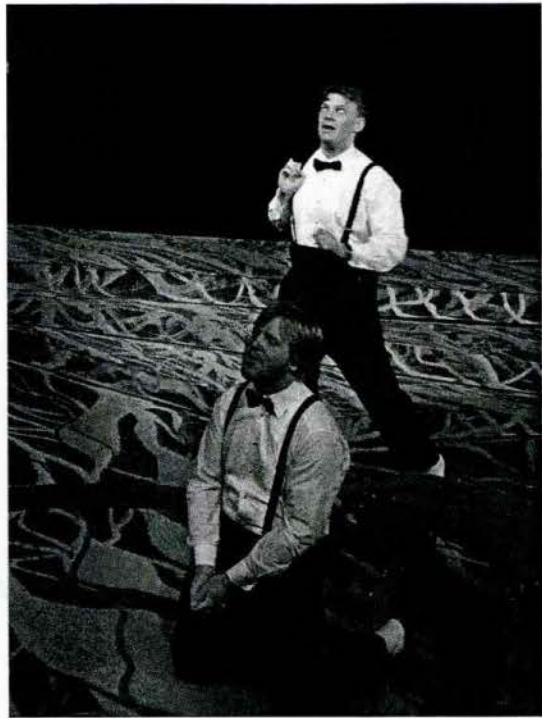
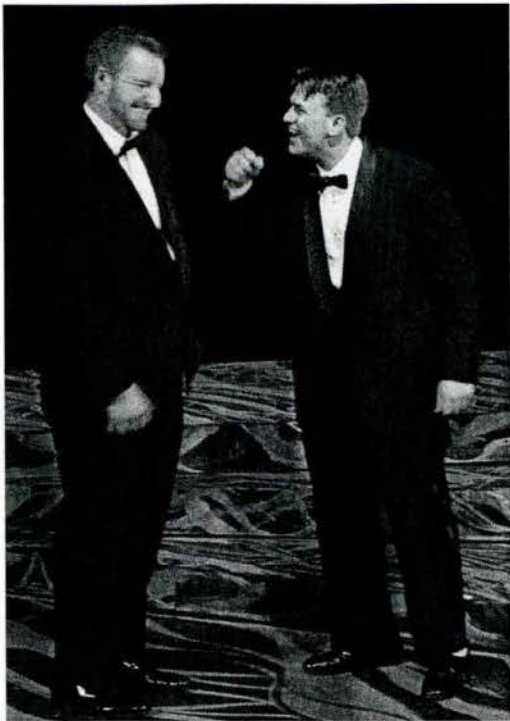
Appendix D
Lighting Design

1. Lighting Plot



Appendix E
Costume Design

1. Actor



2. Actress

