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THE HEROIC STRUGGLE OF PLEASING A MAD KING:
AN ACTOR'S EXPLORATION OF
THE EARL OF KENT IN
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR

by

Robie A. Hayek

A THESIS

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Major: Theatre Arts

Under the Supervision of Professor Harris Smith

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THE HEROIC STRUGGLE OF PLEASING A MAD KING:
AN ACTOR'S EXPLORATION OF
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Robie A. Hayek, MFA

University of Nebraska, 2010

Adviser: Harris Smith

This thesis is the research and analysis of the creative process I used in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's 2009 production of King Lear. It is comprised of three main parts. Part One: *Research* explores the life and work of William Shakespeare. Part Two: *A Study of King Lear* examines the history of King Lear including major themes and performance history. Part Three: *Process* provides insight to the thought process of an actor while building a character. Additional materials include documentation of the rehearsal and performance, script analysis, and critical responses to the actor's performance.

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I would like to thank my fellow classmates for making this experience a memorable one. Jason Francis, thank you for being a part of my life and showing me that working hard and playing hard makes life in the theatre a limitless world. Thank you to the faculty and staff of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. I would also like to thank those individuals who allowed me to interview them: Stan Brown, Dr. Stephen Buhler, Melissa Lewis-Nuss, Harris Smith, and Virginia Smith. Thank you to Sarah E. Johnson for reading this saga over and over in order to double check my well crafted seventy-two word sentences, and recommending to try using paragraphs. If I have ever in my life thus far referred to you as a friend, or chatted with you over a beer—Thank you. Thank you to my mom, dad, brother, and extended family for supporting me through all of my crazy endeavors, including graduate school. To my best friend and love of my life, Ula, thank you for standing by me and hanging in there even during the “if I had hair I would pull it out” moments.

Table of Contents

Part One: Research

| | |
|---|---|
| The Life and Work of William Shakespeare..... | 1 |
|---|---|

Part Two: A Study of King Lear

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| The History of <u>King Lear</u> | 26 |
|---------------------------------------|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| The Performance History of <u>King Lear</u> | 34 |
|---|----|

Part Three: Process

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Character Analysis..... | 41 |
|-------------------------|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Scene-by-Scene Character Breakdown..... | 44 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Anticipated Movement and Vocal Choices..... | 98 |
|---|----|

Appendix A: Creative Documentation

| | |
|--|-----|
| Rehearsal and Performance Journal..... | 103 |
|--|-----|

Appendix B: Script Analysis

| | |
|---|-----|
| Script Analysis of <u>King Lear</u> | 152 |
|---|-----|

Appendix C: Critical Responses

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Stan Brown Correspondence..... | 156 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Dr. Stephen Buhler Interview..... | 159 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Melissa Lewis-Nuss Interview..... | 172 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Harris Smith Interview..... | 182 |
|-----------------------------|-----|

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Virginia Smith Correspondence..... | 189 |
|------------------------------------|-----|

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Bibliography..... | 193 |
|-------------------|-----|

Part One: Research

The Life and Work of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's life, plays, and poems are a constant source of scholarly debate to this day. These scholarly debates can be attributed to how little we actually know about Shakespeare. What facts exist can be twisted into intricate webs of speculation. Given the vast amounts that we do not know, the most that scholars can do is look for clues and carefully attempt to piece together one of the world's greatest jigsaw puzzles. It is in the speculation about the events and whereabouts in the life of Shakespeare that a novice scholar can get lost and overwhelmed when trying to formulate an accurate timetable of his life and work. Based on my research, I have come to the conclusion that Shakespearean Scholars agree on one thing, which is that the questions surrounding Shakespeare by far outweigh the factual answers. This section will focus on Shakespeare's life in and out of the theatre, the structure of the plays of William Shakespeare, and a little speculation and controversy for flavor.

The story of William Shakespeare is divided into four categories. First, the early or formative years, covering 1564-1585 revolving around his childhood, education, marriage, and work. The second category is what scholars commonly refer to as The Lost Years 1585-1592. This title stems from the fact that scholars have absolutely no clues as to the whereabouts or accomplishments of William Shakespeare during these years. The Lost Years of his life have scholars deciphering and piecing together information using slivers of information in attempts to formulate hypothetical situations as to his whereabouts. We can assume that Shakespeare was in Stratford in 1583 and

1585 for the birth of his children, but when did he leave Stratford and “How, then, did Shakespeare find himself a rising star in London’s theatre world in 1592?” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 10) The third category is The London Years 1592-1610/11 depicting Shakespeare’s life in the theatre as a player, playwright, poet, company member, shareholder, and partner. The fourth category is The Final Years 1610/11-1616 documenting his retirement and move back to Stratford where he lived until his death. Due to the lack of records, the time frame dealing with Shakespeare leaving London and retiring to Stratford can only be given an approximate date. Shakespeare’s move from London to Stratford is open to debate with five and six years before his death in 1616 as a formative estimation. Whether the move happened quickly or gradually is unknown.

THE EARLY YEARS: 1564 – 1585

Church documents and public records allow us to piece together the formative years of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was baptized on April 25, 1564 and “since the normal lag between birth and baptism was several days, his birthday is conventionally regarded as April 23.” (Boyce, 587) William was the third child of John and Mary Shakespeare. Their first two children died in infancy, and after William, Mary (Arden) Shakespeare gave birth to three more sons and two daughters. (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 10) The next mention of William Shakespeare is the dispensation granted by the Bishop Winchester to marry Anne Hathaway on November 28th, 1582. (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 9) The eighteen years of his life between these records can be pieced together through public records regarding William’s father, John Shakespeare. They document John Shakespeare’s rise in social status, the public offices he held, and his

financial difficulties. Based on the records we can imagine the life young William Shakespeare possibly led in Stratford.

John Shakespeare was of the yeoman social class, the son of a farmer on the outskirts of Stratford. He moved to Stratford and became a tradesman. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, came from a family of the gentry class. When John and Mary were married, John's status in social class rose, "John Shakespeare's rise in status through marriage was quite typical" for the time period. (Boyce, 587) Seven years before William was born, John Shakespeare joined the town council and was appointed the position of high bailiff in 1568. It was because of his father's status in Stratford, that William was able to attend the Stratford grammar school, The King's New School.

The Stratford grammar school had "a reputation for excellence thanks to a teaching staff of Oxford graduates" (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 10), and "under the guidance of a series of schoolmasters- Simon Hunt, Thomas Jenkins (the most important in terms of time spent with Shakespeare), John Cottom, and possibly Walter Roche and Alexander Aspinall" (Boyce, 587) Shakespeare gained a solid education. Based on the fragments of the documented curriculum of Elizabethan grammar school and educational standards of the time period, it is possible that he studied "Latin Literature in Latin." (Boyce, 587) Here in The King's New School is where the young William Shakespeare is thought to have studied the Latin authors such as Ovid, Livy, Virgil, and Horace. Peter Ackroyd comments on Shakespeare's methods of learning, "For out of imitation, as he was taught to understand, came invention. It was possible, in the course of a school exercise, to take phrases from a variety of sources and in their collocation to create a new piece of work" (59). Through this imitation to invention principle Shakespeare gained

the insight to possibly “write a letter, or compose a speech, from a wholly imagined point of view.” (Ackroyd, 59) Since the imitation of the great Latin texts was a standard tool of education, and “essential requirement for any composition” (Ackroyd, 59) young Shakespeare was taught to view what he was learning not as plagiarism but “an inspired act of adaptation and assimilation.” (Ackroyd, 59) Through the standard practices of grammar schools throughout this particular era the correlation can be made between the standard curriculum and the structure he used when writing his plays. “In later life Shakespeare rarely invented any of his plots, and often lifted passages verbatim from other books. In his mature drama he took plots from a variety of sources and mingled them, creating out of different elements a new compound.” (Ackroyd, 59)

Shakespeare’s knowledge of Latin gave him the tools to write and the 5-act structure with which he would often craft his plays. In Horace’s *On the Art of Poetry*, he states, “Neve fibula sit minor, neu productior quinto actu, quae vult posci, et spectata reponi.” (Horace, 482) Literally translated: “Neither let a play be shorter, nor longer than the fifth act, which wishes to be called for and, having (once) been seen, to be brought out again.” (Horace, 482) The idea that the five-act structure is imperative to a successful play became engrained in the young impressionable mind of Shakespeare for “there is an old medieval saying, to the effect that he who learns young never forgets.” (Ackroyd, 59) The Latin authors that he studied also popped up in his plays throughout his career as a playwright. The most notable evidence of this is the Latin lesson scene in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Shakespeare echoes the use of William Lyly’s *Latin Grammar*, a text he himself would have likely used when he was enrolled in the Stratford Grammar School. He was also given insight to theatre by studying “selections from plays of

Plautus and of Terence” (Ackroyd, 59) where he also “gathered some dim intimation of scenes within a five-act structure.” (Ackroyd, 59) It is evident that the education that the young William Shakespeare received in Stratford influenced him in the highest regard.

Shakespeare would have attended grammar school until the age of 15 or 16, at which age, “good students from wealthy families would move on to Oxford or Cambridge universities.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 10) Even with John Shakespeare holding various elected and appointed civic positions within the community it is unclear whether William was offered, eligible, or able to attend university. This speculation becomes a moot point because by the time William finished grammar school his father’s status, wealth, and property dealings were questionable. “In 1577 he stopped attending the aldermen’s meetings, at which he had regularly been present. In 1578 he was delinquent in taxes, and in the same year he mortgaged an estate Mary Shakespeare had inherited and sold other property that she owned.” (Boyce, 585) In 1579 upon leaving grammar school, “it seems likely, particularly in view of his father’s financial problems, that young William took a job of some sort at this point” (Boyce, 587) bypassing a university education.

There are a number of possibilities as to what kind of job the young Shakespeare had during this point and time in his life. Scholars look to his plays to find the missing links. The possibilities “based on various traditions and on references in the plays that imply familiarity with certain occupations” include an assistant schoolmaster, a law clerk, a gardener, and “perhaps the most natural supposition, assistant to his father, who was a glover and dealer in commodities.” (Boyce, 587) Even though it is uncertain whether Shakespeare took a job with his father, the trades with which John Shakespeare was

known for were put to use in his plays. For example, the Clown in *The Winter's Tale* “puzzles over the market price of wool in 4.3.32-34”, (Boyce, 587) and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.4.18-19 “when a beard is described as ‘round ... like a glover’s paring-knife.’ ” (Boyce, 587)

When William Shakespeare was eighteen, church records provide specific details to his whereabouts. In November of 1582, Shakespeare was married to Anne Hathaway and in May of 1583 they welcomed their first child, Susanna Shakespeare, into the world. In 1585, William and Anne welcomed twins Hamnet and Judith Shakespeare. The church record noting the twins’ baptism in February of 1585 “provides assurance that Shakespeare was in Stratford nine months earlier,” as Boyce wryly notes (587). Aside from the conception of the twins in 1584, “no record of his activities between then and 1592 has survived” (Boyce, 587) these years have been coined the Lost Years of Shakespeare.

The Lost Years: 1584 – 1592

The mystery surrounding the late teenage years of Shakespeare does not compare to the mystery of where he was and what he was doing between the years of 1584-1592. These are the years that scholars debate as they work through probable stories, legends, and hunches as to Shakespeare’s whereabouts, trying to connect him to the theatre world in London where, in 1592, he is criticized by Robert Greene. Did Shakespeare join the military and fight against the Spanish Armada? Assuming the extent and quality of his education, was it more likely that Shakespeare worked as a lawyer’s clerk or in the publishing industry in London? Or was Shakespeare “caught poaching by a local

nobleman, Sir Thomas Lucy, and had thus departed for London as a fugitive?" (Boyce, 587-588)

Michael Wood's documentary, *In Search of Shakespeare*, brings to light a vast array of possibilities and speculation as to where he was and possibly how he started a career in the theatre. Wood begins to look for Shakespeare by examining a country divided by those who were of the Protestant faith or new faith, and those who were Roman Catholic or old faith. Wood explains the persecution the old faith believers received from a Protestant Queen and those of the new faith. He discussed the lengths to which Catholics would go to protect fellow Catholics, forcing many believers to hide themselves and their faith of practice. Wood traces a possible route Shakespeare took on his way to London through people known for having Catholic sympathies.

Wood makes a case that Shakespeare took the job of tutor to the home of Alexander Hoghton. Hoghton's will, dated August 3, 1581 requests "his neighbor, Sir Thomas Hesketh, to be friendly to one William Shakeshafte." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11) Even though this dated will is before Shakespeare's marriage to Anne Hathaway, and assuming that William Shakespeare and William Shakeshafte are the same person speculates that he was possibly a teacher of some sort in the early 1580's. Could Shakespeare in fact been an assistant schoolmaster? Michael Wood also brings to light the probable relationship Shakespeare's family might have had with Hoghton. The connection begins with the Schoolmasters who taught young Shakespeare in grammar school as "some of the grammar school teachers were also recusant Catholics from Lancashire in northern England." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 10) While in the minority, there were families who continued to secretly practice the old faith.

Shakespeare's old schoolmaster John Cottom came from a family whose members were known to practice the old faith and were neighbors to Alexander Hoghton. Perhaps Shakespeare's former schoolmaster John Cottom recommended William Shakespeare for a teaching position in the Hoghton household.

Another question surrounding the mystery of Shakespeare is how did William arrive in London by the 1592? In the year 1575, he was only 11 years old and presented with a rare and wonderful opportunity. Queen Elizabeth made a visit to Kenilworth Castle, near Stratford "where the Earl of Leicester organized three weeks of festivities to celebrate her birthday." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11) Shakespeare may allude to his possible attendance through a remark in *Twelfth Night* "Like Arion on a dolphin's back." (Shakespeare, *Twelfth*, 5) The Earl of Leicester's festivities "included a water-pageant in the castle's lake in which Arion rode a dolphin's back." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11) If Shakespeare attended these festivities, is it here where he first saw established theatre groups or was it later? Stratford was not unfamiliar with London's established theatre groups coming to town. Did Shakespeare attend any number of performances from companies such as the "Lord Strange's Men in 1579, the Earl of Essex's Men in 1584, and the Queen's Men in 1587?" (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11)

Could Shakespeare have hitched a ride or followed with one of these groups to London in order to embark on a career in the theatre? The best possible fit is the Lord Strange's Men in 1579, "because the earliest sure evidence of his employment is a document of 1594, in which he is listed as a principle member of Strange's Men successor, the Chamberlain's Men." (Boyce, 588) Charles Boyce notes that Shakespeare "was probably in London no later than 1589, for he was established as an actor and

playwright by 1592” (588) where we find him the target of some harsh criticism from Robert Greene.

The London Years: 1592 – 1610/1611

The first reference to William Shakespeare in London is a remark made in 1592 by Robert Greene. In Greene’s *Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* he warns “three fellow playwrights, Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, and Thomas Nashe, against the uneducated newcomer who was invading their turf: ‘There is an upstart crow, beatified with our feathers’, that with his ‘Tiger’s heart wrapt in a player’s hide’ supposes he is well able to bombast out blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11) For Shakespeare to warrant such harsh criticism supports the notion that he had been working for a few years already and making a name for himself. Criticism from other playwrights was a constant for Shakespeare throughout his career especially stemming from the fact that he did not attend university, while the majority of his contemporary playwrights did.

The criticism from Greene assures us that Shakespeare was known in and around the theatre community. Shakespeare’s respect and high esteem in the theatre community is prevalent in an apology given by Greene’s publisher Henry Chettle, noting, “his uprightedness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 11) Greene’s quotation of one of Shakespeare’s plays and the apology previously mentioned makes the task of precisely dating Shakespeare’s early plays difficult.

Shakespeare's early plays, assuming that he was in London no later than 1589, are considered to be: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Henry VI one, two, and three*, *Richard III*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Charles Boyce notes, "Several of these plays were performed by an acting company called Pembroke's Men, and it seems likely that early in his career Shakespeare wrote and acted for them" (588). It is unclear when Shakespeare completed these early plays, because late in 1592 London shut down the theatres due to an outbreak of the plague, which kept the theatres closed for approximately two years. Did he travel the countryside with an acting company, or perhaps, look for a noble patron?

We know that Shakespeare wrote two narrative poems during his forced lay-off from the theatre. The two poems, *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, were both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. It is up for debate whether he lived with the Earl of Southampton, continued to live in London, traveled the countryside with an acting company, or returned to Stratford during the time of the plague. Even though his whereabouts are unclear, the dedications in the two narrative poems to the Earl of Southampton have scholars in agreement that a friendship existed between the two men. Charles Boyce states, "In fact, that the two men were friends is one of the few undocumented aspects of Shakespeare's life that virtually all scholars accept." (588) The possibility that Shakespeare wrote some of these earlier plays during the same time he was writing his narrative poems should not be overlooked.

The question of whether Shakespeare wrote plays during the time of the plague is overshadowed by his obvious need of an income to provide for a family living in Stratford. Once the plague subsided and theatres were reopened, solid documentation

provides evidence of his employment with an acting company. In June of 1594, Strange's Men were reorganized and took the name of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It is not known if Shakespeare was part of the reorganization, but he "is presumed to have joined them then or shortly thereafter, since he was a prominent member of the company in December, when he was a representative of the troupe at court." (Boyce, 588) The Lord Chamberlain's Men, under various names, was the company that Shakespeare stayed with for the duration of his career. The exact dates of the plays written during this period are, once again, difficult to pinpoint. His employment, starting anywhere from June through the later half of 1594, with the Lord Chamberlain's Men provides Shakespeare with a specific group of actors he could have had in mind for his new plays. From the time he joined the company until possibly the later half of 1596 it is believed that he wrote the following plays: *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, *King John*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It seems likely that when Shakespeare joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, he formed a life long friendship with Richard Burbage. Burbage played the title roles in Shakespeare's great tragedies such as *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. (Boyce, 81)

Business did not slow down for Shakespeare. The demand for new plays grew due to the popularity of the public theatre houses, and multiple theatres competing for an audience. Shakespeare turned out an astonishing number of plays from 1597 to 1603. The plays he wrote during this time are believed to be: *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry IV one and two*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and *Twelfth Night*. Throughout the 1590's Shakespeare was keeping busy writing plays, and presumably the *Sonnets*, as well as

moving up in the theatre world. His personal life remains as big a mystery as the actual composition dates of his plays and sonnets.

The records of the city of London provide scholars with tax records for William Shakespeare that reveal where he lived during the 1590's. The money he paid in taxes provides ample source for speculation as to whether his family visited him during his time in London. "Some scholars believe that his tax bill in the first of these homes was too large for a single man's dwelling, suggesting that his wife and children spent time with him in London." (Boyce, 588) There is nothing but the suggestion that his family visited, but this raises the possibility that Shakespeare was striving to be a family man. Regardless if his family visited him in London, the success Shakespeare gained while working in the theatre allowed him to justify his long absences by providing for his family.

Once Shakespeare established himself financially, he applied for a coat of arms for the Shakespeare family. Michael Wood tells the story of how William's father had once applied for a coat of arms and then withdrew the request due to financial difficulties. In 1596, John Shakespeare was granted a coat of arms, and "it is presumed that the playwright paid the fees for the Shakespeare escutcheon." (Boyce, 589) Shakespeare's financial success was also expressed in a new home for his family. In 1597, he purchased "a grand Stratford mansion, New Place." (Boyce, 588) His success and new ability to provide for his family was overshadowed by the death of his only son, Hamnet, in the year 1596. The reason behind his purchase of New Place is unknown, but buying a grand mansion shortly after the death of your child could suggest some form of guilt.

As Shakespeare worked in London far from his family, we can only look at the pieces of his life that are documented, and try to work around the missing links. There is no documentation of his attendance at the funeral of his son, but he was in Stratford for the purchase of New Place. His presence for that purchase is the first clear documentation in Stratford since 1584. Besides this, it is unknown how often Shakespeare was home to visit or how involved he was with his family. It could be suggested that the lavish gifts he bestowed upon his family in the mid 1590s “constitute so firm a commitment to the town as to imply a strong earlier involvement as well.” (Boyce, 589) How do events back in London correspond with what we see of Shakespeare’s wealth in Stratford and elsewhere?

The Globe theatre was built in 1599, and Shakespeare found another moneymaking opportunity. He was already a shareholder with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, and now he became a partner in the Globe. He was making money as a playwright, as a shareholder with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, and in a partnership with the Globe. When Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and was succeeded to the throne by King James the Lord Chamberlain’s Men earned the patronage of the new monarch, and became The King’s Men. The Queen requested performances by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men and during the last nine years of her reign they performed 32 times at court. Under King James, the King’s Men performed on a more consistent basis for the court; “between 1603 and Shakespeare’s death in 1616, as the King’s Men, his company appeared before James on 177 occasions.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 13) King James was an ardent supporter of the theatre; how well did Shakespeare keep up with such a high demand coming from royalty?

During the first five years of King James' reign, Shakespeare wrote at a rapid pace bringing forth ten new plays. The plays documented during this time are: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Pericles*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 37) In 1608, the King's Men branched out and acquired the Blackfriars Theatre for which Shakespeare continued to write. The Blackfriars was an indoor space and so allowed the company to explore possibilities in their new surroundings such as scenic options not permitted in an outdoor space like the Globe. It is during the time when the King's Men were performing at the Blackfriars Theatre, the Globe, and for the court that Shakespeare wrote what we now refer to as his romances and his last history play. Shakespeare's last plays, written between 1610 and 1614 were, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 37) The mystery surrounding Shakespeare's final plays is where he was when he wrote them, was he in London or Stratford?

The Final Years: 1610/11 – 1616

Scholars have noted that in the last years of Shakespeare's career, he had a writing partner. Charles Boyce notes, "Shakespeare wrote collaboratively (as he may also have done in the obscure early years) with at least one other playwright, John Fletcher, who wrote parts of *Cardenio*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and possibly *Henry VIII*" (590). Shakespeare's lessened output of work and the taking on of a writing partner "surely reflects Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford." (Boyce, 590) Of the three plays John Fletcher is said to have co-written with Shakespeare, scholars can only look to *The*

Two Noble Kinsmen and *Henry VIII* for differences of writing styles because there is no surviving text for *Cardenio*.

Shakespeare visited London in 1612 in order to testify in a lawsuit for his landlord Christopher Mountjoy. (Boyce, 446) Knowing that he had to travel to London prompts the question: how long had Shakespeare been living back in Stratford? According to Charles Boyce “some scholars believe he may have made the move as early as 1610, writing *The Tempest* in the country”(590). Even given the uncertainty about when Shakespeare moved to Stratford, be it in 1610 or 1611, it can be assumed that he “visited the city to confer with Fletcher” (Boyce, 590) while writing his final plays.

It is unclear whether Shakespeare was in Stratford for his eldest daughter Susanna’s wedding in 1607. His prominence in the town of Stratford grew with his purchase of New Place; “As master of New Place, Shakespeare was one of the social leaders of the town.” (Boyce, 590) With the wealth and power Shakespeare had acquired throughout his success in London, he continued to invest in real estate, agricultural land, and investment properties in London and in Stratford from 1605 to 1613. Shakespeare watched his father suffer financial problems as a child in Stratford. John Shakespeare’s monetary problems had possibly encouraged William’s drive to succeed in order to gain the amount of wealth needed to invest in real estate. At the end of the day, William Shakespeare was a savvy businessman.

Shakespeare was either lucky, smart or both with the business deals he entered in when progressing back up the social ladder. He took precautions with his wealth and in “January 1616 Shakespeare’s lawyer, Francis Collins, prepared a draft of the playwright’s last will and testament.” (Boyce, 590) Shakespeare’s youngest daughter,

Judith, was married in February of 1616, and Shakespeare revised his will in order to “protect her portion from her husband, signing it on the 25th of March.” (Boyce, 590)

William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, the day believed to be the date of his birth. The cause of his death is unknown. It is suggested that he was drinking heavily with fellow playwrights during the wedding celebrations for his daughter, and caught a chill after leaving the festivities. This is plausible given the date and could explain why he revised his last will and testament. Shakespeare was laid to rest on April 25, 1616, coinciding with the date of his baptism.

The Plays of William Shakespeare:

William Shakespeare is credited for writing the plays listed below. The dates provided are approximate dates of composition or performance which scholars use to create the timeline of Shakespeare’s work.

1589-1591

- *Henry VI Part I*
- *Henry VI Part II*
- *Henry VI Part III*

1593-1594

- *Richard III*
- *Titus Andronicus*
- *The Comedy of Errors*
- *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

1595-1596

- *Love’s Labour’s Lost*
- *Richard II*
- *King John*
- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

1597-1598

- *The Merchant of Venice*
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
- *Henry IV Part I*
- *Henry IV Part II*

1599-1600

- *Much Ado About Nothing*
- *As You Like It*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *Henry V*
- *Hamlet*

1602-1603

- *Twelfth Night*
- *All's Well That Ends Well*

1604-1606

- *Othello*
- *Measure for Measure*
- *King Lear*
- *Macbeth*

1608

- *Pericles*
- *Coriolanus*
- *Timon of Athens*
- *Troilus and Cressida*
- *Antony and Cleopatra*

1610-1614

- *Cymbeline*
- *The Winter's Tale*
- *The Tempest*
- *Henry VIII*
- *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

A number of Shakespeare's plays were published in his lifetime and after his death in the quarto format until 1634. This format receives the name from the specific way the paper for printing was folded. "A quarto is a sheet of paper that is folded in half

twice, yielding four leaves or eight pages.” (Boyce, 526) A book printed in the quarto format is also referred to as a quarto. Of Shakespeare’s plays, 22 of them were printed as Quartos. Scholars divide Shakespeare’s Quartos into two categories: the Good Quartos and the Bad Quartos, depending on the source from which these plays were printed. Scholars distinguish the Good and Bad Quartos from the speculative source material. The Good Quartos are suggested to come directly from the foul papers of the playwright. The foul papers consist of the manuscript or original copy of the text, which are unpolished and filled with inconsistencies such as character name changes, detailed stage directions, and characters who never appear. These foul papers also provide scholars with names of actors in the margins: proof that Shakespeare wrote certain characters with particular actors in mind. For example, in the quarto version of *Much Ado About Nothing* “Kempe for Dogberry” (Boyce, 202) appears in the margin before the speech. Scholars look for these inconsistencies by the playwright to determine the Good Quartos because “no original Shakespearean manuscript exists.” (Boyce, 202) The Bad Quartos are believed to come from unauthorized sources such as actors, audience members trying to remember the lines in order to pass the text along to the printer, or an unauthorized early version of the play found its way to the printer. Many of Shakespeare’s Quartos had multiple printings. The following is a list of Shakespeare’s plays, which were printed as Quartos followed with the date(s) of publication.

- *Titus Andronicus*, 1594, 1600, 1611
- *Henry VI, part 2*, 1594 (*The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*), 1600, 1619
- *Henry VI, part 3*, 1595 (*The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*), 1600, 1619
- *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, 1599, 1609
- *Richard II*, 1597, 1598, 1608, 1615
- *Richard III*, 1597, 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622

- *Love's Labor's Lost*, 1598
- *Henry IV, part 1*, 1598, 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622
- *Henry IV, part 2*, 1600
- *Henry V*, 1600, 1602, 1619
- *The Merchant of Venice*, 1600, 1619
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1600, 1619
- *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1600
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602, 1619
- *Hamlet*, 1603, 1604, 1611
- *King Lear*, 1608, 1619
- *Troilus and Cressida*, 1609
- *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609, 1611, 1619
- *Othello*, 1622
- *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 1634

The quarto publication of Shakespeare's plays allowed for only one play per book. A complete publication of Shakespeare's plays was not available to the public until 1623 when John Heminge and Henry Condell gathered Shakespeare's plays and edited the plays to be published in what is known as Shakespeare's First Folio. The folio, like the quarto, is given the name from the format used in printing the book. "A folio is a sheet of paper that is folded in half to make two leaves-four pages-or a book composed of such pages." (Boyce, 198) Three other folio-sized editions of Shakespeare's plays were published in the following years: The Second Folio in 1632, the Third Folio in 1663, and the Fourth Folio in 1685. The subsequent editions were published with corrections from each previous edition that further distanced each publication from Shakespeare's original manuscript. "Each was printed from the preceding edition and added its own corrections and errors. Since they have no connection to an original manuscript or other publication source, they are of little scholarly interest." (Boyce, 198)

The First Folio contains 36 plays divided into three categories: comedies, histories, and tragedies; of those 36 plays half were new to the reading public. The eighteen plays which were never published as Quartos include:

- *The Tempest*
- *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- *Measure for Measure*
- *The Comedy of Errors*
- *As You Like It*
- *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *All's Well That Ends Well*
- *Twelfth Night*
- *The Winter's Tale*
- *King John*
- *Henry VI Part I*
- *Henry VIII*
- *Coriolanus*
- *Timon of Athens*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *Macbeth*
- *Antony and Cleopatra*
- *Cymbeline*

The plays now referred to, as the romances were not separated into their own genre until the 18th century when the term “romance” was considered an acceptable genre. Only three of Shakespeare’s romances were included in the First Folio with *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* listed under the comedies and *Cymbeline* considered a tragedy. Even though *Pericles* was printed as a Quarto it was not included until the Third Folio in 1663 along with a number of plays thought to be written by Shakespeare. The lost play of *Cardenio* was also not included in any of the editions of the Folio for the obvious reason. Shakespeare’s final play *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was not included because it “is often viewed as predominantly Fletcher’s work” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 397) “yet the play’s connection with Shakespeare somehow survived, and in the

mid 1960s major publishers added it to Shakespeare's complete works." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 439) Since *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was added to the canon in the 1960s, Shakespeare is credited with writing eleven history plays, thirteen comedies, ten tragedies, and five romances.

Non-Dramatic Works:

Shakespeare not only kept busy writing plays and being a shrewd businessman, but he also wrote non-dramatic poetry. When the theatres were closed down due to plague outbreak in 1592 Shakespeare had to find another source of income, so he wrote narrative poems, lyrical poems, including the sonnets, and possibly epitaphs. Scholars suggest the possibility that Shakespeare kept writing plays throughout this time while plague kept the theatres closed for two years. The publications of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1593 and 1594 suggest that Shakespeare focused more on narrative poetry than writing plays at that time. Both of these poems were a great success for Shakespeare: "no less than nine quarto editions were issued before his death in 1616" (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 447) of *Venus and Adonis*. The success of these two poems earned Shakespeare some respect with more established writers. Scholars suggest, "even the most envious of his competitors would have recognized that the young, middle-class writer with no university education was in fact a refined and inspired poet." (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 447) It is suggested that from 1592 through 1598, or possibly late as 1603, Shakespeare wrote his sonnets. Shakespeare's 154 sonnets were published in 1609. It is debatable whether he approved the publication, but there is also no documentation that he took steps to obstruct it or limit its distribution. By 1609

Shakespeare was a respected playwright, “perhaps he no longer had reason to keep even intimate poems from public scrutiny.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 447)

Shakespeare continued to write and publish non-dramatic poetry throughout his career with such poems. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was published in 1601 yet probably written earlier in his career, and *A Lover’s Complaint* was printed in 1609 with a suggested composition date between 1603-04. The authorship of *A Lover’s Complaint* was debated for years, and finally accepted as Shakespeare’s in the 1960s. The authorship of the lyric poem *Shall I Die?* is still debated to this day. This poem came to light in the 1630s, well after Shakespeare’s death in 1616. This has led to questions not only about its authenticity as a work of Shakespeare, but also its purpose. One possibility is “In nine stanzas (verses) of ten lines each, the lyrics may have been used for a musical production of a Shakespearean comedy following the playwright’s death in 1616.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 464) This musical element possibly explains one of the documented sources attributing the poem to Shakespeare coming from a “compilation dated from the 1630s.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 464) The unresolved authorship still debated “demonstrates that quests for new pieces by Shakespeare remain as alive as ever.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 464) There is no way to prove authenticity with any specific epitaph for Shakespeare to be credited with writing, but after his death “it became conventional to attribute epitaphs to the great poet.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 465) The epitaphs with possible ties to Shakespeare are those of whom he was associated with during his lifetime who could have commissioned one from the poet. The possible candidates are Ben Jonson, Elias James, John Combe, members of the

Stanley family, King James, and of course William Shakespeare himself. The most famous of these epitaphs is Shakespeare's very own on his tomb in Stratford.

*“Good friend, for Jesus’ sake forebear
To dig the dust enclosed here!
Bles’t be the man that spares these stones
And Curs’t be he that moves my bones!”*

(Dunton-Downer and Riding, 465)

With no positive way to authenticate the speculation surrounding these epitaphs, their authorship continues to be debated.

Why did Shakespeare write?

Evidence suggesting why Shakespeare wrote plays and non-dramatic poems can be pieced together from the information and speculation surrounding his life. The questions concerning his reasons for writing far outnumber the answers. The answers are speculative at best.

What grabbed his attention during his time at The King's New School to steer him toward writing? Was it Shakespeare's possible experience attending the Queen's birthday festivities combined with his acquired knowledge from Latin authors that sparked his imagination to write? Is it possible that Shakespeare discovered his desire to write when he was working as an assistant schoolmaster or tutor? Was it during this time that he started to write poetry and realized his desires for writing could not be contained in mere poems? What separates Shakespeare from other writers from the era? Did Shakespeare write with true passion or was it passion disguised by a desire to provide for his family? The questions regarding the reasons Shakespeare started writing parallel the questions about what motivated him to keep writing.

We know that he had a family living in Stratford while he worked and lived in London. Assuming Shakespeare wanted to provide for his family, was it this sense of duty and honor that motivated him to write? Why did he not stay in Stratford and assume the family business? Were his father's bad business deals and financial shortfalls the deciding factors for Shakespeare to take a gamble and write plays in London? His possible adherence to the Catholic faith may have determined his departure from Stratford; he could have been running from Protestant persecution. Once Shakespeare was an established playwright in London the pressure of harsh criticism coming from university educated playwrights possibly urged him to prove the university wits wrong. There is no record of Shakespeare fighting back with words aimed directly at his critics; instead he kept on writing, evolving into one of the greatest writers of the English language.

When the plague forced the public theatres to close sending acting companies out to tour the countryside, Shakespeare did not stop writing. He expanded his options by writing non-dramatic poems. Whether he felt limited by the theatre, or he simply needed a way to keep an income to provide for his family, he found himself popular with both theatre patrons and readers. As the public theatres grew in popularity there was an increased demand for new plays and Shakespeare wrote them at an impressive rate. What gave Shakespeare the means to write at such a pace? The headings in the published quartos may be a clue to the possibility that Shakespeare wrote parts with certain actors in mind. Perhaps he trusted the actors performing the material he was writing. Was this possible trust a catalyst in developing new plays at such a rapid pace?

Aspects of Shakespeare's personal life are highlighted through his business ventures, tragedy, and extravagant gifts. Once Shakespeare became a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men and a partner in the Globe, he was making good money and could afford to spend and invest his money. How he became wise with his money can be linked to his father's financial mistakes. Whether the death of his son or his absence from home triggered the spending spree in the late 1590s is unknown. Perhaps Shakespeare battled his critics not with words, but by flaunting his wealth. He exhibited a strong sense of honor and duty by providing not only for his family but also for his parents. If he was secretly practicing the old faith, he may have feared discovery and strove to be so successful that none would question his loyalty to his king. This combination of guilt, honor, and duty may have fueled a "middle-class writer with no university education" (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 447) to write some of the finest plays ever written.

The answers to all of these questions are speculative and throughout the centuries layers of hypothesis have been added to this unsolved mystery. As much fun as it is to create possibilities surrounding a man's life to tell us what we want to hear, we have to remember that only Shakespeare lived that life. With no documented insight to Shakespeare's mind the real answers are sealed inside a tomb in the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

Part Two: A Study of King Lear

The History of King Lear

Composition of *King Lear*:

The exact date of composition for *King Lear* is unknown; this challenges scholars to look for clues in what facts are known about the play. From the date of the premiere performance on December 26th 1606, scholars look back in time to the publication of some of the possible sources Shakespeare used to write *King Lear*. One of the difficulties which scholars face in determining the sources Shakespeare used comes from knowing that “the main plot of *King Lear* was well known in Shakespeare’s day- at least 40 versions have been uncovered by scholars.” (Boyce, 349) In combination with the first performance date and the publication records preceding that premiere performance, scholars suggest that “*King Lear* was written between the spring of 1603 and early 1606, for one of the play’s sources--Samuel Harsnett’s book--was published in March 1603, and a play that was influenced by *Lear*-- *The Fleir*, by Edward Sharpham--was registered for publication in May 1606.” (Boyce, 349) The exact date of composition of *King Lear* is a subject where scholars tend to agree that, “A more precise date is difficult to determine.” (Boyce, 349)

Scholars’ opinions differ as they use the text to search for clues to determine a more precise date of composition. Given the simultaneous editing and printing process of the time period and the similarities of *Lear* and other work published, scholars are unable to determine the order of influence between authors. “Similarly, relationships between *Lear* and other works published between 1603 and 1606 are generally problematic, as it

is impossible to tell which is in debt to which.” (Boyce, 350) The number of sources published which possibly influenced Shakespeare’s writing of *King Lear* send scholars searching through texts for clues to support theories about the inspiration for the plot and subplots of the play.

Sources for *King Lear*:

Given that the main plot line of *Lear* was well known - based on the multiple versions discovered by scholars - the primary influence for Shakespeare might have been his own play. It is suggested that Shakespeare could have been acting in a company as early as 1590. A play by an anonymous playwright, titled *King Leir*, was onstage at that time. When the rearranging of theatre companies would happen, the playwrights took their plays from company to company. Did Shakespeare take *King Leir* with him when the Lord Chamberlain’s Men was formed in 1594 or was he handed the play to rewrite it for the company? “It has been suggested that the first *King Leir* was part of his own juvenile work, but it is more probable that he recalled his youthful involvement in it and then completely rewrote it for the King’s Men.” (Ackroyd, 446) With the probable answer the latter, “it is clear that the playwright relied chiefly on an earlier, anonymous play, *King Leir* (c. 1590).” (Boyce, 349) Scholars suggest the connection Shakespeare has to *King Leir* is closer than a mere influence. If Shakespeare did not write the play earlier then perhaps his memories come from acting in the play, making his connection to the play more personal than a memory of witnessing it. “Some scholars think Shakespeare may have acted in *King Leir* in the 1590’s, playing a character corresponding to Kent, for a number of passages that are especially closely echoed in

Lear are spoken when that figure is on stage.” (Boyce, 349) Speculation aside, scholars have discovered specific sources Shakespeare used or at least consulted when writing *King Lear*.

Scholars trace Shakespeare’s sources through the known publications where the story of *Lear* appears. When looking for a source for the anonymous play *King Lear*, circa 1590, scholars agree the main source is Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. (Ackroyd, 162) In the second edition of Holinshed’s book published in 1587, scholars begin to look for clues for Shakespeare’s influences based on what influenced the author of the source. “Holinshed’s account of *Lear* is based on the work of a medieval historian, Geoffrey of Monmouth.” (Boyce, 349) As we look at the possible sources for *King Lear* we see how Shakespeare mixed and matched his sources of influence.

The stories in Holinshed’s *Chronicles* and other possible sources lead scholars to believe Shakespeare used this inspiration as influence for the main plot of *Lear* and the details of the sub-plots. “Details of Gloucester’s attempted suicide were probably inspired by another story in Holinshed, that of a giant who was thrown to his death from the cliffs of Dover.” (Boyce, 349) The sub-plot revolving around Gloucester and his sons is inspired by Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* published in 1590. The details in Sidney’s *Arcadia* crossover between the main plot and the sub-plot giving proof that Shakespeare reassembled the sources of his influence. Sidney’s *Arcadia* “may also have influenced the main plot, for Sidney’s tragic hero is not restored to his former glory, like *King Lear*, but dies of mingled joy and exhaustion, like Shakespeare’s Gloucester. Also,

Sidney's king is driven out into a storm, like Lear, and lives as a beggar, like Edgar.”

(Boyce, 349)

The Themes and Setting of *King Lear*:

Scholars discovered sources which Shakespeare was inspired to use towards the themes in *King Lear* contributing to Edgar's assumed mental state of mind, Edmund's position as a bastard, and unethical stance of morals. “Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), which provided the lore of demons for Edgar's assumed lunacy, and John Florio's English translation of the *Essays* of Michel de Montaigne (1603), whose skepticism influenced Edmund's disdain for the conventional attitude towards illegitimacy, as well as his unscrupulous attitude towards morals.”

(Boyce, 349) In no other version of the Lear story does the character go mad, which leaves scholars searching for what triggered Shakespeare's imagination to create a mad king.

We can see how Shakespeare scavenged his ideas from multiple sources, but the thought processes that drove him to use these various sources in the ways he did leaves scholars wondering at the full spectrum of his imagination. “We may picture his mind and imagination as a vast assimilator, picking up trifles that were later polished until they glowed.” (Ackroyd, 447) The process of Shakespeare's imagination is impossible to determine but using the text and the dramatic action of the play we can compare the themes with the sources and the events in Shakespeare's life to construct possible motives for the themes contained in *King Lear*. It is in the text and dramatic action where

we discover the themes of human nature, various levels and desires of love, status, loyalty and patience, religion, and suffering.

Human Nature:

The theme of human nature or rather its fallibility is the core of Shakespeare's play. Gloucester's inability to trust and lack of judgment toward Edgar is his breakdown of human nature. Lear's madness comes through his desire of total love from his daughters and sends him whirling into an instable mental frenzy. The desire for power seen in Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund where their cruelties are dispensed towards family emphasizes the evil side of individual human nature. What good comes from human nature is punished or tested under extreme circumstances throughout the play. Cordelia speaks the truth concerning her love towards her father but is banished and married off to the king of France. Kent's humanity can be seen as the core of good when discussing human nature in terms of good verses evil in *King Lear*. The characters' failures combined with the lack of divine intervention forces the characters to rely on the altruistic behaviors of others or self-realizations to change the course of action while the characters learn to humble themselves. "To watch *King Lear* is to approach the recognition that there is indeed no meaning to life and that there are limits to human understanding. So we lay down a heavy burden and are made humble." (Ackroyd, 447)

Love:

The theme of love in *Lear* can be seen in two forms, one being unconditional love and the second being sexual love. Cordelia and Kent's love of Lear is seen as an

unconditional love. Lear banishes both Cordelia and Kent and they respond with love and respect they have for the man that is a father and king. Cordelia and Kent embody the good characteristics of love when recognizing love under the pretenses of good versus evil. The evil love in *Lear* stems from a sexual nature. “In *King Lear* sexual love is seen as evil and is only presented in the monstrous rivalry of Regan and Goneril for Edmund.” (Boyce, 348) The sexual tension between Regan, Goneril, and Edmund is the only physical example of sexual love but it can be seen as the root of other evils in the play. For example, Edmund entered the world through illicit sex, which connects the physical aspect of sex to evil. With familial love dismissed by Lear and the association of evil with sexual love, “Happiness is only offered in the isolated and asexual world of the reunited but imprisoned Lear and Cordelia, where all other human contact is willingly forsworn.” (Boyce, 348)

Status:

Shakespeare plays with the increase and decrease of status in *King Lear*. Lear elevates the status of Goneril, Regan, Albany, and Cornwall when dividing the kingdom. It is through the use of their new status that we see how a rise in power can deconstruct the individual human nature. Cordelia’s banishment and subsequent decrease in status in Lear’s kingdom becomes an increase in status when she becomes the Queen of France. Edgar’s status is decreased at the expense of Edmund as he tries to increase his own status. The status change concerning Lear and Gloucester is shared as they decreased their status through their individual actions. Lear divides the kingdom relinquishing his power and status as the land is divided. Gloucester’s loyalty for Lear garners him the

label of a traitor under the new regime, decreasing his status as Edmund rises to the noble title the Earl of Gloucester. Oswald's condition is defined by his desires to increase his status, which "is a caricature of a 17th-century social climber." (Boyce, 348)

Kent's status change is challenged through an internal struggle. Kent loses his title upon banishment from the kingdom, decreasing his status. When Kent returns in disguise, his status is that of a servant wherein we discover the paradox of Kent's situation. Kent serves Lear as the Earl of Kent and has a high level of status, whereas when he is disguised as Caius he still serves Lear but with a decreased level of status. Kent's confrontation with Oswald reveals the struggle Kent has dealing with his change in status.

Loyalty and Patience:

Kent's struggle with his decrease in status is balanced with the abundance of loyalty he has for Lear. When Oswald shows a lack of respect towards Lear, Kent's reactions stem from his loyalty and respect for Lear, coupled with the snobbery of an aristocrat who resents social climbers, and he unleashes his frustration on Oswald. Kent's loyalty finds him on a heath in a storm caring for the mad king. This is where Kent discovers that his loyalty develops into a test of patience. Lear's decline tests the limits of Kent's patience as he watches his beloved king be consumed by madness. Kent maintains his loyalty even when he recognizes that he has lost the man known as King Lear and is caring for a man named Lear. Kent's patience is preserved when he arranges the reunion between Lear and Cordelia. The human nature of Kent as defined by his love of and loyalty to Lear comes to a mortal end when Lear dies. It is up to interpretation

whether Kent's service to Lear is finished upon Lear's death, or will Kent's patience, loyalty and unconditional love continue to serve Lear until his own death.

Religion and suffering:

Shakespeare's *King Lear* departs from the various sources of the story as it leaves behind the Christian tone to the overall theme of the play. "Shakespeare removes the Christian allusions of the earlier drama, and gives it a thoroughly pagan atmosphere." (Ackroyd, 448) The symbolism provided by the Christian allusions is also removed from the play by converting the "...storm from a signal that divine justice is impending into an image of evil chaos." (Kermode, 1251) Shakespeare strips away the Christian allusions in favor of a pagan atmosphere. This strengthens the setting of ancient Britain, which deemphasizes the role of religious faith. With the lack of divine intervention and the evil chaos, the suffering the characters endure is amplified with "...images throughout the play of the human body being wracked and tortured" (Ackroyd, 448) humbling the human body, mind, and spirit.

Performance History of *King Lear*

The theatrical history of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* begins with very few documented facts. The details surrounding various performances of *King Lear* become more specific as one progresses through the documentation over the years. Sifting through approximately 400 years of information since the documented premiere performance, one can see how the play *King Lear* has changed with the times. For example, there have been rewritten versions of *King Lear* that are extremely different from Shakespeare's original. When the political environment of England mirrored that of the play too closely, *King Lear* was banished from the stage. It is by looking at the documented evolution of the play *King Lear* that we find the actors who played the parts, the multiple staging concepts through various versions, and how the play was received throughout its performance history.

The exact number of performances of *King Lear* that took place during Shakespeare's life is difficult to pinpoint. The evidence regarding the first performance is accessible through the title page of the first quarto publication. The quarto title page states "it was played before the Kinges Maiestie at Whitehall vpon St. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes." (Ackroyd, 445) Court records provide the exact date and year "for the first performance of *King Lear* at the court on 26 December 1606." (Ackroyd, 445) The critical response regarding the premiere performance or any following performances is provided through individual beliefs with minimal documentation. "Scholars believe that the play was not well received in Shakespeare's day, for there are

few surviving references to it in contemporary documents.” (Boyce, 350) This minimal documentation proves difficult when forming a possible cast list.

With the available documentation concerning the premiere performance, scholars attempt to piece together a possible cast list using the known members of the King’s Men. When we look to Shakespeare’s role as a company member, there is endless speculation as to which roles he might have played in his own plays. The roles he could have played range “from Caesar in *Julius Caesar* to the Friar in *Romeo and Juliet*, from Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida* to Orsino in *Twelfth Night*.” (Ackroyd, 234) Scholars also suggest the possibility that Shakespeare took on the role of Albany in *King Lear*. Through the speculation of which roles he played comes the question of why he chose to play these particular roles. “It would also be sensible to suppose that Shakespeare played those roles in which he could simultaneously watch or ‘direct’ the other actors in rehearsal, rather like the conductor of an orchestra.” (Ackroyd, 235) Aside from the speculation surrounding Shakespeare possibly playing Albany, two other actors have a more definite spot in the cast.

With Will Kempe’s departure from the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in 1599, (Ackroyd, 381) Shakespeare began to write parts for the company’s new comic actor, Robert Armin. “It is worth remarking that Shakespeare started writing parts for ‘fools’ only after Armin had joined the company.” (Ackroyd, 382) Armin’s notoriety for being a comedian and a musician leads scholars to acknowledge “Shakespeare wrote many songs for him.” (Ackroyd, 382) What is undetermined is “whether Shakespeare fashioned his new ‘fools’ in the image of Armin, or whether Armin’s persona was fashioned by Shakespeare.” (Ackroyd, 382) However Shakespeare fashioned his writing for Armin,

the possible collaboration created “Touchstone and Feste, the Fool in *King Lear* and the gravedigger in *Hamlet*.” (Ackroyd, 382) There is a possibility that Armin played Cordelia as well as the Fool. “It seems strange ‘doubling’ but it would explain the fact that the Fool mysteriously disappears at the end of the third act, at which point Cordelia emerges.” (Ackroyd, 446) Scholars debate the idea of a comic actor portraying Cordelia, “The idea of Cordelia played by a comic actor, however, does not suit modern taste. It is easier to imagine a boy in the part.” (Ackroyd, 446) Robert Armin’s credit for playing the Fool in *King Lear* is solid, but the speculation of Armin playing Cordelia compares to the suggestion of Shakespeare playing Albany. With the reorganization of the Lord Strange’s Men in 1594 into the Lord Chamberlain’s Men the friendship between Richard Burbage and William Shakespeare was solidified.

Shakespeare often wrote specific characters with particular actors in mind. The friendship between Burbage and Shakespeare proved to be a lucrative one for both men. Shakespeare’s reputation as a playwright was enhanced with actors like Burbage, who kept the theatre full of patrons for “Burbage is said to have been the greatest actor of the Elizabethan Theatre.” (Boyce, 81) Burbage was the leading man in the time of Shakespeare, playing the major roles in his plays such as Hamlet, Lear, Malvolio, Othello, and Richard III. It was the success of *Richard III* which established Burbage as an actor and Shakespeare as a playwright. Charles Boyce notes that while Burbage “achieved widespread recognition in *Richard III*, the play also established Shakespeare as a playwright.” (Boyce, 82) Scholars agree, “it is known that Richard Burbage was the original Lear.” (Boyce, 350) Aside from the roles of Lear, Fool, and Albany the rest of the cast for the premiere performance is pure speculation (unless there is a program

tucked behind a pillar in Whitehall waiting to be discovered). Along with that program there might be a book documenting the other performances of *King Lear* from 1606-1660.

***King Lear* after Shakespeare:**

The London theatre scene outlived Shakespeare, but with the death of King James in 1625 the popularity of the theatre slowly faded under the visual art-loving King Charles I, although masques continued through the 1630s. “Then, in 1642, under Puritan influence, Parliament ordered the closure of all theatres.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 31) It was not until 1660 when the theatres reopened with the restoration of the Monarchy that we find documented performances of *King Lear*. The performances were sporadic, but the script changes are noteworthy as it came back to the stage after a long absence.

After the theatres were reopened in 1660, there were only two documented performances of *King Lear* over fifteen years. Charles Boyce states, “*Lear* was staged only twice, in 1660 (by William Davenant) and 1675” (350). It was in 1681, when Nahum Tate’s version of *King Lear* titled *History of King Lear* that we see vast changes to the script. Tate’s *History of King Lear* “eliminated Lear’s fool and kept Cordelia alive so that she could marry Edgar.” (Dunton-Downer and Riding, 356) Tate kept much of the Shakespearean dialogue, “but amid vast changes in the plot, including a happy ending in which Lear is restored to his throne” (Boyce, 350) we see the play begin to separate from the original. The critical response to Tate’s version differs depending on the era. “Though modern commentators condemn this version as a travesty, it was one of the

most successful plays in the history of the English stage, continuing to be staged-with Shakespeare's text sometimes restored in varying degrees-until as late as 1843." (Boyce, 350) Tate's version of *King Lear* was standard until 1742 when Shakespeare's text began to reappear.

The restoration of Shakespeare's text started with actor David Garrick [in 1742]. The play and the character Lear was a source of constant work for Garrick. "Yet throughout his career Garrick kept returning to the text, trying to find ways of bringing the playing-text, the play in the theatre, closer and closer to the Shakespearean play he so much admired." (Bate and Jackson, 82) Garrick's first attempt to play Lear was in 1742, when he was 25. For an actor to take on such an extensive role at such a young age shows the passion and determination for success. Garrick was "still playing the role thirty-four years later in his retirement season in June 1776." (Bate and Jackson, 82) His performance would have evolved throughout the years as he reworked the text restoring much of Shakespeare's original script. "If the broad outline of his view of the character remained constant throughout this long and continuous encounter with the demands of the massive role, the performance changed and developed as Garrick altered his text again and again." (Bate and Jackson, 82) As Shakespeare's text was slowly reintroduced to the stage, *King Lear* vanished from the stage through government intervention.

In the early half of the nineteenth century England was in the middle of some of the most trying times for the country: "harvests had been bad and poverty was widespread; the church was but an instrument of the state; Parliament was sclerotic and unrepresentative." (Bate and Jackson, 92) The reigning monarch was King George III. While he was long lived, his physical and mental health was beginning to deteriorate:

“1811 was the year in which the king’s insanity was finally acknowledged to be permanent and incurable.” (Bate and Jackson, 93) The similarities between a mad Lear and a mad King George III were too close for comfort. Because of the fear of censorship, “in 1811 the theatre managers had agreed to suspend the play from the repertoire.” (Bate and Jackson, 93) We know that *Lear* was not staged in public theatres during this time, but the power of suggestion the theatre offers coinciding with current events should not be overlooked. “That *Lear* was not staged in the legitimate theatre during the next ten years provides vivid evidence of how Shakespearean drama is always open to topical interpretation.” (Bate and Jackson, 93) The self-imposed censorship of *King Lear* out of fear by the theatre managers as *Lear* was “suppressed by the government, which disliked its focus on a mad monarch at the time when King George III was insane.” (Boyce, 350) During the time when the play was not openly produced, Tate’s version snuck back onto stage removing the original Shakespearian text, which had slowly been restored by Garrick in the 1700s.

Within the sources concerning the banishment of *Lear* from the stage there is documentation of performances preceding 1811 and shortly after the ten years of suppressed censorship. “In 1809 in a version by John Phillip Kemble,” *Lear* is again on stage with a version “that restored most of Tate’s text.” (Boyce, 350) It was not until 1823 that *Lear*’s death returned to the stage. “Edmund Kean, under the influence of the critics Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt, restored *Lear*’s death in his production of 1823.” (Boyce, 350) Kean’s production brought back *Lear*’s death but what should not be overlooked is that the text was still primarily Tate’s. The remnants of Tate’s version of *King Lear* would not leave the stage until 1838. Shakespeare’s original text would not

completely return to the stage until 1845 and by 1876 Shakespeare's text was once again standard for productions of *King Lear*. "No subsequent production reverted to Tate, but considerable editing of the original text remained common," (Boyce, 350) and still is common to this day.

The 20th century has seen a rise in popularity for *King Lear* with many leading actors vying for the opportunity to play Lear. Notable actors who have walked the boards as Lear are "John Gielgud, Donald Wolfit in the 1940s; Michael Redgrave, Orson Welles, and Charles Laughton in the 1950s; Paul Scofield, especially in a famed 1962 staging by Peter Brook; and James Earl Jones in Joseph Papp's production of 1973." (Boyce, 350) Sir Laurence Olivier played Lear twice: once in 1946 where it is reported that he was upstaged by Sir Alec Guinness playing the part of the Fool, and in 1983 where he took on Lear for a version for television. Ian McKellen played Lear in 2007 for the first time but it was his third time performing in a production of *King Lear* having played Edgar and Kent the two previous times. In 2009 Stacey Keach played Lear for a production of *King Lear* produced by the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, and later remounted for a run at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington D.C.

King Lear has survived through extensive rewrites and being suppressed from the stage. The daunting task of enacting such a tragic story still excites actors just as the tragic events captivate the attention of audiences. The joint excitement and captivation prove that Shakespeare wrote a timeless piece of theatre.

Part Three: Process

Character Analysis

The Earl of Kent is an exceptional character and I am grateful for the chance to develop this character from the page to the stage. After my initial reading of the script I was intrigued to discover how a character can have so many strong good qualities and come out of a grueling tragedy as a pillar of stoicism and loyalty. In each reading, I was looking for the traits, actions, and relationships that could potentially separate Kent from the rest of the characters. Kent provides plenty of fuel to the fire with his loose tongue and has a hand in motivating the tragedy, proving that every hero is not a saint.

I discovered that Kent is confident and loyal throughout his service to Lear. Kent's confidence provides the character the ability to accomplish his loyal service but also puts him into situations where shame fills him with guilt. For example, Kent ends up in the stocks on one occasion. Kent's confidence, at times, undermines his status, which leads to banishment or being placed in the stocks. Kent's unconditional love for Lear drives his loyalty pushing Kent to protect and take of the King at any cost. It is Kent's unconditional love and desire to prove that love that force him to dismiss his banishment and subsequent death threat by taking on a disguise in order to continue his service. Kent hides his true identity from everyone for the majority of the play, with the exception of Cordelia. When Kent returns in disguise his drop in status is fueled by anger, frustration, and witnessing the disgraceful treatment Lear endures. Does Kent's unconditional love of Lear turn into a form of greed that turns Kent's selfless acts of service into acts of selfishness? Kent's loyalty and confidence are tested throughout the play as his patience

wears thin. I think it is in his tests of patience where, as an actor, I will find Kent's faults in his loyalty and confidence.

Kent's actions are meant to prove not only his confidence and loyalty to Lear, but are also the driving force used to prove the king's accusations to be false. Through multiple readings of the script, I find Kent's various relationships further define his loyalty and confidence but also they are tested once he returns in 1.4 seeking new service under Lear. Kent's relationships with Lear, Fool, Cordelia, Regan, Goneril, Gloucester, Oswald, the knight, and Edgar magnify not only his loyalty but also the unconditional love he has for Lear.

According to Robert Egan's article "Kent and the Audience: The Character as Spectator," Kent also has a relationship with the audience. Egan discusses Kent's relationship with the audience under the premise of Kent being the voice of the audience's feelings as the story develops. For example, Kent is silent while Lear is dividing his kingdom in 1.1, and the audience watches as nobody speaks up to stop Lear from dividing the kingdom. "Throughout, Kent maintains an attitude parallel to that of the audience: intensely and critically aware of the central action, silently responsive to it, but effectually outside its boundaries." (Egan, 147) Kent finally speaks, advising Lear not to divide the kingdom. If the audience has united with Kent then his release from silence would mirror the release the audience has been struggling to express. I find this potential relationship worth understanding in order to justify why Kent is silent on stage during scenes that compromise his character. For example, when Kent is released from the stocks in 2.4, Lear dismisses him and he stays on stage. Kent witnesses the harsh treatment Lear receives from his two eldest daughters, and remains silent. Kent

eventually exits with Lear. William Ringler discusses the lack of stage direction and awkwardness of Kent's actions in "Exit Kent". Kent leaving with Lear suggesting the audience could be confused when Kent re-enters to begin 3.1, after the 25 lines concluding 2.4, asking a knight the whereabouts of the King. Should Kent leave the scene when released from the stocks, and jeopardize the relationship with the audience in order to spare the potential confusion of the audience with the next entrance? Ringler suggests that it is possible that Kent stays on stage, silent due to his loyal nature. "Kent exemplifies selfless loyalty, and his fate is to be either spurned, unrecognized, or ignored." (Ringler, 316) Ringler's essay identifies Kent's unconditional love, and his anger and frustration with his drop in status.

Scene-by-Scene Character Breakdown:

Some editions of *King Lear* do not separate 2.2 into three scenes giving Kent eleven scenes rather than thirteen. I have taken the suggested separation of 2.2 and will explore thirteen scenes. The following work is an exploration of those thirteen scenes involving the Earl of Kent. This work will provide a further understanding of the character and text, which will allow me to create multiple options to explore throughout the rehearsal process.

Each scene analysis will include:

- The character's super objective
- The individual scene objective for Kent
- A summary of the action within the scene
- Character motivations
- The stimuli to which the character responds
- The impulses that drive the character
- The rationale behind the character's actions
- Obstacles (Physical obstacles will vary until the staging is decided in rehearsal)

Act I, scene 1: The Palace of King Lear**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to listen to the matters at hand in order to lend my services as counselor to the King.

A summary of the action:

In the opening scene Kent and Gloucester discuss the knowledge of Lear dividing up his Kingdom without objection. Gloucester brags about Edmund being a bastard son compared to his legitimate son, Edgar. Kent meets the bastard son of Gloucester. During this introduction Gloucester reveals a friendship between him and Kent.

Lear makes a grand entrance with his three daughters along with Albany and Cornwall. Lear announces that he is dividing his kingdom between the three daughters. Lear asks his three daughters to profess their love to him, and with each answer he decides how the kingdom shall be divided. Goneril and Regan answers are filled with the words of love that Lear wants to hear, while Cordelia speaks from her heart. Lear, furious with Cordelia's answer takes her share of the kingdom away and banishes her from his sight. Kent speaks up and questions Lear's judgment. Lear warns Kent to keep silent. Lear sends for the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France. Lear divides the kingdom between his two eldest daughters and their husbands. Lear announces that he

will rotate living with his two daughters on a monthly basis. Kent is relentless voicing his opinion. Lear banishes Kent giving him five days to tie up loose ends in the kingdom and to leave on the sixth day. If Kent is seen after the sixth day the punishment is death. Kent gives well wishes to Cordelia and warns to Goneril and Regan to hold true to their promises of love. Kent leaves.

The Duke of Burgundy and the King of France enter. Lear offers Cordelia's hand in marriage to Burgundy. Cordelia, without a dowry, does not interest Burgundy and he declines the offer. The King of France accepts the proposal and takes Cordelia's hand in marriage. Lear and Burgundy leave with Cornwall, Albany, Gloucester, and Edmund in tow. Cordelia tells her sisters good-bye and presses them to take care of their father. The King of France and his new Queen leave. Goneril and Regan try to make sense of the events that have just unfolded before their very eyes.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Lear's possible choice of favoring Cornwall over Albany motivates Kent's question to Gloucester.
- Does Kent think this is all a scheme in order to give Cordelia something to fight for, or the best land?
- The presence of Edmund motivates dialogue between Gloucester and Kent
- Lear berating Cordelia motivates Kent to interject and defend Cordelia

- Lear dividing his kingdom and releasing his power to his eldest daughters and their husbands and the banishment of Cordelia motivates Kent to advise against these actions
- The banishment of Kent motivates his blessing to Cordelia, his stern warning to Goneril and Regan, and finally his exit

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- The opening line by Kent reveals that Lear favors Cornwall over Albany. Kent is under the impression that Lear favored Albany over Cornwall. This ‘impression’ is what stimulates Kent to raise the opening question to Gloucester.
- The presence of Edmund stimulates another response in the form of a question.

Kent: “*Is not this your son, my lord?*”

- The banishment of Cordelia stimulates Kent to interject and the subsequent hush from Lear.

Kent: “*Good my liege-*”

Lear: “*Peace, Kent,*

Come not between the dragon and his wrath!”

- Lear’s announcement that Cordelia’s share of the kingdom is to go to Cornwall and Albany and Lear’s relinquishment of power stimulates Kent to

advise caution and defend Cordelia. Kent does this by stressing his allegiance to the crown and the father-like status Kent has labeled his love of Lear.

- Lear continues to stand his ground by telling Kent once again to stay out of the way, which stimulates Kent to pledge loyalty to Lear and express concern over his safety
- Lear's exclamation "Out of my sight!" stimulates Kent's plea to stay
- Lear swears to the gods, which stimulates Kent to continue his protest
- Lear banishes Kent, which stimulates Kent to bestow his blessings onto Cordelia and stern warnings to Goneril and Regan
- Kent's final words stimulate his exit

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Confusion with the unknown
- Wary of whether or not to continue the conversation with Edmund present
- Shocked and afraid my secure world will crash
- Pleading with Lear to think and listen to what he is saying
- Pointing out the obvious to squash my fears
- Swearing my loyalty
- Begging for an ear
- Will not shut-up - anger
- Acceptance of status change

- Angry from the result of Lear being stubborn
- Pray
- Love
- Warn the sisters
- I think Kent decides never to leave the kingdom. Kent knows he is the only one left who is close enough to the King to at least protect him in some fashion. Kent would 'show up' even if he were coming to a losing battle in order to protect the king. Kent serves the king not only because he is loyal to Lear but; he truly loves Lear.

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

These are different suggestions of the character's thought process, which could prove to work as further character exploration takes place and some of them are hypothetical off the cuff remarks or options to try when rehearsal begins.

- Under the assumption that Kent has been in council with King Lear and the later revealing of Kent and Gloucester's friendship the assumption can be made that the knowledge Kent and Gloucester have of Lear dividing his Kingdom has been from recent discussion in private counsel. Here we can arrive at the position that the assumed private counsel and Lear's decision drives the impulse to open the scene.
- When Lear berates Cordelia for her response to his question of love, a number of possible impulses to drive Kent are revealed. Kent defends

Cordelia not only to show proof in his loyalty to the crown but also to warrant concern for Lear's safety as he relinquishes power and land. Also there is the element of Kent's love for Lear not only as king and a man but the symbolism behind the title of king- the monarchy system, something that Kent stands behind wholeheartedly. I think also there is a possible spark of love for Cordelia that impulses Kent. Does Kent love Cordelia as more than a sister? Is Kent too old for Cordelia? Could Kent's main impulse be his desires to be with Cordelia, if so, and then is Kent's loyalty a façade to earn respect and good graces from a father (who just happens to be king)? Has Kent's love for Cordelia come and gone knowing he had no chance?

- Another impulse for Kent to act the way he does is the idea of security. If the kingdom is a well-oiled machine why is Lear ripping it apart? In dividing the kingdom, Lear is ripping Kent's sense of security, the symbolism behind the monarchy system, and idyllic world Kent has come to know. What else could inspire someone to act more than the crushing of their world and everything it stands for in mere moments?
- Along that line of thought, Kent's love is for Lear and the crown therefore, his impulse to prove his loyalty becomes magnified to the millions when Lear banishes Kent from the kingdom. Kent must salvage what is left of his world and redefine not only his relationship with the king but also his idea of security from the repercussions he has endured tossed down by Lear. The only thing he can do to avoid

death is leave the kingdom. How can someone avoid death and express loyalty without leaving the kingdom? Kent's impulse to prove his self worth and loyalty to the king and the crown drive him to new lengths.

Obstacles:

- Lear's decision to divide the kingdom
- A fear of uncertainty with the outcome, regarding the division of the kingdom
- Lear's stubbornness
- My own strong point of view
- My own banishment

Act I, scene 4: The Palace of Albany**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to justify my loyalty to Lear in order to save the monarchy.

A summary of the action:

Kent enters and includes the spectators in his plan to enter Lear's service in disguise. Lear enters with various knights and attendants. The disguised Kent asks to gain employment to serve Lear. Kent reveals his age as forty-eight. Lear desires a word with Goneril. Lear is informed that she is weary and cannot meet. Oswald, the twit that he is, provokes Lear and Lear strikes him. The disguised Kent trips Oswald, and then proceeds to push him out of the chambers in order to fetch Goneril. In doing this Kent earns favor of Lear and is employed in his service. Lear's fool enters and advises Lear and Kent in humorous way to the effect of you will suffer if you cannot please those of higher status. Then making light of Lear's situation of having questionable power, and reverberating the results of banishing those close to him. Lear's knights and servants act unruly, diminishing the regal atmosphere of Goneril's home. Goneril enters and begins to rip into Lear about how his unruly knights and servants are turning the castle into a brothel or a tavern. Goneril is to have fifty knights leave. Lear, furious with his daughter, leaves Goneril and Albany and heads for Regan and Cornwall's.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent's banishment provokes him to prove his loyalty to Lear and in turn promotes his idea of returning in disguise prompting Kent to earn Lear's favor and good graces to gain employment.
- Oswald taunts Lear by belittling Lear's preconceived notion of his own status. Oswald's ill treatment of Lear causes Kent to slap Oswald around and push him out of the door requiring Oswald to fetch Goneril.
- Kent listens to the Fool. Kent takes the opportunity to let his selfless nature speak reassuring Lear and almost dismissing the fool.
- Goneril rips into her father- Kent listens.
- Lear, furious with Goneril and her proclamations- decides to leave and go to Regan's household. Kent exits upon the request of Lear.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- In response to Kent's banishment:

Kent: "If but as well I other accents borrow

That can my speech diffuse, my good intent

May carry through itself to that full issue

For which I razed my likeness. Now, banished Kent,

If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned

So it may come thy master whom thou lov'st

Shall find thee full of labours."

- Assertion of loyalty and humbleness-
 - Kent: *"A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the King."*
- Kent responds to Oswald's rude treatment to Lear- Resulting in physical harm to Oswald
- The physical harm done to Oswald earns Kent employment of service to Lear.
- The Fool speaks- Kent listens- and keeps the Fool in check while reassuring Lear and somewhat dismissing the Fool. (Is Kent dismissing the Fool?) (Does the Fool recognize Kent?)
 - *(Work on relationship with the Fool during this scene)*
- Goneril berates Lear- Kent keeps silent. Goneril confirms the fears Kent stated which resulted with his banishment.
- Lear's anger prompts Lear to gather his men and leave Goneril and Albany's palace.
- This action prompts Kent to leave-

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Selflessness
- Humbleness
- Anger at Oswald
- Pride to prove my loyalty

- Love
- Duty
- Honor
- Passion
- Fear of safety for Lear
- Fear of being recognized
- Joy upon receiving favor of Lear
- Pain at seeing the King being mistreated

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- Kent's love for Lear prompts Kent to come back in disguise in search of employment. Kent comes back not only out of love but because it is his duty to be with the King. I think Kent sees his banishment more as an opportunity to prove his loyalty. Kent is the kind of person that will fight for what he believes in and will not back down from anyone, even the King. Kent is a selfless and humble person. His humbleness and selflessness stem from his honor and duty to serve Lear. I think Kent has a sense of Pride, but his pride does not get in the way and only comes out when anger rises out of the fires in his bowels that ignite when danger or harm comes in the way of the King. Due to Kent's change in status, he is filled with resentment, which is directed towards those who are inferior or equal to his former status. Kent is a precursor to modern day secret service. Kent will take a bullet. The

difference with Kent and a secret serviceman is that Kent is allowed to offer his opinion on matters at hand.

- Kent has a certain amount of fear when he enters the scene. This fear comes from the possibility of what would happen if he were found out. I think the element of fear is snuffed when Kent sees the state of mind that Lear is in. When Lear starts to ask if anyone knows him (lines 217-221) is where Kent begins to see that Lear is starting to weaken in mind and body. Kent realizes he has bigger things to worry about than only the mistreatment of the king. Kent is correct about his concern over the safety of Lear. Kent is not the kind of person to boast, but rather will figure out how to continue to protect the king.
- Kent has a form of joy when he has earned the favor of Lear and is allowed to enter his service. Kent has no time to express his joy. I think it may be expressed with a simple sigh of relief acknowledging the acceptance.
- Lear's line 221- "*Who is it that can tell me who I am?*"
- The fool replies with- "*Lear's shadow.*"
- I think this line exchange has promise in meaning... We definitely open our eyes to see Lear as someone other than his former self. A new light has been cast on the appearance of Lear.
- (*Find info on the meaning of 'Shadow' referring to an actor*)
- Kent has an element of pain when seeing Lear being mistreated by Oswald and releases his pain into anger. I wonder what kind of restraint Kent has in regards to controlling his anger.

- Oswald ignites the fire in Kent's insides; however, Kent keeps quiet when Goneril berates Lear. Once again, is he quiet out of the fear of being recognized by Goneril? Is Kent playing it safe to see to what extent Goneril is treating her father? It is unlike Kent to keep quiet. What is the purpose?

Obstacles:

- The fear of being recognized
- Oswald
- Lower status
- My own anger and resentment
- Stage positioning? (Will have to wait until rehearsal)
- My disguise

Act I, scene 5: Outside Albany's castle just before departure to Cornwall's

The super objective for the Earl of Kent:

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to reassert my loyalty in order to insure the safety of Lear.
- I want to insure the safety of Lear in order to reassert my loyalty.

A summary of the action:

Lear sends Kent with letters to Regan and Gloucester. (According to the footnotes in the Arden version of *King Lear* it is up to debate as to whether Kent is going to Gloucester's as well as Regan's. Also, it is noted that a messenger could be present to deliver a letter to Gloucester; however, no letters ever arrive to Gloucester. It is suggested that Gloucester might be a meeting point, which is halfway to Cornwall's lending reason as to why everyone is at Gloucester's in Act 2, scene 1.) Kent vows to deliver the letters and exits. Lear and the fool chat. A gentleman enters. With horses ready, Lear and the Fool depart.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent finds himself with his first task for Lear. Kent accepts the task and exits.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent is simply responding to orders given from Lear. Lear is clear with the directions. Deliver the letter to Regan and provide her with no more information than what is provided within the letter. Lear requests that Kent be ‘speedy’ and Lear himself will follow soon.
- Lear’s request is met with a pledge from Kent to deliver the letters.

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Honor
- Trust
- Duty

Rationale behind the character’s actions (thought process):

- Kent has honor running through his veins. As simple as this task is, Kent is honored that Lear trusts him with it. Kent will in no doubt deliver said letters with speed and diligence in order to insure the safety of Lear’s arrival to Regan and Cornwall’s palace.

Obstacles:

- The fear of being recognized
- My self implied high standards to please Lear
- Lear’s unpredictable actions
- My disguise

Act II, scene 2: Outside Gloucester's castle**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

Could be one of these three options

- I want to crush Oswald's soul in order to defend my King.
- I want to crush Oswald's soul in order to teach Oswald a lesson and smash his face.
- I want to destroy Oswald in order to compensate my social displacement.

A summary of the action:

Just before sunrise Kent and Oswald meet just outside the castle of Gloucester. Kent begins a verbal onslaught toward Oswald. Eventually Kent draws on Oswald for possessing letters containing ill will toward the King. Kent physically beats Oswald until the entrance of Gloucester, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund comes at the request of the cries coming from Oswald. The entrance of Edmund, Gloucester, Cornwall, and Regan put an end to the dispute as Kent and Oswald take turns explaining themselves and further degrading each other. In essence Kent accuses Oswald of treason toward the crown. Cornwall deems Kent a braggart and puts Kent in the stocks where he spends the day. Everyone leaves besides Gloucester and Kent. Gloucester promises to make things right and goes for Lear. Kent overcome with emotion speaks aloud. Kent sleeps.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent has earned the favor of Lear by abusing Oswald.
- Kent, still upset with what Oswald had done to Lear, sees the opportunity to pick a fight. This so to say cock fighting between the two men leads to Oswald crying like a baby pleading for help.
- The entrance of Gloucester, Edmund, Regan, and Cornwall brings the fight to an intermission of physical violence, but they keep the words slinging from their mouths with a continuous verbal assault.
- Kent's relentlessness with his verbal attack on Oswald and the various claims of treason and such toward Oswald land him in the stocks.
- General name calling back and forth builds upon Kent's main motivation to stick up for the King. Kent is responsible for the disgrace and misery, which lands him in the stocks.
- Everyone leaves but Gloucester and Kent, and Gloucester runs to fetch Lear resulting in Kent offering a lament as he falls asleep.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- The way Oswald has previously treated Lear furthers Kent's resentment towards Oswald. Kent continues the fight by refusing to talk when asked a question by Oswald.

- This instance with Kent reveals a fault in judgment and character. Besides Oswald being a regular twit and not honoring the wishes of Lear in 1.4, Kent's verbal onslaught stems from the resentment he holds for those who are inferior or equal to his former status.
- Kent seeing Oswald connects him to Goneril and knows something is going on between the two sisters.
- When the stocks are asked for, Kent pulls out the 'diplomatic mission' card, relying on the fact that he is a messenger of the King. This gets him nowhere. Kent is to be in the stocks until noon. Then Regan demands Kent should stay in the stocks all night. Serving the King through attacking Oswald does not save him.
- If serving the King does not save him from the stocks then surly thinking of Cordelia will do something, which is provided in the letter (verbal message?) that has come from Cordelia. Will Cordelia come to help?

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Humor
- Rage
- Jealousy
- Distrust
- Pride
- Self-disgust

- Pain (Mental and Physical)
- Shame

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- I think at first when Kent comes across Oswald he is feeling a bit snarky toward him and is not consciously picking a fight, adding a pinch of humor to the character of Kent.
- Kent has some pent up rage boiling inside of him, and unleashes it toward Oswald, for several reasons.
- Kent is upset that a twit like Oswald has better clothes than him along with a higher rank, whereas Kent used to be ranked higher than Oswald before being banished. Kent resents Oswald because Oswald has not earned his status.
- Does Kent's pride get the best of him and he then lacks control over his anger generating from all of the wrong doings towards Lear, and Oswald just happens to be the lucky receiver?
- Is Kent harboring ill will towards Oswald for dishonoring Lear in 1.4?
- Is this Kent's version of fun?
- When Kent sees Oswald does he simply realize something bad is planned between Goneril and Regan? When does Kent see Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall as symbols of evil? Is it this scene when Kent calls on the being a messenger to the king to save him and it does nothing to help his cause?
- Kent's feelings of rage can stem from his banishment and lose of his title and role in the court.

- Kent's rage might be what he unleashes as a sign to pump up the 'smack down' on anyone who messes with Lear in order to reassert his loyalty for Lear.
- If this is the scene where Kent connects the pieces of who is evil- then his reactions contain distrust with others can come into play.
- Also, with Kent finding his way to the stocks he could be having a sense of mistrust with himself, but also self- disgust and failure.
- Depending on the fight style and choreography Kent could be in physical pain to match his mental pain of self-disgust, failure, and almost melancholy mind-set.
- Above and beyond, I think Kent has some shame that creeps out after Gloucester leaves to fetch Lear. He has let his King down. Who is going to save Kent now? Who is going to save Lear? Will Kent be able to look in the eyes of Lear?

Obstacles:

- Oswald
- Pride
- Regan
- Cornwall
- Guards
- Edmund
- My own anger and resentment
- My disguise

Act II, scene 3: A wood or just outside the castle of Gloucester

- Kent is asleep in the stocks. Kent is onstage while Edgar speaks, asleep.

Thoughts and Questions:

- Are we in a wood on the outskirts of the castle of Gloucester?
- Are we in the courtyard outside the castle?
- If we are in a wood- I question Kent's presence while Edgar speaks.
Unless Kent is put in the stocks close to the edge of the wood for folks passing by to gawk, point, stare, and laugh.
- How are we acknowledging the scene breaks within 2.2?
- Sleeping with images in my brain of Edgar and Kent banished. The audience visualizes the images of Lear's foolish decisions and Edmund's mendacity.

Obstacles:

- The stocks
- Guilt and shame
- Exhaustion
- Edgar?
- My disguise

Act II, scene 4: Outside of the castle of Gloucester

The super objective for the Earl of Kent:

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to explain my miscalculated actions in order to justify my predicament (Stocks) to Lear.

A summary of the action:

Lear arrives to the castle of Gloucester. Kent awakes and calls to Lear. Lear notices Kent in the stocks. Kent reveals that Cornwall and Regan have put him in the stocks. Kent explains that he delivered the letters as requested by Lear. Kent explains further that Oswald has also arrived, and tainted his own arrival. Kent, seeing Oswald, drew, and Oswald woke the house with the cries of a coward. Cornwall and Regan deemed the infraction worthy of the stocks. Lear, furious, leaves to find Regan and Cornwall. Kent asks the fool why Lear has arrived with so few in number. Kent and the Fool chat. Lear enters with Gloucester. Lear is upset that Regan and Cornwall refuse to meet with him. Lear calms down for a bit coming to his senses that health is important. Lear then sees Kent and lets the rage begin to flow from his voice once again, Lear bellows for Regan and Cornwall. Finally Regan and Cornwall enter with a train of servants. Kent is now released from the stocks. Kent calls to his lord. Lear recognizes that Kent is freed from the stocks. Regan and Lear have a chat. Regan wishes Lear to return to Goneril's house and ask for forgiveness. Lear asks for shelter from Regan and Cornwall. Lear tells Regan what Goneril has done (taken half of his men and verbally

assaulted him). Lear pledges that Regan is better than her sister and will not treat him wrong. Lear presses as to who put Kent in the stocks. Oswald enters and announces the arrival of Goneril. Goneril claims she has done nothing wrong. Cornwall admits to putting Kent in the stocks. Regan advises Lear to finish the month with Goneril. Lear offers up some better alternatives than to go back with Goneril and be slave to the wit Oswald. Lear calls Goneril some degrading and harsh names. Regan's reacts by advising Lear to have a train of only 25 men. Goneril chimes and asks why he needs any men at all to follow him around. Lear raises the rage and fury towards his two daughters as the storm approaches. Lear, Gloucester, Kent and the Fool exit once Lear is done speaking. Cornwall, Regan, and Goneril make plans to head indoors as the storm approaches. Gloucester comes in again and reports that Lear has called for a horse and is entering the storm.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent has been put in the stocks by Cornwall and Regan and is asleep. Lear arrives to the castle of Gloucester. Kent awakes to find Lear with him outside on the castle grounds. Lear's presence motivates Kent's shame in Lear seeing Kent in the stocks.
- The fool makes Kent's explanation that much harder with the jibes coming from the fools mouth; providing Kent's guilt trip.

- Kent has plenty of circumstance to provide Lear with an explanation. Kent reveals the truth as to how he ended up in the stocks. Kent's motivation to justify his situation in turn motivates Lear to lash out.
- Kent sees the king has arrived with fewer numbers, which motivates Kent to ask why.
- Kent is released from the stocks at the request of Lear- to be saved by a lame duck king motivates Kent to keep quiet and stay by his side

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Lear's disbelief stimulates the quick paced dialogue of yea and nay between Lear and Kent
- Lear's continued denial of the treachery carried out by his son and daughter provides an open door for an explanation from Kent.
- The outcome of Goneril and Regan ganging up on Lear stimulates not only Kent to follow but to formulate further plans to undo what Lear has done in order to insure his safety.

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Shame
- Guilt
- Pain (Mental and physical)

- Self-Disgust
- Anger
- Boiling rage

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- Kent's shame comes from Lear seeing him in the stocks upon his arrival.
- Also, Kent's shame in not being with him to stick up for Lear when Goneril took his men from him.
- The guilt Kent feels stems from not only being in the stocks but provokes a sense of failure when he meets the eyes of Lear.
- On a positive side I think Kent is justified when he explain to Lear who put him the stocks. The downside of this is that Goneril and Regan don't love their father so all of the rage that flows from Lear and Kent is falling on numb feelings.
- I think the way I am heading with deciphering the character of Kent is that he takes on too much responsibility or feels he is the only one fighting for the good cause. Gloucester is being duped and Edgar has been run out of the castle. Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund are developing into characters with evil intentions.
- Kent is present when Goneril and Regan gang up on Lear, so why does Kent keep quiet? Quiet selflessness? Once again, Regan and Goneril are proving Kent's previous statements to be true. Is it here where we really see that Lear is foolish to have surrendered his power, yet retain his title?

- The fool jibes at Kent saying he learned what he learned not by being in the stocks.
- This jibe could add to the guilt that should be oozing out of Kent.
- What keeps Kent from punching Cornwall in the mouth when he is released from the stocks?
- Another part of the shame, guilt, and self-disgust is that Kent cannot serve the king when he is in the stocks crushing the very thing that drives his life force and soul- his love for Lear.

Obstacles:

- Lear seeing Kent in the stocks
- Regan
- Goneril
- Cornwall
- Edmund
- Approaching storm
- Lear running into the storm
- The timing of my own exit?
- My disguise

Act III, scene 1: A heath**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to build trust with this knight in order to insure the safety of Lear.

A summary of the action:

The storm is upon us. Kent meets with a knight and asks for an update on the status of the king and the company he keeps. Kent sends the knight to Dover to find the forces of France and Cordelia. Kent will not give the knight his name but provides strict instructions with what to do once he finds Cordelia. The knight and Kent shake hands binding a trust. Kent is off to find the King.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent says he knows this knight- all the more reason to hide his identity, and more importantly a good reason to trust this knight.
- The scene takes place on a heath. Kent asks where is Lear. So we can assume that Kent has been away from the Lear and making plans to correspond with Cordelia. Kent is provided where the king is but not the exact location.
- In order to gain the trust of the knight and not reveal himself, Kent provides the knight with just enough information.

- Kent is wise with withholding certain information. He is motivated to do so because of the tyranny and evil doings by Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, etc.
- If the knight is captured he has no information to give.
- What motivates Kent to use his ring as a sign?

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *"I know you. Where's the King?"*
- The knight's information stimulates Kent to ask who is with Lear
- Kent reassures the Knight that he knows him- (tells him twice)
- Lines 18-29 stimulates the urgency in the scene with talk of spies and the mistreatment of Lear.
- Kent's acknowledgement in knowing this knight warrants something to build trust.
- Kent: *"Show her this ring, and she will tell you who your fellow is that yet you do not know."*
- Knight: *"Give me your hand."*

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Wary
- Trust
- Confidence

- Love
- Caution

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- It is apparent that Kent has really taken on his role of disguise and servant to Lear. He is familiar with this knight and knows him. Kent has blended with the knights and relates to the job they are doing.
- With the power struggle between the sisters and the split in the nation, Kent really has to be careful with whom he trusts and what information he passes onto others, which provides a sense of caution and urgency to the scene.
- Kent realizes he knows this knight, which provides a sense of comfort, yet he has to be wary with the turmoil going on around him. Kent needs to keep his head on straight.
- Why the ring? Does the ring carry the seal of Kent? If the knight happened to be captured would not Goneril or Regan recognize the ring? Why does only Cordelia recognize the ring?
- Does the ring provide a special insight to the relationship between Kent and Cordelia?
- Kent's love in this scene is Patriotic, loyalty, love for Lear, and possible more than sisterly love for Cordelia
- How much of a mastermind is Kent behind what is can now be considered the rebellion?

Obstacles:

- The storm
- The whereabouts of Lear
- Finding Lear
- The uncertainty with automatically trusting the knight
- My disguise

Act III, scene 2: The Heath where Lear is situated**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to inspire Lear to take shelter in order to insure the safety of the crown.

A summary of the action:

Lear and the Fool are on a heath and amongst the storm. Kent finds Lear and the Fool in the cold and wet rain. Kent convinces Lear to take shelter from the storm. Kent leads Lear and the Fool to shelter.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Now that Kent has found Lear it is his duty to get Lear to take some shelter. The elements of the storm are the motivation for Kent to take action. The last thing Kent needs is Lear to catch a death of a cold.
- Kent makes reference that he has not seen such a storm in all of his years.
- Lear is without a hat and in a storm- Urgency to get him indoors.
- The company has been dismissed from Gloucester's house forcing Kent to find the hovel.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *“Since I was a man such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, such groans of roaring wind and rain I never remember to have heard.”*
- Kent: *“Alack, Bareheaded?”*
- Kent: *Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel: Some friendship will it lend you ‘gainst the tempest.”*
- Lear: *“Where is this straw, my fellow?”*
- Kent: *“Which even but now, demanding after you, denied me to in- return and force their scanted courtesy.”*

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Sadness
- Joy
- Relief
- Hope
- Love

Rationale behind the character’s actions (thought process):

- Kent has relief when he finds Lear, but all the more urgency to get Lear to take shelter.

- I think Kent begins to enter the word of sadness when he hears Lear talk to the gods because the gods are absent.
- Kent has another moment of relief when Lear accepts the offer to take shelter.
- Once Lear accepts the offer of shelter Kent has a sense of hope that Lear will bounce back after warming by the fire... How long does the hope last?
- All this while Kent is being driven by his love and loyalty for Lear.
- Does Lear comprehend that they are not granted entrance to Gloucester's home?

Obstacles:

- The storm
- Lear and his initial stubbornness not to listen
- The cold and damp
- The staging?
- How much fight is in Lear
- The lack of welcome from Gloucester's household
- My disguise

Act III, scene 4: Entering the hovel**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to reassure Lear in order to get his ass inside the hovel.

A summary of the action:

Lear, Kent, and the Fool are just outside of the hovel. Lear does not want to go inside. Kent asks Lear to enter but Lear curses his daughters and insists that Kent go inside, urging Kent to leave Lear outside; he is going to pray before he enters. The fool goes inside and discovers Poor Tom (Edgar) and comes back out into the storm. Lear, sinking further into madness, tries to tear his clothes off of his body and is restrained by Kent and the Fool. Gloucester enters with a torch looking for the King. Kent acknowledges Gloucester. Gloucester comments on the banished Kent and his own son. (Gloucester is speaking to both of them) Lear accepts Poor Tom as a philosopher and will converse further with him. Lear decides to enter the hovel and the company follows.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Lear's madness becomes more defined, motivating the urgency of Kent to get Lear out of the storm and inside the hovel.
- Kent's desire to save Lear is at its highest point when trying to get Lear in the hovel. *"I had rather break mine own [heart]. Good my lord, enter."*

- Kent is motivated also to protect Lear due to unknown element of Poor Tom. Who is this guy?
- It seems that Kent has to get two men back into the hovel and get their wits grounded.
- Lear tries to rip his clothing off- Kent must do something more than ask Lear to enter the hovel.
- Kent tries to get Lear to listen to Gloucester, by asking Gloucester to get Lear to go inside.
- After considering the neglected needs of the poor, they enter the hovel.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *"I had rather break mine own [heart]. Good my lord, enter."*
- Edgar: *"Fathom and half, fathom and half: Poor Tom!"*
- Lear asks Poor Tom if he is here because he gave all he had to his daughter – Just like him.
- Kent is dealing with Lear who is contemplating God and the nature. Lear sees Poor Tom as a wizard of sorts.
- Lear denies that anything but daughters can wreak such havoc.
- Kent has to take all of this in, and think on his feet to try and get Lear inside- if there can be any chance at restoring Lear to power...
- Kent reacts to Gloucester thinking to use him as a tool to get Lear inside...

- Gloucester acknowledges that Kent was right with what he predicted in the beginning of the play.

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Desire to save the king
- Sorrow
- Agony
- Fear
- Torture
- Sadness

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- Kent offers up his heart and soul to save Lear. His love for Lear is expressed further in this scene.
- I think Kent's sadness teeters on sorrow for Lear when Lear starts talking to the gods and dealing with his anger, sorrow, and rage with nature.
- God versus Nature
- Man versus Nature
- Man versus the unknown
- I think Kent reaches a point of agony and possibly begins to realize that Lear cannot be the king he was in the past. Kent might reach the point where he is taking care of an old man who happens to be the former king

- Kent is then dealing with the loss of a loved one... I think these feelings are not fully in his mindset but rather starting to brew and formulate in his mind.
- If these feeling are starting to form in Kent's mind then he must be dealing with a sense of torture.
 - Torture of being banished
 - Torture of serving his king in disguise and not being able to reveal himself. Would Lear comprehend that it is Kent if he were to reveal himself?
 - Torture of losing a loved one
 - Torture to Lear going through pain and agony he is going through
- I think the fear that Kent is dealing with, if at all, at this point in time comes from the fear of the unknown- has the knight made it to Cordelia?
- How is Kent keeping his own wits sharp? Is Lear rubbing off on him?

Obstacles:

- Lear's stubbornness to not enter the hovel
- The Storm
- Poor Tom
- My own torture
- Lear's imposed torture
- Lear trusting Poor Tom
- The Fool?
- My own wits and patience wearing thin
- My disguise

Act III, scene 6: Near Gloucester's castle (Perhaps something better than a hovel)

The super objective for the Earl of Kent:

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to ensnare Lear's madness in order to buy some time.

A summary of the action:

Gloucester has offered a place to stay for Lear and his company. Kent graciously accepts the lodging. Gloucester confides that he will not be far away and leaves. Lear, Poor Tom, and Fool enter the scene. Kent urges Lear to lie down and rest. Lear must listen to a mock trial. Poor Tom and the Fool take their places on the bench, while Kent is appointed the mock Justice of the peace. (Symbolism?) Lear puts his daughters on trial. Lear clearly is mad and crazed. Kent finally gets Lear to lie down and rest. Lear falls to sleep as Gloucester, once again, enters the scene. Gloucester has come to move the king. Gloucester has heard of a plot to kill Lear, and that they need to move onto Dover where good company awaits. The Fool and Kent rush to get Lear onto his feet. Gloucester leaves while Poor Tom speaks while Kent and Fool are supporting Lear. Edgar possibly begins to shed the mask of Poor Tom. They exit. (It is possible that Edgar is onstage alone, and speaks as Kent and Fool escort Lear off stage following Gloucester.)

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Now the race is on to find more help to save Lear. Gloucester has given us lodging. The new lodging provides shelter from the storm and gives Kent more time to help Lear come to his senses.
- I think Kent has more of a down turn here and knows that he is seeing the man who used to be the King. The mock trial fills Kent with grief.
- Kent stands by and watches Lear sink deeper into madness.
- Kent can only keep Lear quiet by encouraging sleep.
- Lear is asleep- Kent has now bought some time in order to think of a plan.
- Gloucester ruins the peace and quiet with the urgent need to move the king.
- Kent honors the news with sudden alertness and prepares to move Lear to a new hiding place.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Gloucester: *“Here is better than open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out comfort with what addition I can. I will not be long from you.”*
 - o Here Kent knows he has some one on his side and can take a brief moment of comfort.
- Kent: *“All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience.”*
 - o Kent shares his thoughts with Gloucester on Lear’s mental status

- Kent tries to get Lear to lie down. Lear ignores Kent and makes plans for a mock trial of his daughter. What can Kent do? Where are Kent's thoughts as he is elected to play the part of Justice of the Peace?
- The trial consumes Lear and his madness. Kent possibly makes the realization that he is caring for an old man who happens to be the old kind king on this line-
 - o Kent: *"O Pity! Sir, where is the patience now that you so oft have boasted to retain?"*
- Lear finally consumed with exhaustion lies down. Kent has moments to gather his own thoughts to rally the troops consisting of an old man, a Fool, and Poor Tom. With this motley crew it does not look good for Kent.
- Gloucester enters with news of a death threat... towards Lear... No time to think must leave now...

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Sadness
- Broken love
- Tired
- Fear/ terror
- Lost battle
- Adrenaline rush times 1,000

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- I think Kent is tired of running from danger- he is only human. Kent needs time to figure out what to do next in hopes that Cordelia has received his message. If indeed she is coming home to help.
- Kent realizes that Lear is no longer the powerful king he once was- this realization compromises his sadness creating the tension of fear that reaches terror- DEATH! Lear and Kent are subject to age and death.
- Kent has to acknowledge that he is fighting a lost battle if France does not come through. This feeling has to cross his mind.
- Gloucester enters with news of a plot to murder Lear. This news rips Kent out of all inner feelings and back to his main priority- Save Lear!!!! God Save the King! Off to Dover where friendly company awaits.
- Kent's realization with Lear's mental state of mind crushes him. I think this is the scene where Kent's heart starts to rip in two.

Obstacles:

- Lear refusing to rest
- Poor Tom and the Fool playing along with Lear
- My own fear and terror
- Exhaustion
- Impending danger
- Lear
- Fool
- Poor Tom
- Lear's exhaustion
- The urgency to leave what was thought to be a safe place
- My disguise

Act IV, scene 3: The French Camp near Dover:**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to ensnare the gentleman (knight) in order to justify my loyalty to Lear.

A summary of the action:

Kent meets with the knight he did previously in 3.1 to hear if there is any news from France. Kent hears the news from the knight. Kent is told why the King of France has left for France but is reassured knowing he left a general in charge of the situation here at hand. Kent learns that Cordelia has received his message. Kent informs the knight that Lear is near and in town. Kent tells the knight that Lear cannot forgive himself and will not meet with his daughter. The knight reports that Cornwall and Albany's armies are drawing near. Kent is going to take the knight to care for Lear. Kent knows that he is fine to stay in disguise, allowing Cordelia to be the only one who knows his true identity. Kent requests the knight to follow.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent knows the King of France has left for France, which motivates the inquiry why.
- Kent finally gets to ask if Cordelia received his message.

- With Lear being stubborn and not being able to forgive himself and face Cordelia- Kent has to find a way to see Cordelia.
- Once again, Kent question's whom he should trust and why. Kent has built enough of a trust with this knight; allowing Kent to inform the knight that Lear is in town.
- The knight informs Kent that Cornwall and Albany's men are near, which puts some urgency to the task of speaking to Cordelia.
- Kent can sneak off to Cordelia if he can convince this knight to go keep an eye on Lear.
- Kent reveals some 'dear cause', which will keep in concealed, further.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *"Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back, know you no reason?"*
- Kent: *"Did your letters pierce the Queen to any demonstration of grief?"*
- Kent: *"Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i'the town"*
- Kent: *"Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?"*
- Knight: *"'Tis so; they are afoot."*

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Panic

- Nervousness
- Relief
- Urgency
- Hope
- Love
- Trust

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- Kent has some panic when enters knowing that the King of France has left back to France.
- He has a moment of relief when he is informed that the King has left a general in charge, and that the forces have not left completely.
- Kent's nerves are tighter than a steel drum. Kent needs to know if Cordelia has forgiven her father and will be willing to help fight her sisters.
- Once Kent knows that Cordelia has read the letter he can breathe a sigh of relief once again.
- But Kent knows that Lear will not come and see Cordelia so Kent must rely on the relationship he has with the knight.
- The knight has earned Kent's trust, which allows Kent to find a moment to meet with Cordelia. I think it will be the reactions combined with the information reported from the knight that allows Kent to reveal that Lear is in the town near Dover.

- Kent then needs to find someone to keep an eye on Lear. Kent trusts the knight with Lear's whereabouts, so Kent should trust the knight to keep an eye on Lear.
- The biggest gut reaction in this scene has to be Hope. Kent has a motley crew, and how they got to Dover- we have no idea. Kent now can restore the hope he has in saving Lear and restoring him to power.
- I think with the feeling of hope being replenished Kent's feeling of love starts to be restored. The love is not only for Lear and the crown but, as well as, for Cordelia.

Obstacles:

- Impending danger
- Fear of getting caught or defeated
- Exhaustion
- The knight
- Lear and his unwillingness to meet with Cordelia
- My disguise

Act IV, scene 7: Cordelia's camp**The super objective for the Earl of Kent:**

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective: I have chosen three objectives for Kent as he transitions from one intention to another as the scene moves along. Kent's changing intentions are more defined than a beat change requiring three objectives, which should make Kent's clear transitions drive the end of the scene.

- I want to reassure Cordelia in order to prepare her to see Lear.
- I want to reassure Lear in order for him to acknowledge his safety.
- I want to destroy the evil trio in order to restore power to the kingdom.

A summary of the action:

Kent meets with Cordelia at her camp. The knight previously has brought Lear to the camp. Lear is sleeping. Cordelia commends Kent's actions. Kent is modest and only requires acknowledgement for what he has done as payment. Cordelia asks Kent to change his clothes, but he thinks otherwise. (Kent cannot upstage the meeting between Lear and Cordelia by reveling his true identity.) Lear awakens and meets with Cordelia. Lear thinks he knows Kent and Cordelia yet he claims he is ignorant. Lear finally comes around to recognizing his daughter. Lear thinks he is in France. (French colors and banners) Kent reassures Lear that he is in Britain. Lear and Cordelia leave. The gentleman informs Kent that Cornwall is dead and that Edmund leads the troops. The gentleman also gives Kent some information and rumors. The knight tells Kent that the

reports say Kent and Edgar are hiding in Germany. Kent reminds the gentleman that the armies are near. The gentleman leaves. Kent closes the scene.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Once the scene starts it is apparent that Kent has relayed his journey with Lear to Cordelia.
- Cordelia is overwhelmed with the 'goodness' Kent has done- which allows Kent to be his natural modest self.
- Does Kent have hidden intentions with keeping up with his disguise? Does Kent keep up the disguise in order to keep the focus of the scene on the reunification of Lear and Cordelia?
- Cordelia kisses her father showing a sign of forgiveness. Kent overwhelmed with joy reassures Cordelia she is doing the right thing.
- Lear awakes and thinks he is in France. This gives Kent a moment to comfort a calm Lear.
- Kent receives rumors and can have a nice inner laugh.
- Kent receives news from the front, and charges up for battle.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *“To be acknowledged, madam, is o’erpaid. All my reports go with the modest truth, nor more, nor clipped, but so.”*
- Kent: *“Yet to be known shortens my made intent.”*
- Kent: *“Kind and dear princess!”*
- Kent: *“In your own kingdom, sir.”*
- Gentleman: *“They say Edgar his banished son is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.”*
- Kent: *“My point and period will be thoroughly wrought, or well or ill as this day’s battle’s fought.”*

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Joy
- Love
- Modest nature proving loyalty
- Tenderness
- Crushing revenge

Rationale behind the character’s actions (thought process):

- I think Kent has overwhelming joy to be in good company and safe- even if it is for the smallest of time.

- I think the modesty Kent displays is his true nature even though he has a defined point of view noted in the top of the play. Also, Kent might have learned a lesson having to deal with a king consumed with madness.
- I think the love Kent has for Lear and Cordelia is fully restored with the sight of Lear and Cordelia meeting and exchanging hugs, kisses, and tears.
- I think Kent has a moment of tenderness when he sees Cordelia comfort the sleeping Lear.
- Kent has the opportunity to have a laugh at the expense of gossip- when he hears that he is supposed to be somewhere in Germany. Hey! The disguised worked.

Obstacles:

- Cordelia and her possible feelings towards meeting her father
- Lear and his stubbornness towards meeting his daughter
- Impending battle
- Lear's health (mental and physical)
- Disguise

Act V, scene 3: British camp near Dover

The super objective for the Earl of Kent:

- I want to serve and protect King Lear in order to bolster the strength of his sovereignty in any way I can.

The scene objective:

- I want to serve and protect the King in order to bolster the strength of the monarchy any way I can.

A summary of the action:

Edmund enters with Lear and Cordelia as his prisoners and immediately sent to jail. Lear and Cordelia hug as they are taken away to jail. Edmund sends the captain off with the death note for Lear and Cordelia. The captain leaves and Albany, Goneril, and Regan enter. Albany wants Lear and Cordelia to be treated fairly. But the death note just left with the captain. (Oh shucks- Albany.) Edmund stalls for time to ensure that Lear and Cordelia will be put to death. Goneril, Edmund, and Regan gang up on Albany. Really, will these three ever quit? Albany throws down his gauntlet. Edmund replies. Regan grows sicker and leaves while being supported. Edgar's trumpet is heard. A herald enters and reads the challenge. The trumpet blasts three times and Edgar appears. Edmund and Edgar draw swords and fight. Edmund is wounded. Albany steps up to Goneril flatly saying "*Shut your mouth dame!*" Snap! You go Albany! Edgar reveals his identity. Edgar tells his story and reveals that Gloucester is dead. Edgar reveals that Kent has been in the service of the king all this time. A gentleman enters with a bloody knife. Regan has been poisoned and Goneril is dead. Kent enters as the bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought on stage. Kent is looking for Lear and Cordelia. Edmund

announces that Goneril poisoned Regan for his sake and then killed herself. Edmund says to hurry if you want to save Lear and Cordelia. The gentleman runs off to save Lear and Cordelia. Edmund is carried off. Lear enters with Cordelia draped in his arms. Cordelia is dead. Kent reveals himself to Lear. Messenger enters and relays that Edmund is dead. Lear's heart is overwhelmed and his heart gives way and he dies. Albany, Kent, and Edgar are left to restore the kingdom.

Motivational actions and developing given circumstances within the scene (On a situational basis):

- Kent enters thinking he is going to say good night to the king. Edmund does not answer directly, making Kent a rather irritated man.
- Kent sees Cordelia draped in the arms of Lear as Lear enters. Kent is crushed with agony.
- Lear lost in agony- tells Kent to go away- Edgar reveals Kent's identity to Lear.
- The death scattering the stage makes the news of Caius being Kent a rather trivial event. Kent reassures Lear that he is indeed Kent
- Does Lear welcome Kent? Has Lear forgotten who Kent is?
- Kent's sadness, pain, and agony consume him-, as Lear dies Kent's love for Lear and Cordelia soars to the heavens.

The stimuli to which the character responds (action or words said to stimulate the motivation of the character):

- Kent: *"I am come to bid my King and master aye good night."*
- Kent: *"Is this the promised end?"*
- Kent: *"If Fortune brag of two she loved and hated, one of them we behold."*
- Lear: *"Prithee, away!*
Edgar: *"Tis noble Kent, your friend."*
- Lear: *"This is a dull sight: are you not Kent?"*
- Kent: *"I have a journey sir, shortly to go; my master calls me, I must not say no."*

Impulses that drive the character (gut emotional reactions to the stimuli):

Trigger words, realizations, and questions to be explored in rehearsal

- Death
- Age
- Agony
- Eager with anticipation
- Pain that is right now indescribable
- Caution, anger

Rationale behind the character's actions (thought process):

- Is the fighting done? Does Kent not know Lear and Cordelia are prisoners?
Where the hell has he been? Why does his entrance seem so casual?
- Kent enters with eager anticipation to see his master and King.

- Some anger with caution creeps into Kent when Edmund stalls to say where Lear and Cordelia are.
- Once Lear enters with Cordelia draped in his arms- Kent is automatically beside himself. The agony and pain slowly wells up inside of him, and finally consumes him when Lear dies.
- The pain Kent releases is something I have to find when I go through this journey on my feet working in rehearsals. I can feel the emotions building inside of me as I write this but I cannot find the words. I feel this description will come to me as I explore the words and situation when working on my feet.
- As I look at my S.O. I think the feeling is failure. After the death of Lear, the longer Kent lives the more he has failed Lear. The man he looked up to with respect and reverence will only continue to be honored once Kent dies himself. Lear is the man whom Kent protected and guided through his most tortured moments. Lear is the man who Kent has pledged his loyalty, honor, allegiance, and unconditional love. Kent was banished and stayed in the kingdom under a disguise to justify the above-mentioned characteristics to Lear. The only way for Kent to diminish the sense of failure is to continue to prove his loyalty, honor, allegiance, and unconditional love is to follow Lear in death.

Obstacles:

- Life
- Death
- Lear's body
- Cordelia's body

Anticipated Movement and Vocal Choices

The Earl of Kent's confidence, loyalty, and love bring forth the challenge of defining the range of physicality and movement. The amount of time Kent is silent on stage requires an exploration of subtle gestures in posture to justify how the physicality and movement define the confidence, loyalty, and love Kent embodies throughout *King Lear*. The physicality and movement of Kent, when he is in disguise, opens a wide range of possibilities to explore physically and vocally. As an actor, do I rely on externals to define Kent when he is in disguise? My reason being that his physical presence is all that he has left when in disguise. Using primarily imaginary centers, psychological gestures, and the contrasts and polarities I will explore options to define the physicality, movement, and vocal rhythms of the Earl of Kent.

As I press forward with my research and exploration of my thesis role of the Earl of Kent in *King Lear*, I will employ the tools of the Michael Chekhov technique to shape my anticipated physicality and the movement of my character. In this section, I will break down the Earl of Kent scene by scene to discover options for my anticipated physical characterization and posture. I will use these options along with a combination of the text and character analysis to develop my vocal choices and speech patterns for the character.

First, I am going to establish a ground zero from which I am going to be shaping the physical appearance of Kent. I will begin by describing Kent's posture from head to toe. I want to place all three of Chekhov's imaginary centers in my basic shape in order to have different centers for different responses at the ready for optimal reaction either

when standing or moving. Chekhov's imaginary centers consist of dividing the body into three categories. The first area of the body is the chest. The chest is connected to how the actor uses the body to respond to the feelings of the character. The second imaginary center is the pelvis, legs, and feet. The lower half of the body connects the actor to the will of the character. The third and final area of the body is the head. The head allows the actor to have a choice by either connecting the character by way of sight or thought. By trying to incorporate Chekhov's imaginary centers I hope to achieve a solid presence on stage in order to be subjective when working with the given circumstances of the script.

The initial shape of Kent is to position my body in a military type stance, with shoulders back, head up bringing the chest out, and keeping everything below my pelvis strong yet fluid. Keeping my head up I will be able to center my energy from my eyes and brain. Chekhov coordinates the elements of seeing and thinking when using the head as an imaginary center for the character. Kent is a loose-tongued guy who sees and reacts with sharp instincts; therefore Kent observes situations and speaks more from the gut. Even when Kent is in disguise he reacts before he thinks when confronting Oswald finding his way to the stocks. It is when Kent's confidence and loyalty are overcome by the desire to assert himself and to serve Lear that his rationale lacks judgment.

Chekhov associates the imaginary center of the chest with feeling. The character of Kent has so much love running through his veins and breathing out of his pores, so I want to have the imaginary center of the chest at my disposal but also I want to keep the love centered all of the time, even when that love turns negative. The contradiction of Kent's shape is from the waist down to the feet. Chekhov designates the pelvis, legs, and

feet with the will of the character. The loyalty that Kent has for Lear radiates not only from the heart, but also is the base of the character's desire to serve Lear. I want to keep everything below my pelvis strong; enabling Kent's will while emphasizing the loyalty Kent has for Lear. I think if I keep my entire body strong and open I will have more options for my body to collapse as Kent reacts to the crumbling foundation that is the Kingdom of Lear and his subsequent banishment. I hope these choices will jumpstart the ebb and flow of reacting and acting through the character's journey.

As I continue the process of shaping my anticipated physicality scene by scene I have the points from where my body can ignite from the imaginary centers described above. This open and expanded body will allow me to engage other tools of Michael Chekhov's to influence my behavioral choices and justify the physical shaping of the character. I will use tools such as contrasts and polarities (expansion/contraction, staccato/legato, radiating/receiving) to awaken the physical body and stimulate my imagination for further physical choices and postures during the rehearsal process. I will also use descriptions of the inner and outer atmospheres to enhance the pictures of the life of the character.

The use of the five senses is vital for the life of the character and will be brought into the mix as I discuss the inner and outer atmospheres. The dynamics of movement ground the character in the four elements of water, earth, wind, and fire defined by flowing, molding, flying, and radiating. In this initial work, I will often combine two or more of these to stimulate choices for rehearsal. Chekhov's psychological gestures (pushing, pulling, opening, closing, embracing, tearing, throwing, wringing, lifting, smashing, and penetrating) enable the actor to embody their objective.

Now that I have laid out my foundation, the next step is go through each scene and pencil in my initial choices. Once I have gone through each scene I will begin to work on my feet and apply my choices. The actor must always keep an open mind once the other actors become involved with the process. These initial choices might stimulate unexpected responses and reactions from myself and from my fellow actors. The interplay of rehearsal allows room for these choices to be explored. This paperwork is a foundation with which allows me to play and live within the given circumstances of the script.

Vocal Choices:

In concluding the process of anticipated movements and physicality I discovered some definite options for using my voice. I think Kent has a fair amount of confidence, which is both personal and social. Kent is not afraid to speak his mind because his social standing enhances his personal confidence. Kent's confidence does get him into trouble on more than one account (banishment and a day and night in the stocks). I am leaning towards using this idea of personal and social confidence to bolster my vocal choices. Based on the work I've done over the past two years and the vocal training I have received from Stan Brown, I am going to ground my vocal choices in the stomach using the cello resonator. I think the solid sound I can create with this resonator best fits the confidence, loyalty, honor, and love that Kent is fighting to express throughout the play.

A major discovery I came across is using my movement choices to springboard choices for vocal swings and patterns that coincide with the rhythm of the text. For example, when I am using percussive movements, best described in Chekhov's work as staccato and legato, I will keep my speech on the same pace as the rhythm of the text and

my movements. I think this will allow me a greater range of exploration in fighting for my objective and provide a dynamic to my vocal range. Also, I will correlate the qualities of my movement dynamics (molding, radiating, flying, and flowing) with how I sit in my vowels, and the percussiveness of my consonants of each word and phrase. I think that by combining these specific movement choices I will complete the process of melding my body, mind, and voice presenting a well-rounded character.

Appendix A

Rehearsal and Performance Journal

October 8th, 2009 (First reading)

The rehearsal process begins tonight! The amount of research and reading I have done to prepare for this night has been one hell of a journey full of emotions, frustration, passion, and excitement. I have no idea what to expect, but I do know what to expect with the first read through and beginning of a rehearsal process. How will this process differ from all of the other shows I have done in the past thirteen years? Buckle up! It is going to be a fun and exciting road to travel for the next five weeks.

The first read through is full of introductions and meet and greet kind of things. We all sat in a circle and introduced ourselves to each other. We all got the chance to meet Steven Patterson, the man who has been hired to play King Lear. After meeting Steven I can say I am truly filled with anticipation and ready to work with and get to know him throughout this process.

Virginia Smith, our director, welcomed all of us and we began with chatting about the show and her ideas and vision driving the show. The various designers all took turns speaking about their individual ideas stemming from the vision and collaboration with the director.

Pat Vendetti, our set designer, showed us drawings, pictures, and renderings of the set. His premise for the design is based on ancient ruins and excavations of the United Kingdom. He is mixing Celtic, English, and Mythical structures to create the landscape of his design. He spoke highly of ancient ruins and excavations as his driving

force behind his design. The painted stonework will look rough and ancient emphasizing the history and age of the story. The tree of life that will be painted on the rake downstage will stress the weight of the story and circle of life.

Angela Sharman our lighting designer passed around pictures representing her color pallet for her design. Her pictures encompassed various storms, sunrises, sunsets, and bolts of lightning. The different hues of reds, blues, and oranges will be fun and interesting for such a tragic story. There are two things I am very excited for and they are: 1) the live lightning effect by use of a carbon arc, and 2) the fog and hazer machines for the storm scenes. I can visualize the fog and haze rolling down this stone like structure with wind blowing as Lear, the Fool, and myself are standing on the top of the set. Who knows if we will be on the top of the set in those scenes, but it is a neat picture to visualize.

This is the third show I have been in for which Cecelia Sickler is the costume designer. I always look great, and I have no doubt we will all look stunning. The renderings she passed around were intriguing. It looks as if I am going to have to shave the top part of my head. I will be clean-shaven and bald. I get to have glimpse of what I will look like in ten years, hopefully longer than ten years. I will have some sort of facial hair after I am banished. I do not know what it will look like as the Cecelia and Virginia are still discussing the options. I hope it is not a beard with ear hooks.

We compared the height of the platforms and the levels of passion. We chatted about language and relationships. Virginia brought up the theme of love. She expanded on this theme mentioning the love of old people and the lack of love for old people. I think it is important to stress something so powerful. Love is uplifting and destructive. I

see tragedy as destructive and uplifting. We learn from the events caused by love and tragedy.

October 9th, 2009 (Notes in class and second read)

Today in class, Virginia gave some reminders about acting style and goals to work toward as we journey towards opening night. The first reminder was about scansion and the meter of the text. We all agreed that words with an 'ed' need to be spoken with the appropriate stress on the 'ed', and those words with the apostrophe 'd' needed to be pronounced with sharp annunciation. We were also reminded that Shakespearean acting is not a modern realistic style of acting. Our emotions need to come from the words, and the vowels that the words contain. We were reminded to sink into the vowels and explore the emotions and meaning of words and phrases. Virginia told me I needed to find a happy medium with my voice. Last night I was using a big booming voice during the read through. I don't think the voice was intended. One cause might have been that I was battling the echo and sound suck for which Temple Room 301 is notorious. I can easily be sucked into a booming actor voice when I am nervous or unsure of what I am trying to accomplish with the text. This will be problem I will have to keep in check throughout the rehearsal process. I will explore to find a happy medium between the booming voice and my natural voice. I think this compromise will happen as I become more familiar with saying the words in order to color my intentions with the vowels.

Virginia gave us some exercises to use in order to explore the variation of inflection with the words. We should start by saying each word fifty times to explore the

variation of possible inflection. We need to constantly ask ourselves how do the words feel in our bodies, and how does the meaning of each word feel in our bodies with each discovery. Above all we need to keep in mind the epic proportions and gravity of humanity the story offers each character. With these reminders and elements to focus on tonight's second read through should be even more interesting as I will try to implement these reminders.

Tonight I tried to find variation and color with my voice. I think I still have to play with the text and pinpoint my intentions and tactics with each line. I am painting with a big brush trying to paint the big picture. It sure is different working on the script for research and then coming to rehearsal and flipping the switch to work individual emotions into the words. I jumped into the read through and started to search for variation with my inflection, but still have more work to do. I think once we get on our feet with staging rehearsals and I know where I am standing, moving, entering, and exiting I will be able to be more specific with my choices. I could have made specific choices when sitting down with the text all summer long, but I had questions for which I knew the answers to be production specific. I would have been limiting myself if I had made specific physical and vocal choices over the summer. I think by taking the time this summer to describe the big picture contained in the story and text, I am now able to use the rehearsal process to make specific choices geared towards our production.

After rehearsal I touched bases with Steven (King Lear). I was going to ask him something about his acting process. He actually started the conversation by informing me that he has previously played Kent with the Orlando Shakespeare Festival in 2007, and that if I had any questions about the character he would be cool with me asking any

questions geared toward trouble spots. I instantly forgot the question I was going to ask. I immediately jumped on this opportunity to ask him about my entrance at the end of the show. Throughout my reading and research this past summer I found the entrance to be lackadaisical and awkward. Steven pointed me to the events that happen before I enter. I should look at the speech that Edgar gives just before I enter the scene. He also suggested me to create events in my mind. I kept thinking that Kent had no clue to the events before the final entrance. I was denying myself the chance to create a character back-story. Is Kent coming to surrender knowing that Edmund and the British forces have defeated the French? Is Kent entering with the knowledge that Lear is here and will do anything to be with him even if it is in jail? I had these questions in my mind but was looking for the answers in an ass backward kind of way. This conversation opened my mind to ideas to proceed forward.

October 11th, 2009 (Staging 1.3/ 1.4/ 1.5/ 2.4)

Our first staging rehearsal! Staging in Room 301 should be interesting with just a taped out floor plan. I have done staging on a taped floor before and found that it can be limiting for all parties involved. I need to keep my willingness to play in the foreground and remember what Carlo taught me at Dell Arte. Carlo always stressed that actors have to trust themselves when working, he always said, "Leap, and the net will appear". If I do not leap or take risks I will be stuck in the world of what could have been.

After getting the run down of the taped out floor plan I jumped into rehearsal ready to play. Once we walked through the playing area and received the basic traffic pattern of the scene we ran the scene a couple of times. I find that I need to be in the

space and have the basic traffic pattern before I can memorize the lines. The first scene we worked was scene 1.4 when Kent comes back in disguise requesting the opportunity for service under Lear. The understanding of the lines and intention began to blossom as we ran the scene. I quickly became aware of the risk of being caught or found out if Lear recognizes Kent in disguise. The physical struggle will have to wait until we are moving around on the actual set next week.

The next scene is short and quick. I enter with the Fool and Lear and exit after a quick line exchange. There is no need to make a mountain out of a molehill. Lear is sending Kent off with letters. I take the letters say my line and then rushed off the stage. The quick exchange calls for truth and diligent urgency.

The final bit of rehearsal we worked the beginning section of 2.4 which is a monster scene. The scene starts out with Kent in the stocks and Lear and the Fool entering. We worked the scene up until Gloucester and Lear re-enter the scene. The challenge in this scene is that I need to really use my words to convey what I need to say. I am unable to move. The speech I have which recounts the events that landed me in the stocks sets the pace for the scene. I used this staging rehearsal to see where everyone else was moving and how I could play off of Lear and the Fool.

What interests me with 2.4 is what do I do once I am released from the stocks. Does Kent have the courage to stay and witness Lear's painful realization that his daughters are trying to diminish what power he thinks he has left when Kent is released from the stocks? Is the paternal love Kent has for Lear strong enough for Kent to withstand the mental and physical anguish Lear suffers in the scene? The answer is that Kent must have the courage, and the love must be strong enough for Kent to witness what

is to be the beginning of the anguish and meltdown of Lear. I must remember that I, the actor, do not know what is going to happen next. If I am true to the given circumstances of the play, and live each moment the courage and love the character needs to endure the scene will be present.

I think what could potentially be an audience comprehension problem is the exit of Lear and his knights at the end of the scene. If Kent exits with Lear and company at the end of the scene then Kent's next entrance has the possibility to confuse the audience. Kent enters to begin the next scene twenty lines later and asks the gentleman the whereabouts of the king. Either Kent exits the previous scene once he is released from the stocks or exits at the end of the scene in a different direction from Lear. Once Kent is released from the stocks Lear does refer to Kent more than once, which calls for the presence of Kent throughout the end of the scene. Is a different exit enough to avoid confusion with the audience? Is it about the exit and entrances or the acting on stage?

Rehearsal offered food for thought, and that I need more work with my intentions. Why am I reacting the way I am reacting? What am I trying to accomplish each moment of every scene?

October 12th, 2009 (Fight Night)

Tonight's rehearsal was quick and to the point. Harris Smith, out fight choreographer, began staging all of the fights in the show. He covered safety and his vision of the fights and we began at the top of the list. I was lucky to have my fights at the top of the list. I have three fights and only two on the list for tonight. The death of the Fool was not on the list because we did not block the scene yet and do not know the

full scale of the stabbing and death of the Fool. The first little fight I have is the smacking and tripping the heels of Oswald (Nick Wolf). We staged the scene yesterday and we showed Harris what we came up with. He touched it up and added to the fight. Instead of just pushing Oswald off of the stage we added a kick to the butt to diminish his status. With this addition Oswald is plastered flat out on the floor in order for me to pick him up and then toss him off of the stage. Some of the lines can be cut, but I want to solidify how we are getting Oswald off stage and then determine which lines are excessive. Nick and I will work on this fight outside of rehearsal and then show Harris later to see what he wants to add or subtract.

The next fight is the second encounter between Kent and Oswald. This is the fight that puts Kent in the stocks. We were not off book, so Harris gave us some rough sections of the fight. Nick and I offered suggestions as we staged the sections of the fight. Once Nick and I are off book we will be able to have more of an idea where the lines interrupt the fight. Nick and I agreed to be off book for the next fight night in order to really work the fight with Harris.

October 13th, 2009 (Movement Work and Staging 1.1)

The movement work we did tonight helped me to embody the physical aspect of my status with all of the other players. I initially thought that Kent would have more insight to the business of Lear. During one of the exercises I found myself hovering by Lear and not learning anything new or have any notion of a privileged life. I need to keep in mind that Kent is not royalty, which something completely different than the noble status he holds. I found throughout this exercise of role-playing that Kent exists in

a world of love and honor. Kent will not bite the hand that feeds him but he has no problem nipping at the hand that feeds him.

During one of the other exercises I found it quite interesting that Kent can float between the rabble-rousing knights and the high class of nobility and royalty. This will be helpful when creating my relationship with the gentleman in 3.1 and 4.3. I think Kent earns his respect by being the bridge between the two social classes. The knight's could potentially see Kent as one of them and the other nobles and royalty do not have to worry about wrangling the knights or dealing with the various servants of the upper lower class.

I also found some interesting and fun dynamics between Cordelia (Lucy Lockamy) and Kent. Kent is the rascal of an Uncle that is always good for a laugh and will stick up for you in heated family arguments. I felt closer to Lear when I was dealing with Cordelia. This could be the breaking point for Kent. If the relationship between Cordelia and Kent is that strong, then when she dies either Kent could have a bigger struggle to stay close to Lear, or it could fuel the fire of his loyalty. I think the stronger choice is that when Cordelia dies Kent cannot let go of Lear. We will have to see how that scene is staged.

After all of the movement work we staged the first scene of the play. It was nice to get on our feet and start to see this show come to life. Steven, once again, brought the fire. This man is so exciting to work with. He makes me want to be a better actor.

I thought the staging of the first scene was going to be a cluster of a mess, but I was wrong. Virginia had a game plan and we stuck to that game plan. I think the hardest part for me in this first scene is being able to show a life long relationship with Lear, Gloucester, Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril in seven pages. I also need to find the urgency

of the opening with Gloucester and Edmund. Right now I understand what I am saying but I am still figuring out the reason why. Overall, rehearsal was filled with high energy and excitement.

October 14th, 2009 (Stage 2.2 and 2.3)

Tonight was a quick night for me. I know that Act II, scene 2 is a long scene, but I thought we came in and tackled the scene rather well. Nick Wolf (Oswald) tried to be off book for the fight portion of the scene. We were shaky on the lines but at least we could get through the opening of the scene with our hands free. I know we will be ready for Harris on Friday's fight night. I know Virginia is looking for cuts and I want to see how the two fights I have play out before I start to offer some ideas for cuts.

I think the part of the scene that will be the tough part is when everyone else enters the scene and I end up in the stocks. Right now the crossing up and down stage before I am put in the stocks is confusing. I am going to say that it is because we are holding scripts and working on a taped floor. I am sure this confusion will go away once we are working on the set. I also have to take into consideration that I will be crossing up and downstage and across staggered levels once the set is finished, which is always fun. I am beginning to get the feel for the journey of my Character. I think that reading and thinking about the journey of the character is completely different when trying to put that journey in your body.

I am wondering what type of stocks I will be using. I know I am sitting and I will have my feet restricted but I wonder if my hands are going to be shackled or if my head will be restricted as well. The other thing I have to deal with is where on my person is

the letter from Cordelia. How and where am I going to get this letter? How am I going to read the letter while in the stocks?

October 15th, 2009 (finish staging 2.4)

Tonight I found out that my idea of exiting this scene early would not work. Lear makes too many references to Kent for me not to be there. I thought that Kent does not have to be in the scene once he is released from the stocks. I was very wrong, and I am glad that the decision for me to stay was made. I think that with me staying on stage I will be able to accomplish much more with developing the character's journey for myself, as well as, the audience. Virginia and I made a compromise about the potential confusion with Kent entering the next scene and inquiring about Lear's whereabouts. I am exiting the same time as Lear but in a different direction. I will leave stage left while Lear exits upstage and I will retrieve my weapon or whatever personal effects that were taken when I am put in the stocks. Virginia was open to my suggestion with leaving early, and we did give it the old college try but in the end we found the stronger choice with deciding that I stay on stage for the duration of the scene.

I will have my work cut out for me from the time I am released until I exit the scene. I have a lot of information to comprehend and react to while standing on stage. I have a good moment to help Lear sit and stand when confronting his daughters. I can find some good stuff dealing with Lear in that moment. I will also have some fun things to play off of the Fool, Cornwall, Regan, and Goneril. I think once we move closer to running the scene and we are all off book I will be able to put more of the puzzle together.

October 16th, 2009 (Fight Night, part II)

Once again, I was one lucky guy tonight. My fights were first on the docket. We worked the trip of Oswald, and added another kick. Harris wants Kent to really degrade Oswald. I have to raise the stakes. The more I degrade Oswald the more he whimpers and complains to Goneril. The more he complains, the more I want to kick his butt in our next fight. The disgust Kent has for Oswald for the mistreatment of Lear should carry over and evolve into the next fight. While in disguise, Kent has to deal with the loss of his status and title. I think the most frustrating part for Kent dealing with his loss of status and title is that while in disguise Oswald has some form of status over Kent. It is Oswald's belief that he has some form of status over Kent that infuriates Kent enough to put this non-gentry, social climbing twit in his place.

The tripping of Oswald in 1.4 is where I am thinking about some cuts. I think that I can do away with some of my lines. I say "away" three times. I think I can do away with a couple of them. The tripping of Oswald will have to be further looked at when we have a set to see how the elevation works with what we have blocked. I think it will be fine, unless something unexpected arises.

The fight Nick Wolf (Oswald) and I have in 2.2 is coming along. Harris changed a couple of things to make the fight flow with better purpose. Instead of me trying to grab Nick as tries to run away I am moving in front of him and pushing him down. We then added another kick to the stomach. I don't know if the second kick will stay in the fight. I have to find the tempo and see if it is needed. I think if we have another kick to the butt to push him down it will help with my cross and we could just have one kick to

the stomach. I am sure Nick and I will let the fight evolve to what is comfortable.

Harris asked us to work on the fight and show him after fall break.

October 20th, 2009 (Staging 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6)

Tonight was our first night rehearsing on stage. We do not have a set just yet, but we were told it is coming shortly. My goal for tonight was to be heard. I have a problem when working in Howell. I have a hard time gauging how loud I am, and whether I can be heard. I hope that this process will allow me to find the balance with being heard and not straining my vocal chords.

All throughout tonight's rehearsal I felt like I was wandering in a dark room searching for the light switch while stumbling all over the place. I still had a hard time imagining the set with where I was on stage. We had the set taped out on the floor, but I had some sort of mind trick happening in my brain. This mental conflict split my focus for the first half of rehearsal. I might be making excuses because the four scenes we worked tonight are the scenes that terrify me the most.

The staging for 3.1 is simple and is kept downstage. Michael Hanna and I will have to do some work with battling the thunder and various storm elements that have been gathering. We have to keep the urgency of the scene in mind as we continue to work the scene in future rehearsals.

The actual storm scenes excite and terrify me at the same time. I know these scenes will be a challenge for me to comprehend and live the emotional journey. If I am scared of these scenes I must have some self-doubt with my capabilities as an actor. I need to have these troubling notions and ideas of fear leave my mind as fast as they were

thought, because I have a hard time dealing with fear. I know that if I was on my game and not making preposterous excuses I would use the fear to catapult my intentions into the character's journey.

We finally reached the staging of the Fool's death. I think it is going to be one of the strongest moments in the play and we have yet to block the final scene. Tomorrow we will have our first stumble through of our Act I.

October 21st, 2009 (Run our Act I) 1.1 through 3.7

I don't know what to say. We managed to stumble through the Act, and now I know just how much more work I have to do in order to make sense of my journey. I am off book for my two fights, and I am itching to get this script out of my hand. I am feeling restricted by holding the script. Steven is running around with the script in his back pocket and only referencing the script here and there. I have to remember that Steven has all day to work on his script. I have to teach and go to class all day and then come to rehearsal. I am not complaining; I am trying to calm myself down.

The only way to go from here is up!

October 23rd, 2009 (4.3 and 4.7)

Last night I was able to get caught up with memorizing and working on my intentions, because I was not called for rehearsal. The night off was greatly appreciated. The placement of our Act break has given me a very busy Act I and a low key Act II. I like being busy when in a show. I tend to be more relaxed the less time I have to think about making an entrance or an upcoming scene. This relaxed state of mind and body

allows me to follow my impulses relying less on some sort of whack nutty plan I might have devised in my mind. I think once I conquer the storm scenes I should produce some concrete work while maintaining a solid focus. The scenes in between the storm scenes clip along, and it seems that once we exit we are entering in mere moments.

The second scene I have with the Gentleman is proving to be a hard scene. I am having difficulty finding the urgency of the scene. I will have to work on my intention and what I wish to accomplish throughout the scene. The staging has been kept simple. Michael and I enter and do the scene with a couple of steps here and there, and exit downstage left. The problem with a small scene that has the purpose of getting information to the audience is that it can trick the actor. If I keep thinking that the scene is short, simple, and has little impact I will never establish my intention to reach my objective. I need to really dig deep and figure out what is important in the scene, because if I do not the scene will be hollow and empty.

In the reunion scene between Lear and Cordelia is a scene where I get to work on my observing and holding the scene together with those observations. I understand what Virginia is asking of me, but will have to work at controlling my emotions.

October 25th, 2009 (Staging 5.3)

We have finally reached the end of staging. The final scene is a bear; so much action takes place in the final ten pages. I have a big break, which brings me the challenge to stay connected mentally, physically, and emotionally until I enter for the final two pages. Most of the cast is still holding scripts, but the power of the final scene is obvious.

Tonight I began putting the final pieces of the puzzle together. Once we have Act II up and on its feet I will have a clear picture of my journey as the Earl of Kent. When I have the picture I will be able to play and expand or shrink the frame in order to contain the picture I have painted. I need to finish memorizing. I should be off book or close to off book for the first run later this week.

I am still trying to figure out my reasoning behind my entrance in this scene. I tried entering the scene as if I was going to surrender in order to be sent to jail to be with Lear. I found this entrance to be lacking power or have a strong impact. Entering the final scene with surrendering in mind is more for my character's back-story and not so much a tactic to play. I am beginning to explore Kent as a brawler and a scrappy fighter. Kent is loyal to Lear but is also unpredictable. I think I have to grab onto the three characteristics of being a brawler, loyal, and unpredictable for my final entrance.

October 26th, 2009 (Run our Act II)

Tonight we ran through our Act II two times. I will not lie, it was just as rough as when we ran our Act I. I think the one good thing from tonight is that I realized that I knew more of my lines than I thought I did. I should know these lines as I have considerably fewer lines to know in Act II than Act I. Rehearsal was a stumble through and the struggle with lines, entrances, exits, and cues reared its ugly head projecting its foul breath. Tomorrow night's full run shall be interesting. I wonder what our run time will be?

October 27th, 2009 (First full run)

Well, that was too much fun. I say we should do it again. If we do not pick up our cues we are going to have an epic show with an epic running time. My main focus was to get the lines out of my mouth. I tried to be completely off book, but did not feel comfortable enough to leave the script behind for the storm scenes. I need one more night working those lines in order to be completely solid on lines. I know I will be off book the next time we run the storm scenes. I accomplished the one and only goal I had for tonight's rehearsal. I was monotone and yelling or whispering here and there, but the words all came out of my mouth. All of the text work and intentions I had been working on seemed to leave my body once the script left my hands. I think it is funny how I have been itching to get the script out of my hands only to take three steps backwards. The only thing to do is to pick up the pieces and put it all back together.

I received the note I knew I was going to get as soon as I finished the first scene. I need to find more color with my voice. I thought I had been adding color to my voice while we were going through staging rehearsals. I guess not! Virginia pointed out that I needed to look for the love. People need to love Kent. If I do not find the love in my scenes then I might as well sit in a room and recite my lines. I understand the character's journey. I need to begin to live the journey in order to fulfill my intentions.

I also was speaking in a very weird voice. I think this is the tragic sound that Virginia commented about. I was playing the tragedy vocally. I did not intend to, but it just happened. I know now not to do what I was doing. I need to focus on taking the journey to the tragedy.

I had a few other notes for the first run, and they were notes geared toward timing and stage picture. I need to start the show as soon as the lights come up. I need to have awareness of my spacing on stage. I tend to block those that are upstage of me. Virginia also told me to bow when someone with higher status enters. I think this is true in the opening scene when I am Kent. I would have to disagree with bowing to others with higher status when I am in disguise. The action of not bowing to those with higher status further strengthens my disguise. I will continue to play with bowing and double check to which people I might bow to or whether or not I bow. I think I bow to Albany but I don't think I bow to Goneril, Regan, or Cornwall after the opening scene. At the end of the day, I think that the less I bow the stronger the disguise.

October 28th, 2009 (Work Shakespeare's Act I)

I came into rehearsal tonight with the goal to vocally color my intentions. I think I am beginning to find some fun moments with Lear in the opening scene. I tried to color each line with my subtext or what I have interpreted the line to mean. This worked rather well. I went through my lines and tried the exercise that Virginia had mentioned to us earlier in the process. The suggested exercise is to say each word 50 times and feel what the words makes you feel emotionally, mentally, and physically. I did not have time to do each word 50 times. I did a shorter version and used phrases instead of single words. When I came upon a word that was giving me the fits I would focus on the single word, but for the most part I stuck to phrases or complete thoughts.

I was moving back and forth from a stabbing intention to a check yourself before you wreck yourself feeling. I was always adding love wherever I could. I am beginning

to let the element of loyalty come through vocally and physically by using more of a paternal love for Lear. How can I say what I am saying while trying to tell Lear how much he means to me? How can I move, stand, sit, squat, and bow and let Lear know that I love him as if he were my father? Sometimes love hurts, and the truth of love stings. I am working with the struggle of saying what I am saying. How hard is it for Kent to say these things to Lear in the opening scene? Could I speak to my own father like Kent is speaking to Lear? Kent might be a brawler and brave, but I think that Lear can make Kent shake in his boots. Kent will never let anyone see any kind of fear, but deep down Kent and Lear know they balance each other. They keep each other in check.

I found some great stuff playing with the possibility of being recognized by Lear when I enter in disguise. I am having fun playing with eye contact. When do I look Lear in the eyes? When do I make eye contact with any of the available knights onstage? When do I take a look away and show the audience my journey? When do I look at the Fool? How do I answer these questions with my voice and movements through the words I am speaking? I am having a blast!

October 29th, 2009 (Work Shakespeare's Act II)

My goal for tonight's rehearsal was to work on coloring my two speeches. The first speech is my prayer and reading the letter from Cordelia when I am put in the stocks. The second speech is the retelling of how I ended up in the stocks to Lear, the Fool, and the Gentleman. I think I made some good strides in moving forward, but not as much as I thought I would. I felt that accomplishing my goal for the evening had slipped away. I left rehearsal feeling frustrated. I am still searching for that moment of arrival or success

with these two speeches. I do not know how to put this moment into words. For me, the moment of arrival is more of a gut feeling than a sense of accomplishment.

October 30th, 2009 (Shakespeare's Act III)

Tonight's work blew my mind. I was shaky going in hoping to get my lines for the four scenes out and full of intent. My nerves were based on the cues in three of the scenes. I have few lines and they come in some random places. My worries stemmed from not knowing my cue lines. My wife had a sit down with me before I left for rehearsal and told me that I need to trust that I know my lines and cues, and that as long as I trust myself I would be fine. Advice taken and consumed into my brain I headed off to rehearsal.

I went through warm-ups thinking about each scene, not the lines but the events of each scene. When my first scene came up I went on thinking of what I wanted and fought for my objective. The first scene was between the gentleman and Kent. I achieved relaxation and decent breathing while working the scene. The scene is short and the least of my worries as I drive most of the scene. After this scene it was onto the three storm scenes.

I entered 3.2 and was coming down the massive set and trying to live in the elements and was promptly stopped in mid-step. Virginia asked me what I was doing. I told her that I am fighting the elements while entering looking for the Fool and Lear. I was reminded that Kent is a brave man, and is coming to save the day. I tried the entrance with that direction and a whole new world opened up for me. I started to find different vocal color and different tactics to get Lear to do what I want him to do. When

we moved on I started to think about other scenes with the mentality of saving the day. I then started to realize the more brave and strong minded Kent is when protecting the King then when he does finally crack at the end of the play the character arc is more meaningful.

The next storm scene seemed to pop into place for me with the new elements of bravery and strength. We changed some placement and staging between Edgar, Lear, Fool, and myself and ran the scene a couple of more times and were on to the next scene. The final storm scene went well, but I got caught up in the urgency with certain moments. When the Fool dies I exit the scene while helping Lear exit. I re-enter the scene with the Fool (Trent Stork) limp and lifeless cradled in the arms of Edgar (Ryan Kathman). I re-enter with plenty of urgency focused toward the situation, but I tend to play the tragedy of the moment becoming frantic and over emotional. This is a sad moment in our production, but it is not the pinnacle moment of tragedy. Virginia advised that I calm down and keep things simple. We ran the scene again and I found where I needed to be mentally and physically by keeping my reactions calm with a simplified urgency.

November 1st, 2009 (Work Shakespeare's Act IV)

This act is far less busy for me than the previous acts. I have a second scene with the gentleman, and the reunion between Lear and Cordelia. The first scene went from worse to abysmal in mere moments. I could not find what was important in the scene. I was just saying lines and indicating that the information was important. I need to find a form of trust with the gentleman. Afterward, Virginia told Michael and I to go and work on the scene before she sees it again. When the cast took a break I went back on stage

was walking through the space trying to find the moments while on my feet. Steven and I had a little chat about the scene and all is good. Michael and I worked on the scene while waiting for our other scenes. I think we found something a little more concrete but we still can dig deeper in order to enhance the beginning, middle, and end of the scene. Once we accomplish a definite beginning, middle, and end we will be able to live within the scene moment to moment.

The reunion scene is one with which I had troubles the last time we worked. I was having trouble understanding my role in the scene. Virginia offered some visual help previously, and it got my brain a-clicking. After some internal cuts, and running the scene I was able to find more of the meat and potatoes of the scene and understand my role. I find myself when listening in scenes asking “How do I feel about what is being said?” or “How I feel about a specific action that defines the moment I am watching?” I find that asking these questions helps to sharpen my focus and reactions when working on stage. This also helps keep each moment fresh. For example, in this scene Lucy Lockamy (Cordelia) and I have been finding places to strengthen the intentions of the scene by use of touch, eye contact, and facial expressions. These moments define our shared excitement, concern, or uncertainties with continuing to coax recognition from Lear. These shared moments with Lucy and I change ever so slightly each time we run the scene. These slight changes somehow keep my individual reactions with what is being said honest and spontaneous. Am I living in the moment?

November 2nd, 2009 (Work Shakespeare's Act V)

Rehearsal was a bit laid back for me tonight. I am only in the final pages of 5.3 entering at the end of the play revealing my true identity to Lear before he kicks the bucket. I should not belittle or lessen my worth in the final scene, but I had been doing some thinking about my role in the scene and making parallels with bravery and mental and physical strength. I have been connecting the dots and the more I play up the bravery and stronger I appear throughout the play. So when Kent cracks there is more meaning behind a stoic man letting go and releasing some form of emotion. My goal is to continue playing with the size of the "crack" and how much emotion I release. I need to define the emotion I release in order to gauge the proper amount. I could always relax and live within the given circumstances of each scene. No, it is more fun to talk about releasing emotion from cracks.

I have to agree with Virginia that it is more compelling that Kent would be the man that would fight his emotions and make it a struggle to contain those emotions in the final moments of the play. Maybe the struggle wins ever so slightly in the end and a single tear drips down the cheek of Kent. I like the idea of this picture, but continue to wonder about the amount of emotion, which comes through my vocal choices. Tomorrow is a run of the show, which is another opportunity to play and explore.

November 3rd, 2009 (Run show)

My goal for the run was to find a consistency for the journey of my character. I kept calm and relaxed and played within the world I have created so far. I think the run was a success for me. I discovered some fun things with the storm scenes bringing my

reactions and my ability to help drive the scenes together. I am beginning to find the urgency with protecting Lear. I find myself buying into more of the aspect of bravery. For example, when Lear, the Fool, and I reach the hovel. Edgar's entrance sends Lear and the Fool downstage. I come bounding downstage to protect Lear and the Fool. The levels of the set seems enormous from out in the house, but when I am crossing downstage at this moment I am reacting to my one and only intention—protect Lear. This discovery of urgency has led me to an extreme level of relaxation, which has developed into a stronger presence on stage. I did not force my emotions and wants of the character; I was just living in each moment and playing with how my scene partners were affecting me. I thought it was a good run. We do need to shave off some time of the show, because no theatre patron would want to sit through a three-hour show.

I found there is more to the scenes with the gentleman, but need to find more urgency with my intention and trust with the second scene between the two of us. The first scene between the gentleman and Kent is moving along smoothly. I need to take the intensity and trust which has developed in the first scene and bring it to the table for the second scene.

I discovered some fun things with the scene after I am banished. I found the base feelings of Kent as that lovable guy in the kingdom. The discovery in 1.4 opened some discoveries and realizations in 1.1. I need to have everyone love Kent in the opening scene, in order to make Lear's actions with banishing Kent immediately register as wrong and drastic.

My goals tend to differ from scene to scene. I am starting to find a giant complete thought, with some little arcs from scene to scene. I am beginning to see that I over

estimated the tests of patience with Kent. I think there is a test of patience but it is not as big as I thought. The rest of the week I need to define the scale with which Kent's patience is tested throughout the course of the show. I think the storm scenes are where the patience of Kent is tested. Kent has to get Lear to enter the hovel, Kent has to urge Lear to follow Gloucester to warmer shelter, and then once again Kent has to wake Lear and rush him out the door to dodge a death threat. The more Lear fights against Kent's attempts to protect him the bigger the test of patience.

November 4th, 2009 (Work our Act I)

The theme of tonight's rehearsal was the more cuts the better. We started the rehearsal knowing that some cuts were coming. We were told that if we want to keep our lines we better not skip or miss any of them. I know the comment was said in a joking manner but behind every joke there is some truth. I know that the cuts needed to be made, but no matter how much I agree that the cuts need to happen-- they sting. At least the cuts came now instead of later in the process. I think if the cuts came later in the process we would have a major train wreck on our hands. The lines are in our bodies, but not as deep as they would be a week down the road.

My goal of defining my journey did not take place if it did I was totally unaware of any discoveries. I was using each moment to listen for new cues and an understanding of each scene with the cuts. I think the intentions in the fights between Nick Wolf (Oswald) and I are clear and concise. Nick is animated when he begs for me not to hit him, and I am relentless with putting his pansy ass twit of a character in his place. I like to believe we are having fun-- I know I am. I just need to quicken my responses and

reacting in order to fill the moments. I think that with me focusing on the cuts and the shape of each scene after cuts I had clearer reactions with an honest feeling. Things felt genuine.

November 5th, 2009 (Work our Act II)

Bad night! I could not find much of anything. I was forcing every moment with false feelings. I was showing instead of living the moments. In the opening scene I looked right into Steven's eyes after my first line, and then it happened—I started to think about my reactions, timing, intentions, and my thought process. I do not know how the words came out of my mouth. My focus flew around the stage like someone let go of an untied balloon. As I look back on the evening I could try and look back throughout the day to find what might have affected me in rehearsal, but I know that I was hindered by a huge lack of focus throughout the night. My lack of focus was the main factor with forcing my intentions. Some good things came out of a bad rehearsal. The scene with the gentleman and Kent (4.3.) started to show some shape. I think my lack of focus put me in a relaxed frame of mind and I did not force the urgency in the scene. The scene is short and should last about 60 seconds. Michael and I worked on the scene and discussed the purpose of the scene. I know that I need to have his trust in order to divulge the whereabouts of Lear, and trust him to attend and care for Lear while I tend to the master plan with Cordelia. I also need to know if Cordelia is onboard with the plan to fight the evil forces. In the initial blocking of this scene I thought it was a simple scene, which is the wrong way to look at a scene. I did not acknowledge what was important in the scene by dismissing the entire scene as simple filler to progress the story. Now that we have

found the personal importance of the scene we are able to shape the scene. The only other part of the scene that is weird is the spacing between the two of us. We are so close together that it makes any movement awkward and forced. Maybe we will have time to address this problem next week.

November 6th, 2009 (Run show)

I used this run of the show to find a feel of the full story and the giant strokes that make our production our production. I think it was good to do this now instead of later, as the show for me was clunky and rough. I was over-thinking and slacking in my reactions to the specific moments. At any given moment my emotions would get the best of me and I would slip into the actor voice, which would disconnect me from the truth and honesty forcing me to present a false or over-acted character. Maybe under-acted is a better choice of words, either way I slipped into a disconnected and scattered character. My disconnected and scattered character only hindered the run of the show. We dragged out the show and added some air with tons of pauses. Virginia pointed out that running a show on a Friday after a long, exhausting week of rehearsal contributed to the clunky, rough, slow, and pause filled pace we accomplished.

The notes I received helped me piece together more of my journey throughout the show and begin to differentiate the loving part of Kent and the rascally loose-lipped brawler Kent. I am looking for the places where I can blend the two together so I am not presenting two separate characters depending on the scene. The one place where I knew I missed my intention was in the beginning of the show. I was in the middle of my banishment speech and I crossed up to Lucy (Cordelia) and I looked right into her

sobbing eyes and my emotions got the best of me. I suddenly felt that my banishment was a sad thing. It is a sad moment but not tragic, and Kent does not feel sad or tragic by any means during this moment. The sadness comes from Cordelia. Kent is more concerned with the affairs of the kingdom and the intentions Lear has in store for the kingdom. As soon as I got off stage I knew I turned the moment in the wrong direction. The delivery of the lines was overfilled with emotion and weakened the strength and bravery of Kent.

The scene where I kick the crap out of Oswald (Nick Wolf) has always been fun and good times. Nick is fun to work with and is always willing to work and make sure intentions are clear. The initial blocking and shape of the scene guided the two of us to enter tired and worn out. Kent being the older of the two I raised the circumstances of being more tired and worn out than Nick. We played with who was to enter first and Virginia has made the executive decision with having Nick enter the scene first and me coming up on his heels. This decision is also supported in the text when Kent says, "... and meeting here the other messenger." I do not know if tonight I played tired more than usual or if Virginia saw something different. The note I received was that I should perk up once I know it is Oswald; that some sort of unfound energy surges throughout my body when recognizing Oswald. The note makes total sense to me, and I see how this would allow me to stretch the range of the character by letting me piece together the fun-loving Kent, the loose-lipped brawler, and Kent's disguised status over Oswald.

The next big thing I need to work on in rehearsal is listening to what is being said and letting what information is new to affect me. In 3.4 Gloucester informs us that Lear's daughters seek his death. This is big news and a huge motivator for me to move Lear and

get him to safety. I need to learn to listen and reread the script to find where else I missing important moments. As I looked back at my paper work for the scene I noticed I placed the importance of the scene not on Gloucester. I kept my focus of importance on Edgar, Lear, and the Fool, which makes a great picture on stage, but puts the important information on the back burner.

Another moment where I put too much emotion in one line was in my problem scene with the gentleman (4.3). I am still struggling with what goes behind the lines that are geared toward seeking information about Cordelia. I keep trying to piece the lines together with what I want, and I find my delivery to be clumsy and boring. I think since I have labeled this scene a problem scene, I am limiting myself in my exploration. Tonight I placed more emphasis on “O, then it moved her” hoping to find something to spark importance or structure to my objective with the scene. Virginia told me that my emotion should be internal. Explaining further, Kent knows that the letters would move her. With internalizing the emotion I can move forward with the scene by continuing to pry into the gentleman to see if I can trust him with the whereabouts of Lear.

Next week is one more look at our Act I and II before we start running the show before tech week and opening... I can't believe the show is going to open in twelve days. It feels like Christmas Eve when I was a little kid. You know Santa is coming but you don't know what he is going to bring-- presents or coal?

November 9th, 2009 (Work our Act I)

Tonight was a stop and start of our Act I. We worked through each scene and fixed problem spots. The top of the show for me is still a problem spot for me. I am still

searching for the urgency and weight of the moment, but still slip into the booming actor voice. I don't know if this is because I am searching for something to grab onto in order to make sense of the scene or if I don't really understand what we are trying to accomplish in the opening moments. I need to further define my back-story leading up to the moment, and drive the opening moment.

Another moment that is more awkward than a problem is the entrance of the royalty in the beginning. We keep fixing the blocking trying to make things less awkward. I still think that the timing of the grand bow is off and out of sync. I don't know if Virginia wants us all to bow and rise at the same time or if it is okay for us to be a little scattered with the action. If we are all a little scattered and committed to the action then we should be fine. It is when we start to spread the scattered look out that I fear we look like we are disorganized. I am sure we will continue to work on this as we get more of the sound cues and fanfares solidified with the sound designer.

When I enter at the top 1.4 I am wondering how the facial hair I am going to apply on stage is going to work. Is the toupee tape going to keep the goatee on my face? I want to place the facial hair on the final line. I think this is the time to do affix it to my face and not confuse the audience with my intentions. This is all under the assumption that I am still putting the facial hair on my face on stage.

The scene where I beat Oswald for disrespecting Lear (1.4) is growing and becoming more defined as we add more to the beating and exit of Oswald. We added a contact slap instead of a shared knap. I am also enjoying the small comic moment with recognizing the height difference between Nick and me. I am excited to see how this

altercation continues to grow throughout this week. The fight Nick and I have in 2.2 is continuing to find its rhythm and the shape of the fight is looking good.

I still need to settle into the second speech I have while in the stocks in 2.4 when I recount the events, which landed me there. I feel like I am forcing the speech out of fear of taking too much time. I still am searching for that blend of a brawler and fun loving guy. I have a feeling that I am thinking and working in the wrong direction. How much shame does Kent have during this moment? How upset is Kent that Lear was offended and disrespected by the mistreatment of his messenger? How do I materialize shame and offence with the words I have to use?

The storm scenes are looking good. These were the scenes that I had the most fear with when starting to memorize and work on, and now they are the scenes I most enjoy. I love submerging myself in the elements and weight of each moment these scenes provide. I find it very easy for me to get wrapped up in the fury of the storm, and being swept away by the emotion. I need to keep reminding myself that Kent is the strong and brave character in these scenes and not let my emotions get the best of me.

November 10th, 2009 (Work our Act II)

We were told that tonight was the last night for us to try anything new that we wanted to offer up for the greater good of the show. I am sure it is not the last time but I got the picture loud and clear. I took this comment as a chance to work some of the kinks out of my problem spots. Knowing I have two problem spots in Act II, one of them being an entire scene and the second being my final line in the play. Since I had some time before going on stage I captured Michael Hanna (the gentleman) and started riffing some

ideas I had come up with regarding our scene. We both agreed that we were feeling trapped with the positions we were given on stage. We decided to enter one step higher to give us a greater distance to travel in throughout the scene. Michael generates the movement and moves one step downstage after his first line, and by entering one more step further upstage the awkwardness (with being so close) diminished. We had more time to work off stage as we were stopping and starting.

Virginia liked the new entrance, which provided her with more options for directing the scene. We all agreed that Michael and I were stuck in a neutral stance. We worked in the proper stances, which we worked on the night before with Sasha Dobson. I know the proper stances for the time period. What working with Sasha the night before did for me was remind me to keep the stance and posture of the time period, and not to drop in and out of it all. Plus, this reminder helped me to keep my focus on my movements and the energies I want to achieve on stage with my movements and posture. My defined posture is enhancing my reasoning that Kent would not drop his physicality after banishment. It is the last element of his true identity. My posture and physicality is what grounds Kent to the mental and physical strength providing the bravery and the basis of the character's foundation.

Michael and I dropped into our period stances and the scene took on a new feeling. We were connecting body and mind. Virginia gave me a note that sparked some new life into the scene. I was told to hang on every word Michael said. This direction provided the definition I was looking for with how to deal with what was important in the scene. All of the information is important, so I need to let the information unfold and

respond. The problem was not enough definition of intention and not listening to the urgency of the scene.

The other problem spot in Act II is my final line of the show. Each night I am told either too much emotion or simply too much. Keep the moment simple. I understand that I, Kent, cannot live in a world without Lear or that the world is not fit to live in without Lear. I think the last line might not be the problem but my progression up to the last line. The final scene takes off for me when Lear enters with Cordelia in his arms. Kent's foundation of strength and bravery is solid throughout the play. The worst has not yet happened-- Lear is alive. Yes, Lucy and I have created a strong relationship between Kent and Cordelia, but Cordelia's death does not destroy Kent's world, but merely dent it. The death of Lear completely cracks open Kent's world. The hard part is what emotion seeps through this crack.

November 11th, 2009 (Run)

My goals for tonight were to listen and pick up cues. One should take care of the other, right? I had some bumbling moments I was either coming in on top of a line or speaking in a foreign language. A big indicator of not listening is coming in too soon and speaking on top of someone's line. I had to stop myself four or five times because the other person was not done speaking, but I was ready to speak. Either I was listening really well and my motivation to speak was running at a high speed or I was not listening and guessing when I was supposed to respond. I was denying the element of give and take with my scene partners. On the other hand I was also dropping cues, and adding some air to moments. The most blatant spot for this is in 2.2 when Cornwall and Regan

enter just after Edmund confronts Kent hovering over Oswald. I don't know why these moments are rough, but I know it has something to do with how the focus shifts in the scene. The scene has had a stopping and starting momentum for some time now. Maybe it does not look and sound that way from out in the house, but on stage it feels like the scene is the little engine that could. I have no reservations and agree entirely with the note we received about picking up our cues in order to compress Act I. We, as a cast, need to find the energy that sweeps the audience away consuming them with the story. I am never going to find that energy with tons of pauses or interrupting lines. I need to relax and focus.

The opening scene still has some problems. I am still trying to find the gusto that starts the show. After rehearsal, Steven shared his character back-story leading up to the opening of the show. He took thirty seconds to explain that he is comparing the intrigue and hype surrounding Lear to that of the situation with the mysteries surrounding the health of Castro in Cuba. This comparison helped me tremendously. My mind immediately started racing creating ideas about this imaginary circumstance knowing that no one has seen Lear, hearing rumors about Lear, only receiving photo-shopped images through government newspapers, and debating what information about Lear is true or false. When I got home I started playing with the opening line and began to find the color, urgency, depth, and discovered a new excitement for the opening moment of the play.

November 12th, 2009 (Run)

It was a good run. We were told as a cast that we could still take some of the air out of the first Act, but that we had already brought the sweeping motion of the story to the foreground. I am still exploring my vocal journey and finding ways to live in each moment with what I am saying. My physical journey is becoming more defined as I listen and react to my scene partners when moving or standing idle. My main goal tonight was to listen and be swept away with the developing events. I found my physical responses to be robotic when I find myself magically stuck straddling two different levels. My movements and reactions were calculated and full of self-awareness. I need to let my body be swept away just as my mind is with the developing events even when straddling two different levels.

Trent (Fool) and I are starting to find the details to our relationship. Trent takes a moment to recognize who I am in 1.4, and tonight we shared a little wink between each other when I am in the stocks just before Lear re-enters. I like how these little moments link us together as kindred spirits. I found some good reaction moments during this scene when Lear and the Fool are talking about lying and be whipped for lying. I am listening to the conversation, as a banished man in disguise and the Fool knows my true identity. This adds weight, urgency, and risk to my journey. If Kent were to be caught or found out by Lear-- the punishment would be death. I see the similarities between the Fool and Kent and how the two characters relate, but I do not know the right words in order to define the relationship and similarities I am noticing. My brain will continue to percolate over what I see in hopes that words will form a definition. I think that with the note I

received about enjoying and laughing at the jokes the Fool tells in 1.4, I will be able to find more to the relationship that Trent and I are defining.

NOTE: The stocks are made out of foam. Be careful not to let the audience know they are made out of foam. Great energy in the stocks, but keep the pink foam a secret. I think the secret is blown when one person carries this big set of stocks on stage, but that might just be me.

November 13th, 2009 (Final run before tech)

I knew that I had some more work to do in the show. I knew the few notes I was receiving were too good to be true. I received more notes tonight than I did all week. I know these notes are only going to help me, and the greater good of our show through the eyes of the director's vision. For a Friday night, I think we had a strong energy throughout the run. Harris Smith sat in on rehearsal and took some notes. It was nice to have another point of view and perspective on the show. I feel like I have more character work to solidify before tech. When technical rehearsals begin I have so much more to deal with such as, costume pieces, fake goatee, the letter in the stocks, the stocks, my dagger, and storm fabric. I can only take it one day and one rehearsal at a time.

Some of my notes are easy fixes or reminders, whereas the notes I received about playing the mood rather than the intention will need some dedicated time for reflection. I need to remember to project and articulate my consonants when facing upstage. I need to relax and breathe in order to carry through with my intention and thought process.

Trent Stork (Fool) and I have been playing with the Fool recognizing Kent in 1.4 and I have been taking my reaction out to the audience. My reaction has been a gruff and

stern look to the Fool hoping to keep him quiet. Virginia suggested that I hold a finger up to my lips and shush the Fool. I think it will work and we will get more mileage out of the moment.

During 3.4 I let my emotions slip away and a frantic, frazzled Kent snuck out when addressing Gloucester regarding Lear's wits. I know I went over board as soon as the line left my lips. It has not happened before. I have no clue as to why it happened tonight.

Another moment I had been working with is my good-bye to the Fool in 3.6. This week I had been playing with placing my forehead to the Fool's forehead. I did not think too much on the moment. It happened one night earlier in the week, and opened up some emotions for me. The moment started to calm me as the week progressed, and put some closure to our relationship. Virginia suggested I should find something else. I agree that I should find something different, the forehead thing was my first choice and I stuck with my first choice trapping me. Plus, a practical concern is that Trent's body position is not a guarantee every time he dies.

In 1.4 the tripping of Oswald (Nick Wolf) has grown as the weeks have past by. Right now we have Nick flying off stage after I slap him in the face. Harris wants me to toss Nick off stage after the slap. Harris did not buy in to the slap taking Nick off stage. Nick and I will have to work on something to toss him off stage. The fly rail is directly in his path once he reaches the bottom of the escape stairs. We will have to be especially safe, so Nick does not meet his doom kissing the fly rail.

In 2.2 Edmund enters and confronts me as I am hovering over Oswald. Once Cornwall and company enter Edmund disarms and grabs me by the scruff of my coat. I

went up on my toes and Harris thought this moment to be comic. The moment was not intended. If I continue to go up on my toes the shtick used to point out the height difference between Oswald and I in 1.4 could be weakened. I just need to stand my ground and keep my feet flat on the ground. Easy fix.

In 2.4 Regan and Cornwall desire Kent to be put in the stocks. Regan wants Kent to be in the stocks until night and all night too. My line that follows her request is, “Why Madam, if I were your father’s dog, you should not use me so.” I have been continuing on with the momentum of my disbelief and humor of putting me in the stocks. Harris suggested that I use a different tactic. I understand the way I have been delivering the line I have nothing of consequence to share with the audience. The blocking permits me to face out to the audience and share my feelings and include the audience with my personal journey until I cross upstage on this line. The tactic I have been using is too forceful to progress the moment. I need to let the loving Kent out in this moment and not the angry one. Kent is a ladies’ man. Should I try to charm Regan?

I missed the mark with my speech in 2.4 when recapping the events, which landed me in the stocks. Harris thought I fell into playing the mood of the speech and moment. It is suggested that I go back and play with the words of the speech and search for how Lear has been offended and disrespected. I understand how this suggestion fits with the intentions and purpose of Kent in the story. How do you feel when a father figure you love, is offended by someone’s actions? I have to sort this out...

The news of Cordelia being hanged demands a bigger response from Kent. Okay! The relationship Lucy and I have formed between these two characters is strong and

loving. The death of Cordelia dents Kent's solid world. I understand why the response should be big.

I am still missing the mark with my last line. I can still simplify the delivery.

Think simple!

Some good things came out of the run. I thought the opening scene found some new life tonight. Sam Hartley, Daniel Gilbert, and I had a solid energy, but I think we can still settle into the opening scene. We can subtract some of the frantic energy and live the moment. Maybe I should not speak for the three of us: the frantic energy might be all in my head.

The scenes between Michael Hanna and me were solid and good. We are finding a groove with listening and communicating to each other. The urgency in 3.1 carries into the storm scenes. The only thing could give us a hiccup is the sound cues for the storm once we get into technical rehearsals. Our second scene (4.3) is finding a life, and the awkwardness that once plagued me is fading.

Sunday begins tech week...

November 15th, 2009 (Tech Sunday)

Today was one long and grinding day. Tech Sunday is always a test of patience. The crew has one day to bring everything together where the actors have been rehearsing for four and half weeks. We started a cue-to-cue rehearsal at 11:00 AM. We took a dinner break at 4:00 PM and returned at 6:00 PM to finish the cue-to-cue rehearsal. At 7:30 PM we were preparing to run the show.

I was not initially in the mood to run the show, but once we started and I picked up some steam I was pumped and in the midst of living the story. After Act I, I was ready to cash in my chips and head home. At the end of the show, I was rejuvenated and ready to run the show again. Where the energy came from I have no idea, but I was erupting with an abundance of energy.

Notes started with the announcement that we cut five minutes off the first Act and that we had a smooth run. Virginia saw a staging problem in 3.2 with Lear, the Fool, and Kent. I think I was crowding and mucking up the picture. I will keep open and not block Lear when we run the show tomorrow. I think the problem has to deal with the timing of when I stand and when I kneel next to Lear. We shall see what we do to fix the problem. I might be off my rocker however, and trying to make the problem all about me.

I found some nice vocal color throughout the run. I think this has to do with my breathing. I was relaxed and pumping the oxygen and letting my body and mind react to the events unfolding on stage. Tonight was the first time I have felt this relaxed on stage since I began the program. Why am I all of a sudden relaxed and having fun with such a tragic play?

Tomorrow we add costumes and wigs to the run. I will have some work to do to figure out the timing of adding facial hair, changing coats, taking facial hair off, and possibly changing coats again. Once again, I might be making a mountain out of a molehill. I know tomorrow will be a forgiving rehearsal with all of the new additions.

In the final scene, I am lacking some urgency when I hear the news that Cordelia is to be hanged in the prison. I was having an internal moment, and I was informed that it was not enough. I will combined my internal stunned feeling of hate and disbelief toward

Edmund and the possibility of a dead Cordelia and add some sort of physical response. I think my response will be accentuated when I run up the stairs on the first ‘Howl’ I hear from Lear. I was asked to make that reaction more urgent by running up the stairs to meet Lear at the top of the set. I think that a bigger reaction to the news of Cordelia will fuel the movement upstage when I hear Lear howling offstage. I will be running upstage and meeting Lear as he enters with the lifeless body of Cordelia. I believe the momentum of me running upstage will crescendo as Steven and I meet upstage center, creating an image where the audience will be anticipating a sigh of relief. The audience will have to wait until Lear dies. The energy of the scene still has to build even when Steven and I meet upstage center, otherwise we will have an anticlimactic ending with audience feeling empty and hollow.

November 16th, 2009 (First dress with wigs)

Last night was such a great run and we were given compliments, so tonight we took a break. Bad idea! I was all over the map. I was not articulating and having problems getting words out of my mouth. I felt restricted by my costume. My performance suffered because I let the costume win and potential problems strip me of my focus. I need to do more articulating warm-ups and go over my lines more than twice before we start the run. I need to find a better warm-up process.

Our lovely stage manager, Amber Naylor, asked me to look over my lines for my second fight with Oswald. She told me to double-check them as she has cues to call that are triggered by my lines. I figured I would get some line notes since I had a scattered focus, mostly due to dealing with my costume. I look wonderful in my costume, but I

will have to get used to the shoulders in my coat. I might be wearing something wrong. I will have to check with the costume designer.

I had a late entrance tonight. I spent about five minutes beating myself up and then realized that anyone could lick their lips and get a mouth full of spirit gum. That is what happened. I licked my lips and suddenly had the stinging sensation on my tongue. I needed water, and instantly thought I had time. I totally forgot about my entrance in 1.5 with Lear to deliver letters. All was forgiven. The fake goatee started to peel off in the storm scene. As much as I do not want more spirit gum, I will need more if the goatee is to stay on while I am sweating and running around on stage.

Other notes:

- Play the trumpet on stage left, so the sound matches with where the trumpet player is on stage.

- React to the announcement that Edmund is dead.

Tomorrow will be a better day, and we add make-up.

November 17th, 2009 (Second Dress with Make-up)

Old age make-up is a pain in my butt. I have had to apply old age make-up for every show I have done at UNL with the exception of *An American Daughter*. I can say I am getting fast at putting on old age make-up. The goatee stayed on my face tonight and I did not taste any spirit gum. It was a good night. I had some minor adjustments done to my second coat. The adjustments made have allowed me to not feel restricted in the coat.

I felt my articulation was far better tonight than last night. I added more warm-ups to my regimen that deal with plosive sounds. However, my focus was still a bit lax throughout the run. I had more control with my emotions during the final scene, and still

can find more simplicity with the moment. I still need to gauge the moment so I let one tear drip down my cheek. I have to say that is damn hard. I am having a hard time figuring out whether it is sweat dripping down my cheek or a tear. Other than trying to simplify my emotions in the final scene, I had one other note that will be easy to address. I was asked to set the lantern on the stool in 3.6 as I cross to pull Lear off the Fool. This needs to happen so Sam Hartley (Gloucester) can pick up the lantern without having to bend all the way down to the floor. It is an easy fix.

Next: Final Dress Rehearsal and Preview

November 18th, 2009 (Final Dress)

There is nothing better than a jam-packed house to work out the final kinks in a play. I consider it opening night with final notes. Tonight I had a few bumps and bruises along the way but had a good show. The opening night jitters are gone and I am ready for opening night.

Let me count the bumps. First, I dropped my dagger in the fight scene. How this happened I have no idea. I picked it up and continued to fight. It was easily justified, as Oswald never draws his dagger. Second, I broke the stocks. I must remember they are made out of foam, and not to get carried away with my frustration of being put in the stocks. Third, I need to continue on picking up my cues. I added some air to the two speeches in the stocks, and the moments leading up to my placement in the stocks. If I connect the thoughts with each of these speeches I should be able to subtract the dramatic pauses. I also believe that if I listen to what my scene partners are saying to me then I should be able to find a place where I am ready to speak before it is my turn. The note

concerning my cues boils down to connecting the thoughts and listening—who would have thought that basic acting lessons could still be relevant? Last but not least, I still have too much emotion in the final lines of the play. I need to look at containing my emotion with the line “Vex not his ghost”. I thought I did better tonight than previous nights. I really should not be getting emotional notes this late in the game. I need to take control and do what I am asked.

Virginia ended notes by giving us her blessing. This had been one of the best rehearsal processes I have ever had with any show I have been a part of in my relatively short theatre career. Virginia reminded us to all have an open heart and to be generous artists. Thank you!

November 19th, 2009 (Opening Night)

I cannot believe I am opening a show that I have known about for two and a half years. The journey has been long, and the process challenging. Break legs!

I forgot to mention that last night I blew the heel out in my new pair of period shoes. The shoes barely made it through the run. My shoes are to be taken to the cobbler and repaired. Somehow communication was dropped and my shoes never made it to the cobbler. I was given a new pair of shoes with a bigger heel for opening night. At first I was full of panic. I realized that I do not have time to worry about a pair of shoes. The show went fine and I dealt with the new shoes. The stocks were fixed, the dagger stayed in my hand, and my words were flying out of my mouth. It was a good night. Best of all I think I have finally contained my emotions in the final scene. I figured out the problem. I was not staying grounded vocally. I was letting the emotion dictate my vocal choice.

Once I figured that out I could let the flood gates open and let the audience see the tears and keep my voice grounded I discovered a whole new world in which to play.

November 20th, 2009 (Friday, Show #2)

I received my shoes from the cobbler and all was good, so I thought. The right heel was fixed, but I failed to mention that the left heel was also ready to blow, and that both should be reinforced. I made it through the show with both heels firmly planted to the soles of my feet. Sunday might be a different story.

I had a great show. I was focused and drove my intentions throughout each scene. I am enjoying my moments with the Fool (Trent Stork), and I look forward to them each night. I noticed that I am changing Kent here and there: for example, I have developed a slight drop in posture when I am in disguise. I think it stems from the possibility of getting caught when I first enter in disguise. The change is nothing major and it is very slight. As long as I keep it controlled, the slight change should be a fun element to play with throughout the rest of the run.

November 22nd, 2009 (Sunday Matinee)

My folks came to the show today. I had a decent show, and I am ready for a break. I need a couple of days to catch up on life and school. The shoe battle continues. I had to wear the emergency shoes with the big heel today. The left shoe was squealing and ready to blow by the end of Friday nights show. With the cobbler closed on the weekend I had to use the spare shoes provided. Everything was going great until I came running down the set after Edgar entered in the second storm scene. I came barreling

down the set and accidentally stepped on Steven's finger. At the same time I lost my footing and landed hard on my right knee, and I heard a pop. My right foot swept out from under me and I landed smack dab on the center of my kneecap. Needless to say I am sore and in a good amount of pain. I am glad that I have a few days to take care of myself before we come back after the holiday break.

December 1st, 2009 (Understudy rehearsal)

I was impressed with quite few of the understudy performances. Peter Swanke was great as the Earl of Gloucester. Katie Gell was wonderful and spot on as Regan. Jessica Elwell matched Beth King's vocal colors as Goneril. My understudy Christian Stokes had a few bumps here and there but for the most part handled the part very well. I wonder why those with larger roles were more off book than those with smaller roles. Who is to say? It is not my place to throw stones. I applaud the understudies for a job well done.

It was interesting to see the show as a spectator. I had no idea how loud the storm was out in the house. I did not come close to comprehending the struggle I have just to be heard during those scenes. The storm scenes had the most errors. All of the errors came from blocking problems and dropped lines. The action in the storm scenes drives the pace at very fast rate. Having a small pick-up rehearsal the night before and then coming on stage and trying to live the action packed moments is not a small task.

My knee is still sore. I have been going over my lines over the break. I try to capture the scenes in my imagination and play them as I go over my lines. I am ready to come back and finish the run.

December 2nd, 2009 (Show # 4)

Good thing Katie Gell has her lines down and that we have understudies in place. Tiffiney Baker (Regan) is very ill, and was unable to perform tonight. Katie stepped in and did a fantastic job. Tiffiney made it to photo call and we all stayed away so as to not get sick.

I had some troubles finding my way back into the groove of the show. I had some pauses throughout Act I, and added a little extra air to final scene. My focus was not as strong as it had been on opening weekend. My breathing was solid and I stayed relaxed. I might have been too calm and relaxed, which is why the pauses crept back into Act I, and the final scene. My knee is still sore. I took care of my knee all through the break, but may have pampered my knee a bit too much. Kneeling down is a chore, and getting up is even more of a chore. I simply added a slight struggle when moving up and down the set masking my sore knee as a physical character choice. I think the physical self-adjustment will get me through the rest of the run.

December 3rd, 2009 (Show #5)

There was nothing out of the ordinary tonight. My focus was back on track and the air was taken out of my scenes. I picked up my cues and stayed on task. I had a good show.

December 4th, 2009 (Show #6)

Tonight was a bad show for me. I was not focused on the show. I was more focused about closing the show than performing the show. I was dropping lines left and right. I missed cues and changed words. I have never performed with such a lack of focus. Plus, the KC/ACTF adjudicator was at the show tonight. For having a very off night the gentleman giving us feedback had some nice things to say, and some general reminders for all of us to keep in mind.

- Remember to make your entrances with purpose. You need to be coming from somewhere.
- As a cast we had a strong grasp of the language. We understood what we were saying and therefore the audience understood what we were saying.
- Only about 5% of what we said could not be heard due to facing upstage or because we were placed so far upstage that our words got lost.
- I was told that I handled the age quite well and gave a very controlled performance.
- My disguise was not enough. All I have is a different coat, a hat, and a goatee. It was suggested that I could have had more of a disguise.

These are just a few of the comments provided by our adjudicator. I was glad to hear that I gave a controlled performance and handled the age of the character. I know in the real world I have a few years before I will play Kent, so I welcome the comments regarding the age of the character. The comments regarding the control of the character are nice to hear. I struggled with controlling my emotions and controlling my emotions as an observer. I am glad that my hard work paid off for at least one spectator.

December 5th, 2009 (Final show)

And we are closed. I said good-bye to Steven, and wished him well with his next gig. I am sad and lost. I have never been so connected to a show. I wonder, as I sit here the day after strike, will I have trouble moving forward from this show? I think I have grown exponentially throughout this process. I accomplished complete relaxation on stage, I never strained my voice (which is evidence of relaxation itself), I had fun, and I lived in the moments, played with honest and truthful intentions, stayed grounded (mentally and physically), and found a deep emotional connection that I was not afraid to grab a hold of throughout the entire run of the show. I had a wonderful time!

Throughout this process I have learned and more importantly I understand that my true self is enough when acting on stage. I now know what it is like to live on stage.

Appendix B

Script Analysis of King Lear

In the style of David Ball

Stasis:

Lear is the aged King of Britain. Lear has three daughters: Goneril, the eldest and married to the Duke of Albany, the second eldest daughter, Regan, and married to the Duke of Cornwall, and the youngest daughter, Cordelia, unmarried still lives in the castle. The Earl of Gloucester, friend of Lear, has two sons. The eldest son of Gloucester is Edgar, and is in line to inherit the Earldom from his father. The younger son of Gloucester is Edmund, and he was born out of wedlock and is deemed a bastard. Given the birth status of Edmund he is unlikely to inherit any form of noble status, wealth, or land. The Earl of Kent is a loyal follower and servant of King Lear. Kent has a level of status in the court and lends counsel to the King with all respect and a blunt disposition.

Trumpets sound as Lear makes a grand entrance with his three daughters and their respective husbands the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall. The King announces the division of his Kingdom to his three daughters. Goneril and Regan follow the request of their father and profess their love to him for their share of the Kingdom with the air of great embellishment. Cordelia speaks truth, and angers the King. Kent speaks his mind and defends Cordelia.

Intrusion:

Kent and Gloucester converse over the affairs of the King and his intention to divide the kingdom. During this brief conversation the knowledge is known of the division and no objections are voiced.

Dramatic Action: (From End to Beginning)

- Lear dies because
 - Kent reveals himself to Lear b/c
 - Kent is loyal to Lear b/c
- Cordelia is dead because
- Cordelia was hung because
 - Edgar kills Edmund b/c
 - Revenge b/c
 - Goneril commits suicide b/c
 - Goneril's plot to kill Albany is revealed.
 - Goneril kills Regan over Edmund b/c
 - The sisters are fighting over Edmund b/c
 - Edmund pursues them to move up the status ladder.
- Lear and Cordelia were sentenced to death because
- Lear and Cordelia were taken prisoner because
 - Gloucester dies b/c
 - Gloucester's heart cannot bear his mistake b/c
 - Edgar reveals his identity to Gloucester b/c
 - Edgar believes his father has suffered enough b/c
- The British forces beat France because
 - Cornwall is dead b/c
- The French invaded because
- Kent sends word to Cordelia (Queen of France) that Lear is mad and crazed b/c
- Lear went mad because

- Edgar joined up with Lear b/c
- Edgar disguised himself b/c
- Edgar fled the castle b/c
- Lear is wandering the country-side because
 - Servant stabs him b/c
 - Cornwall gouges Gloucester's eyes out b/c
 - Gloucester is supporting Lear b/c
- Regan kicks Lear out of her castle because
 - Gloucester believes the King is being treated unjustly.
- Lear showed up at Regan's castle because
 - Lear stands up for the disguised Kent b/c
 - Kent is in the stocks b/c
 - Kent insults Oswald b/c
 - Oswald insults Kent b/c
 - Edmund is announced as heir b/c
 - Gloucester proclaims Edgar must die b/c
 - Edgar is framed by Edmund b/c
- Lear left Goneril's castle because
- Goneril berated and mistreated him because
- Lear imposed himself upon her because
 - Kent trips Oswald b/c
 - Kent is trying to earn the good graces of the King
 - Kent returns & desires to serve Lear (in disguise) b/c
- Lear is splitting his time between two daughters
 - Edmund begins betrayal against father & brother b/c
- Cordelia was married to the King of France b/c
- Burgundy wanted nothing to do with a disowned daughter w/o a dowry b/c
 - Kent is banished b/c
 - Kent defends Cordelia

- Lear banished Cordelia because
- Cordelia spoke the truth about her love because
- Lear asked his daughters who loved him the most because
- Lear is dividing up his Kingdom among his three daughters.
 - Gloucester boasts Edmund is a bastard & Edgar is a true son.

New Stasis:

Albany, Kent, and Edgar stand over the dead. Albany offers the crown to split between the three of them and rebuild and care for a nation soiled with these tragic events. Kent vows to stay loyal and follow Lear beyond the grave.

Appendix C

Critical Responses

The following is written correspondence between Stan Brown and myself. Stan Brown is an Associate Professor and Voice Specialist with the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. Stan Brown was the voice coach for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's 2009 production of *King Lear*.

RH: What are your overall impressions of the JCSTF production of King Lear?

SB: I was confused and lost most of the time.

RH: I know my vocal inflection and ability to color my words has been a rough journey these past three years. In your opinion, do you feel my vocal color arrived to point of telling a consistent and honest story? Any specific moments come to mind?

SB: Your ability to be more present in performance has increased considerably. That specific growth has facilitated 'ALL' the added nuance you're now capable of bringing to your vocal performance. Your vocal skills will continue to improve in direct proportion with your comfort in being fully surrendered to the now.

RH: Did I find any success vocally with mixing the qualities bravery and being unpredictable?

SB: I'm not sure I understand the question. If you're implying that, as Kent, you attempted to play "bravery" and "unpredictability" to an observable, aesthetic end, then, 'yes', I observed those two "qualities" in your overall performance

RH: What I was trying to express with this question was: did I utilize my breath and air support to vocally control the emotions that came through while attempting to pursue the qualities of bravery and the unpredictable brawler type I tried to make Kent?

SB: Yes! Definitely!

RH: Or, as you comment later on, did the problem of exploding sound from my throat hinder what I was attempting vocally?

SB: It didn't happen consistently. It only seemed to happen when you left the moment and/or your body.

RH: Do you think I could have done anything different to enhance my characterization of Kent?

SB: You still retain a tendency toward trapping and exploding your voice from your throat when you become excited. It gives the impression of crying and weakens you. I would have liked that aspect of your performance to be "different".

RH: Do you think I have grown and stretched my boundaries as an actor these past three years?

SB: Definitely. You have become a great deal more capable of thinking, creating, shaping and playing in performance.

RH: Any other comments?

SB: Thank you for being here.

The following is an interview with Dr. Stephen Buhler. Dr. Stephen Buhler is a professor with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's English Department and is the Education Director with Lincoln's Flatwater Shakespeare Company.

December 17th, 2010

RH: Today is December 17th, 2009 and I am sitting here with Dr. Stephen Buhler in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's English department. We are going to have a bit of an interview over *King Lear* that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln produced in late November and the early part of December. Question number one. What are your overall impressions of the show?

SB: I was impressed overall. I found a lot of the... a lot of the interaction among the principal characters very convincing, involving, and enlightening. I thought there were some gestures towards some really interesting takes on the material that didn't get explored as fully as, you know, I would have liked. But then this is a, you know... I am coming to it from a more of a literary than a dramatic perspective. So that'll happen sometimes and I'm just amazed that sometimes that these shows work to the degree that they do because of all the different competing agendas sometimes at work... where here's the set design that supposed to work and then the costume design which may or may not really fit with the set design, you know, so all of those different things at work but um... um... Overall, I was... again... I was impressed with it and moved by it. I thought this was... in particular I thought that this show was a good production for my

students, who haven't had a lot of experience at seeing Shakespeare performed, to get a good experience.

RH: Wonderful. The next set of questions are about how I work as an actor, since you have seen me work as an actor before this production, and my take on the Earl of Kent.

SB: I thought a little bit um... you might have been impeded a bit... back to the point on costuming because I'm not sure that the um... "Common characters" and the "Noble characters" were distinguished as sharply, which may or may not have affected your ability to either work in a lesser register as just an attendant rather than an Earl or make it easier for you to keep behaving like an Earl even though you were supposed to be, you know, in effect under cover. I was really intrigued by some of your kind of interview comments, like with the preview article in the Daily Nebraskan, where um... You're hinting at some of the shadow sides to the character and some more mixed motivations. And I was looking forward to that and didn't see as much of it as perhaps I would have liked. In a take on the character where um... Robie, you were just too damn noble all the time. There was a little bit of the... And I can understand why people in productions go in this direction. Um... We've talked about this before, the kind of Branagh syndrome where unless they are clearly marked as villains we are supposed to really, really unreservedly like the aristocrats. And um... And yet, I also got from your performance an even deeper understanding of how badly Kent contributes to the mess. He does exactly the wrong thing to worsen the situation. And as you said in your interview statements, one of the reasons he (Kent) does that is, he (Kent) hates being a commoner

and he particularly hates somebody like Oswald lording it over him. And those are interesting trigger points and yet um... just as Lear over reacts and makes horrible decisions in terms of what, you know, from the very first decision he makes all the way through. How can I make this absolutely fall apart in an interesting way? You were demonstrating how Kent is really doing the same thing and contributing to the tragedy rather than working against it. So... So... I'm not sure what else I would have wanted um... from you in terms of underscoring that further because clearly your performance communicated that to me. And, I think, communicated it to most folks in the audience pretty well. So... Was that something that you thought of when you were approaching the role?

RH: Through the rehearsal process I was discovering the elements of how to use this bravery and that once Kent is banished he is definitely an underdog. And so I reflected back into my personal life. Where have I been in a position where I am an underdog on a constant basis? And being a bouncer at the bar you're the underdog until they speak. Until the customer you are carding comes in and speaks. So on a constant basis I was consistently the underdog. So I was going with the aspect of finding that bravery that brings out that unpredictable brawler of a man, and where he won't... Kent won't bite the hand that feeds him but he'll nip at it. And that's where I was hovering and trying to explore there. So, would you agree with my characterization on how I saw it or did... or was I hindered in other aspects that... that the unpredictability didn't come out?

SB: No. That did come out. I think um... and maybe it is a different take on the character I... The way you described it, is the way it came across. What I would have been interested in seeing is less a sense of the underdog and more of the sense of the individual who's painfully aware that um... he's above all this... that he shouldn't have to... and ultimately he refuses to bow down to conform. And so I was... I was puzzled by well, one series of cuts, in particular, where there is this nice building of... well, why are you two fighting? Well... Well, I don't like his looks. Well... And the whole nice ladder which is almost where you take the bait and then finally you consult Cornwall directly...

RH: And fall into the trap...

SB: And the trap is taken away. Where those lines say... where Cornwall is saying, well maybe you don't like him... and then... then you say well if truth be known there are... I have seen better faces... So, I was puzzled by um... some of the decisions in terms of editing. That where um... Kent is given chances to back off and he refuses and in part... and he refuses in part because even though he knows he's supposed to be playing the subservient underdog role, he can't bring himself to do it in a convincing way. Especially since by not doing it to anyone except Lear, he's won this other kind of approval. So um... so the way you are describing it is the way it communicated. I just think it would have been interesting to see you as um... really being this um... this aristocrat with all the senses of entitlement, you know... you know impending upon that. It's one of the reasons he defies Lear... is because you're... but you're... you're the first

among equals and I'm here to... and I won't back down anymore than Cordelia did.

And you see that continuing throughout the play where... when diplomacy as opposed to brawling would have saved the day. But one of the reasons he's a brawler is because he is um... he's this incredibly, incredibly high born individual who um... feels compelled to assume this lower identity... anyway...

RH: No. No. Wonderful. Wonderful. Do you think I have grown as an actor compared to the two Flatwater Shakespeare productions I have been involved with?

SB: The growth is absolutely evident. Um... And which is not to say that you are a better actor in this show than you were in the other shows. But I understand that the real challenge that this production presented for you is... how convincingly can I do a non-comedic role. And I think you have laid the groundwork for that just beautifully. So... so... the development as an actor is not in terms of quality of performance it is in expansion of range. You were... you were wonderfully non-shticky a... except of course with the steps, but the steps were there... I mean... c'mon. How could you not use that but um... and... and... again given that this was a production that, at times... although at times, again this came back to some of the cuts really resisted humor at other times very interestingly invited humor. As with, and this is something I'm going to talk with Ryan about, um... having mad Lear be amusing to both Edgar and Gloucester. Which works against many of the lines that they speak to which is why many of their lines got cut so um... But you were able to establish yourself in this serious role um... powerfully and again the kind of poignancy at the end where c'mon... I've been your faithful, faithful

follower— let's... let's have a little reward. Oh. Okay, never mind. You know?

(That) kind of thing was done really affectingly, really poignantly... so... and again...

It's that kind of dogged devotion that you brought to the role that led to that added bit of anguish at the end where you don't even really get acknowledged or thanked by the person for whom you made these sacrifices. Again, you made these horrible mistakes to contributing... pouring... you know... fuel on the fire. But then... But never the less that you... that you could [do this] again... All of these frustrating expectations that Shakespeare structures into the play and the earnestness with which you tackled the role allowed for that final... you know... that added little bit of... we don't even get that... that kind of convincing recognition scene at the end. No... we don't... Shakespeare withholds that one, too.

RH: Okay. So continuing on. One of my big challenges, besides laying the groundwork for a non-comedic role, was controlling my emotions. So do you think I controlled my vocal inflections in order to ground my emotions, or did my emotions come through vocally and muddy up what I was saying?

SB: No... No... Um... A little trick... I'm... You succeeded in um... controlling the emotions... um... and perhaps that was one of the things that... um... prevented discovering the kind of flashes of just outrage. That this nobody [Oswald] is trying to insult you or order you around, that there could have been fiercer flashes from Kent when he is absolutely appalled and outraged... not... not to the point of muddying the words... but... but perhaps... perhaps there is a little too much... almost stiff upper lip... at

times... So if anything you may have... you may have... done that so incredibly well that it may have inhibited revealing other aspects of the character to your audience. Um... But again... particularly that sense of... I'm entitled to be treated better... I'm entitled for people to not ask questions of me... unless it's the King himself... And... And that's why I'm going to do the stupid thing of exploding over and over and over and over... But where it was effective... the kind of controlled emotions, were the exchanges with... you know... whatever gentleman or lord, where you are exchanging information about Cordelia and the French army. There and all of that where... um... there were suggestions of the concern for Lear... the hope that... okay... we're finally going to set things right... um... and those feelings were communicated without it getting in the way of the crucial information that those scenes were delivering to... So... So... But... But there were times particularly... again it may simply... um... a difference of opinion about... about the character but... um... I would have liked... to have seen... your Kent much more pissed off than your Kent ever really got. Again, just for those moments and then the ability to get a handle on them and again never losing control of the vocal delivery, but a little more intensity... at times... I would have liked to have seen... at those moments.

RH: Interesting. The last question... Do you think I connected emotionally with the other actors on stage? And is there any specific instance that comes to mind?

SB: I think you did... um... and especially... um... well that... the concluding scene is really powerful. The scenes with the gentleman... the scenes... the various scenes where

you are conveying information and conveying concern... um... There's um... I'm... I'm curious about the... um... The scene in the hovel kind of... because again... I was intrigued but sometimes thrown off by the... um... Well sometimes the lack of intensity there... where even some of those scenes played more for the humor than even Lear's own rage... um... and again some of that is... some of that was achieved by some of the cuts. Like some of Lear's... you know... darkest, most brutally misogynistic lines were left out to... um... so again... I'm trying to recall how much in effect you had to work with there. But you were very much in the same... the same emotional universe as the other characters... um... I would just, in the future work, like to see a kind of... a more extensive emotional palate. Where again... some of the... in the case of this role... some of Kent's arrogance, entitlement, and I guess a kind of resentment. But it's not exactly the same as the underdog because Kent knows in his own mind that he isn't one and that's what pisses him off... um... and again... again that's not the same as sharing emotions but that's another kind of emotional response.

RH: I would agree.

SB: I think more of that would have... well as I said before, some of that came... some of that did come through, which is why Kent's own culpability in the tragedy was so clear. It... Your presentation of his own journey and of his own folly... um... so it's more a matter of degree rather than was it there or wasn't it. Yes, it was there otherwise I wouldn't have gotten that.

RH: Wonderful. I just had another instance pop in to my mind. The relationship that I had with the Fool was one of the hardest relationships for me to define. Until Trent and I found that possible chance where he possibly recognizes who I am. And after that happened we connected here and there throughout the storm scenes and it grew into a very loving relationship between the two of us... knowing each others secrets and working to protect the King. Did that work for you or was it kind of out of nowhere?

SB: No, it wasn't out of nowhere but I think that's why I am having a hard time distinguishing Kent in those scenes. Because you entered into this kind of symbiotic relationship with the Fool... and where it's a very tender relationship that the Fool has with Lear too... and so... um... There was... um... there wasn't a... um... Well, it makes sense then that I'm not finding you as distinct a character in those scenes when there is that kind of... It's the two of you and there is Edgar... and... and... and that's the dynamic... kind of circling around Lear in those scenes. Where you two became in effect more of a unit there and I think that's what's causing the interference there... um... Which...um... Which raises the question for me... Do you think that... would there have been more of that connection in the accidental mortal wounding of the Fool than you were allowed to do? Granted it was clear that your definitive duty is to the King... so you must go to... but it was interesting... that given that relationship that was developed that it's Edgar who gets to do the kind of premonition of Lear and Cordelia as opposed to you who had forged this relationship with the Fool.

RH: It is interesting that you mention that because initially it was blocked where I would carry the Fool off and then Edgar would do his monologue and then the next scene would come on. But I was going to follow the King and Edgar was not... so logically it was... Well, how would Kent pass off to sneak away and bury the Fool... while watching Lear... when Edgar is more than capable to do it? And... I think when we changed that moment... is when I had that brief moment where I possibly recognized Edgar. It never fully developed but I knew that he was no longer an enemy but a friend... at least that minimal distinction was there. Whether or not I figured it out that it was Edgar at that point and time... each night tended to be a little different. But every night I can say... that the realization that it is a friend and not a foe happened when I looked at him and he shook his head 'no'... and the Fool was gone and the reaction to the Fool dying started off and it was... it's the first go... and you find that perfect moment... and then the next night it became too frantic and then it was too much emotion and too much this... couldn't understand what you were saying... you are always trying to get back to that perfect moment that you hit right away... and it was that weird journey where I figured it out but I never found the intensity...

SB: ...of that discovery...

RH: ...of the first initial discovery of this is how we are going to run it. And I think once the Fool goes... I think there is that moment that I had... that I am alone. I no longer have this person to go with me... I am leaving and this guy is holding the Fool and I probably... I don't know what's going to happen, but I have to continue my duty...

even if it's on my own. So it's more or less one of those pull up your bootstraps and put your waders on because you got to go... before he gets too far ahead... It was tricky... it was tricky.

SB: ...And it's a tricky thing because you don't have a lot of time because you don't want to take the focus away from this thing that is not strictly textually grounded... and so...

RH: Correct, very much so... I had six lines... No... six words to pack in all of what we just discussed. That line was butchered and changed... and... and everything was moved. I came in two lines into Edgar's monologue and then exited and he finished his monologue. So with the change of the script I was kind of forced to make it work, but I thought it was an interesting choice and I bought into it wholeheartedly.

SB: I was also intrigued by how thoroughly the production really did present Lear and his cronies and knights as kind of... as these are aging wild boys. That these really are hell raisers... these really are hellions and which is why it was strange for me then that the older daughters [were presented] as pretty much evil from the outset. When I would think that if Lear and his crew really are hell raisers, they [the daughters] have every reason to try to crack down... And so... again... I found that... I felt those parts of the production were kind of at odds in some ways. Because... I mean... you know... Not that Lear and his buddies don't have a right to be hell raisers... It's just that if they are... then the older daughters are absolutely right to try to... kind of reign it in somehow and

then it escalates. Um... But I was just really intrigued... by the way... we're talking about this kind of... um... this default position to be a brawler... that you saw in Kent... um... the take on... um... you know... Edgar as one of the hard drinking guys who likes to hang out with Lear and his knights... so...

RH: I found myself in some of the early rehearsals... in the process... where Kent was that bridge between the nobility and royalty and the knights. I mean... he could go and party with the knights... and the knights respected him because he wasn't above them. He wasn't afraid to be apart of them. Where it gave the other nobility and royalty the ease of going... well, if we need to send anything down stream... Kent will be there... You know...

SB: ... Because he's that bridge...

RH: I found that bridge and I think that's where I made that connection with Edgar as well... that we would be the first two guys, out of all the other royalty and nobility, to go down to the knights quarters... roll dice... drink and have a good time. Then the next day be a part of the...

SB: ...official proceedings... Interesting.

RH: Yes, that helped me... that underdog element... even though... maybe underdog isn't even the right word...

SB: It was the word that served your take on the character...

RH: But coming now full circle to this other part of the conversation. I find that he was definitely that bridge or he was that social butterfly... I should say... Where he could go back and forth and pull rank... if he needed to... but he didn't need to...

SB: A Falstaffian figure... so there we are... interesting. Well, it was a pleasure to see you do that... I think it really was an important break through role for you... and you did it well, sir.

RH: Regards! Thank you very much.

The following is an interview with Melissa Lewis-Nuss. Melissa Lewis-Nuss is a local actress. I have had the opportunity to work with Melissa while working for Lincoln's Flatwater Shakespeare Company during the summers of 2008 and 2009.

January 19th, 2010

RH: Okay, it is January 19th and this is the interview with Melissa Lewis...

ML: It's the 19th already...

RH: Yeah...

ML: Fuck... Sorry... Fuck (speaking closer to the microphone)... Excellent... Okay...

RH: So I just have five questions for you over the production of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's *King Lear*...

ML: Do you have curly cues on the other side too? (Pointing to my beard)

RH: Uh- huh... So... Question number 1: What are your overall impressions of the production?

ML: My overall impressions... that's the... yeah... stretch it out...

RH: Yes. Stretch it out...

ML: Yeah that's how you do it? (Laughs) I enjoyed it. The thing that immediately stuck out... that pops into mind is... the... a... the killing of the fool. Which, I loved. I wasn't sure if he had a knife or not, and I was like 'oh, mother fucker... he's got a knife in his hand'. But the thing that I was left with wondering... a little bit... was exactly how much does Virginia direct the grad students. Does she give them free... more free rein because it is... you know... a thesis project for... you know... so many of them or... you know... to... to pursue what they want to... pursue... with their characterizations and character. I mean obviously she's directing but there were some things that I was scratching my head big time, wondering what the (pause) hell was up with that, and why the hell didn't she do something.

RH: I would say throughout this process, Virginia listened to... listened to our ideas more than in the past. But then yet... in the last show that we were all in, that she directed... my role was minimal. And I was not really involved in some of the process things that they did in the rehearsal process, because I was holding a video camera... you know.

ML: (Nods in agreement)

RH: I thought...

ML: ...was the professional dude a mix of all... I mean... the process. You said, you weren't that much of... a... your role was minimal in it because you had the camera.

RH: ...in *An American Daughter*

ML: Right.

RH: Right.

ML: Okay.

RH: In this one, Steven, we... I thought we all worked well with Steven and collaborated rather nicely.

ML: I enjoyed... I did enjoy watching you all with him. It seemed like you all enjoyed each other.

RH: I would agree.

ML: That was very nice. I loved... I loved watching you up there. Um... Straight up... I... I... I was wondering about control... and... and... a... and there were different characters in it... um... that I thought could have had far, far more control, but you as an actor... I mean... never had to worry about that for a moment as... as the audience

member. I knew immediately that I was going to be in for a treat to watch you and the characterization.

RH: Thank you

ML: You are welcome.

RH: The next question is... Do you think I have grown as an actor compared to the two Flatwater Shakespeare productions that you and I have been involved with, and do you have any specific examples from either the two shows that we did together *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *The Merry Wives of Windsor* compared to what you saw in *King Lear*?

ML: Well, you are... you are a funny damn guy. You have great instincts... you... you milk well (laugh)... you milk well... which... you know... that's... that's a talent because there can be too much milking. Um...I... again... I enjoyed the control... the honesty and subtlety that you layered with this guy... not that you didn't have... you know... I mean... fabulous wonderful... I mean... moments, and obvious relish in those moments with the character but... uh... I enjoyed the control. I mean... you... it's just obvious... immediately that... you know... this guy can have... I mean... a huge, big fat career. As I guess, to compare with the other shows I think... again sort of touching on that... I was afraid that the gas pedal might be pushed a little too much, but it wasn't. It was awesome, and that's the biggest thing: knowing what your part is and supporting the play, not taking cheap... you know... laughs... just for a laugh... but supporting the play,

the other characters and their role... the other actors and their roles and being that kind of solid foundation. If you're getting jobs that(s) what people look for – someone they can count on. So... I mean... you know... your comedy is aces but I think it's the subtlety... subtlety honesty that shows... keep it simple stupid, that's often what's hardest to learn for actors, and sometimes particularly for people who are so great at comedy... you know... need to know... when to pull back.

RH: Regards! Number three: are there any character choices that I made in the show that you disagreed with... any of the small humorous bits that snuck in here or there?

ML: Again... I was watchin' ... I was watchin' ... I think you justified everything that you did and it wasn't too much. And again... I was on alert for that, so to speak. And there were definitely other performances where that did come into play. I loved your physicality... you use your body... the type you are, and you're not afraid to use everything you have. That's what makes it...you interesting.

RH: Regards! In your opinion, was the journey of loyalty and patience consistent after Kent was banished?

ML: Well – yeah.

RH: Okay.

ML: I don't think... I don't think that was an issue for me. I think it absolutely was.... I think you stayed in tune with everything that was going on around your character and reacting... again... in an honest way to what was happening around you and obviously, you have other actors around you making their choices too. I think you were right in line with what people gave you to play off too.

RH: Okay, in following that up... If the loyalty and patience was consistent with my characterization after banishment... with the short period of time I have on stage to establish the loyalty and patience before I am banished... I mean... according to our script it was seven pages... and so I am Kent from beginning, middle, and end but for seven pages I have to establish a certain type of patriarchal love that I have for Lear... the relationship I have with Edgar, Gloucester, and Cordelia. Establishing all of that with the few lines that I have. Do you think there is anything that unhinged those moments before I was banished?

ML: I think you were as clear as a bell. I don't think there is any reason for your character not to be clear about what he is feeling. Obviously, there are many other characters that are not being clear... I mean... As well they shouldn't be about what their intentions are, and what their true feelings are... I... I thought you were crystal clear, it worked very nicely... and... and... I mean... I don't see or I can see your betrayal as Kent needing to be anything other than that.

RH: The last thing... Do you think I connected emotionally with the... with any specific actors on stage more than any other besides Lear? Do any specific instances come to your mind?

ML: I am not going to be much help with that one. I am sorry.

RH: That is okay. Do you have any other comments about the show?

ML: I... I thought you were one of the strongest people up there. I... I enjoyed... you know... watching you. I enjoyed... you know... not... not worrying about Robie... you know... again... you know... going to far with the comedy... I mean it is Lear. So... I mean... not that you can't find some little gems... but... I mean... I... I enjoyed watching... watching your journey as well as some of the other people's journeys but I felt... I felt taken care of. I didn't... I didn't feel like I needed to worry, and that was obvious really pretty damn fast. I think... and... and... I appreciate that as an audience member not having to worry about someone because there were other characters that scared the fucking hell out of me and continued to scare the fucking hell out of me... you were not one of them... and... and... I... I...well... I don't know... I am curious to talk with you maybe a little bit more about... about what you think you've gotten from this program and what you think is just a natural progression as an actor... I mean... you know... you do shows... you progress whether you are in a program or not... you know... you learn with the people that you work with whether they are a teacher or not...

you know... I mean... inevitably a director is a teacher in some regard whether they teach you something bad or something good.

RH: Well, for me the beginning of the program... I was coming back and going... wow! I have not acted in a long time. I was remembering things that I had learned in the past and its those things... where its like you are taught something so much that its second hand... that you take it for granted. And so it's the little things of breathing here or relaxing or pulling back and finding that honesty... and it's those little things that you just take for granted. Once you start taking them for granted on a consistent level you forget about them and you don't practice... and... Really what grad school has done... is snapped me out of forgetting all of the things I have learned. Instead of keeping it in a bag of tricks and going... I'll relax when I need too...

ML: (Laughs)

RH: You know...

ML: Because I don't understand anything about... I mean... your journey... I don't... I don't understand about the gas pedal at all... you know... because obviously that is not an issue I... (Laughs)

RH: So... you know... I mean... It was three... It was three years of searching for answers of well... if I, Robie, am enough for this character... You know... that can...

that is mind over matter. I mean... that's like looking at a big chocolate chip cookie and going... Oh, I could eat that and gain some weight or I could not eat it and gain some weight, but you know what? That cookie looks good.

ML: (Laughs)

RH: You know... so there's that fight... that struggle going in you with food or what not. But when you're trying to figure (out) that you are enough... as a person...

ML: See, that's huge...

RH: ...to bring... to the stage... I mean... that is... you're just... you can be overwhelmed, because then all of the sudden you are thinking, and thinking, and thinking, and thinking, and that's what you are not supposed to do.

ML: Now is that your verbiage? Or...

RH: Oh! It's stuff that I came to conclusion with over Christmas break.

ML: Really!

RH: I realized that... that part of my journey here has been discovering that I am enough.

ML: Okay. Well then again... did someone get... I mean... put that idea in your head... I mean... did someone say...

RH: Oh... Oh... Throughout the time we were here. Oh... it was when we first walked in the door...

ML: Okay... Okay...

RH: When we first walked in the door that was stated... you know... but you could sum up the three years... That... yeah... I learned how to relax... I learned how to breathe... I learned how to be present on stage... but a part of being present on stage is just me... I am enough... and that can be overwhelming to figure out.

The following is an interview with Harris Smith. Harris Smith is a professor with the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. Harris Smith was the fight choreographer for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's 2009 production of *King Lear*.

January 26th, 2010

RH: What are your overall impressions of the show?

HS: In the simplest of terms; my overall impression of the show: I thought overall the show was as success based on the goals we set out for you as classically trained graduate students. This was not a show you (and when I say you, I mean your class as a whole) could have pulled off after your first or even second year. As a group, you worked well to build a strong ensemble, which has always been a strength for your particular class. In general, I thought the actors did well portraying the characters that were written by the playwright and bringing them to life on stage. Each character portrayed helped support the main themes of the play and kept the plot moving forward. From my perspective there wasn't one performance that was distracting or took away from the production of the play. I would also say that most of your classmates (including yourself) were successful in meeting the performance goals that the faculty set out for them.

RH: Number two. How would you describe my physical movement throughout the show, and do any specific moments come to mind where it was particularly good or bad?

HS: I'd say overall this is my biggest impression compared to your first year, but you were much more grounded than you've ever been. You know you're a character actor... we've told you that-- but we wanted you to come into the program to stretch and grow in your craft. To me at least, I guess Kent could be a character actor- I mean a character actor could play him since he has to play the dual roles, as it were, since he's in disguise once he's banished but I – what I got away – got from you was mostly the fact of how grounded your character was- compared to things you've done in the past. The sense of maturity that your character had- just physically- his physical presence. So I thought that was a big improvement. There was no extraneous or superfluous movements that you've had in the past when you performed- you weren't acting with a capital 'A' is what I call it when people overact, you know, you... you did the work. If anything, at some times it might have been... the energy might have been a little low- actually believe it or not is fine... because it's nice to know that you could do that and go there in a public performance... you know... so... so I thought... I thought you hit it pretty well.

RH: Number three. Do you think I could have done anything different to enhance my characterization of Kent?

HS: There you go! Um... Kent was fine- I was... and maybe I might have missed it in your- um... in your thesis and writing your research- um... and you might have alluded

to it... but I was wondering why, and this might have been a directorial choice, why, once Kent was banished... why he maybe didn't try a different accent, or something to try to show that disguise of him trying to disguise himself from the King. I didn't really see that. Did I miss it or did you think about doing it or...

RH: It came across my mind to change my speech pattern. The little sentence that Kent has, that says he is going to change his voice to strengthen his disguise-- that was cut- so I was... I contemplated on pushing it and then I was like, I have enough on my plate to try and capture this person and ground myself and breathe and relax and let all of the research go...

HS: So what you're saying is you under-estimated your abilities as an actor is what you did... (LAUGH) That's what I think because you... you had that part down—you had him...

RH: Virginia didn't want us to use... I mean Ryan went through loads and loads of different voices...

HS: Yeah—Yeah—for Tom...

RH: It was too close of an accent, too much this... and Virginia didn't want us to use accents...

HS: Okay. So it was a little bit directorial.

RH: It was directorial and on my part I figured I didn't want to get stuck... if I... not using an accent but a character voice... I didn't want to fall into an old routine when I was pursuing something that I was enjoying so much. I was having fun with what I was doing and I didn't want to put another pot on the stove that was full...

HS: I think you could have did it.

RH: Okay.

HS: and I think it would have been okay if you had to rely on some of... Remember, some of the old stuff you have is still legitimate to use. We just want to stretch... to have you stretch and grow... so that was my only question. But once again... Remember, all of this is under a microscope and... you know... my opinion, so it still... It still was a wonderful performance. So...

RH: Regards! Question number four. Did my efforts to build solid relationships before Kent's banishment resonate after banishment?

HS: Oh yeah! Yeah definitely... I mean that was established clearly... and once again that's a... that's a... a... a... a... a testament to the ensemble that was built over the last three years. I mean you guys came in with that from day one... that trust and comfort

level that you had with each other... and then Steve just kind of helped... solidify or add on to something that was already a strong base. So no, that was very consistent... to me... at least to me throughout the performance... that was easy... easy stuff.

RH: Cool. Number five. As fight director of the show, do you think that I used the choreography to enhance my character's struggle with status?

HS: Yes, I think... I think it worked well... um... especially your confrontation with Oswald... and then after I had to leave, since I wasn't there as much as I wanted to be, it was a nice little change when you stepped up on to the step. That his physical status...his physical stature being taller than yours was a fun, light moment... because there is not too many light moments in that play. So it was a nice little break for us...um...so it was... it was enjoyable. And then the other fact that once you were ordered to do something by someone of higher authority you did it... you know... grudgingly... but you did it... um... so I think it worked well.

RH: Okay. Number six. Do you think that I have grown as an actor, in this program, throughout the three years?

HS: No... end of interview... (LAUGHS)... okay... sorry... I know we are running... hello... hello... um... as I said before, yes. In every way... um... and I don't think if it has been the last three years... and I keep saying, I'm not going to get emotional. This a... of what we've been through... so I think that's grounded you more and you have

been through a lot... a lot more than a... any graduate student should have to go through... so yeah! I would say you have grown emotionally, physically... like I said, you got rid of all that extra crap that you would do to make sure you were on, and you were performing, and you were showing us that you were working, and that you're working hard... I'm a working hard because I'm acting and... you know... now I think some of that is a... has been taken away and I think... it has been replaced with confidence. I think, at least that's how you come across now... that there's a little bit... you're more grounded and maybe it is because you have more to focus on... I think I said the first semester... you know... um... and throughout the second semester... it's like... yeah. Now we have to actively pursue an objective, stay in character, pay attention to the given circumstances, listen to our partners... all these things that, you know, you take for granted. And then you get into graduate school and you find out, yeah- I really need to do all these things. I don't have to try and impress someone because I need to be in the moment... and stay focused on my partner... be open and giving... and um... So I don't know if it's that but it... it... Definitely there's a sense of maturity and more confidence in your performance. There's... there's... there's less clutter. I guess is the best way to put it.

But my words to you... if there is anything else I have to say is... don't forget where you came from and what got you in to this program... as a character actor, and you're a funny guy... and don't forget about that. Remember, our job was to help you to stretch and grow, so you can be things besides just being the funny guy... and now you have shown that... um... But hey, if you are going to make your bread and butter being that comedic relief and that character actor- that's great! You get involved with a

company then they can see that you can do more than that and then you will get those other roles so... That would be my parting advice... so...

RH: Thank you very much.

HS: Okay. That's it! This is Harris Smith... I'm out!

The following is written correspondence between Virginia Smith and myself.

Virginia Smith is the Artistic Director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, and the director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's 2009 production of *King Lear*.

RH: In your opinion, was the journey of loyalty and patience consistent after Kent was banished?

VS: It was consistent.

RH: Did I find success with mixing the qualities of bravery and being unpredictable with a solid beginning, middle, and end?

VS: I think you were more successful at being brave and loyal than at being unpredictable. You didn't show it in scenes with Lear and Cordelia. But it wasn't particularly called for in those scenes and it was in others. Your performance served the play.

RH: I know my vocal inflections were non-existent in the beginning. In your opinion, do you feel my vocal color arrived to a point of telling a consistent story with honesty?

VS: Your vocal work came a long ways. Learning to be simple was a good journey for

you to take. I still think your work as a clown has stunted your exploration of your authority, especially your vocal authority. You did tell this a consistent story with honesty. But you have lots of work to do on the heroic part of you. I mean heroic both in classical and in contemporary work. There can be so much more, still being totally simple and letting breath and emotion fly.

RH: Do you think that my clown work allows me build up facade and hide from confronting and demanding authority vocally and physically? I think the exploration with confronting authority this role provided me strengthened my understanding of my inner clown through discovering a certain amount of self-confidence.

VS: I'm not sure that I understand this question. So ask again if I miss the essence here. I think you still tend to find a character mask and hide behind it rather than be yourself. You don't do this in film, by the way. The crazy grad student you played in the RCR videos was completely you. Felix Humble was a guy you constructed. Ouch! I know! Ouch! I am always so pleased to see you in the halls in the office, out in front of the school. You have this unbelievable warmth and love that just wafts off of you. Put that guy on stage. If that is your inner clown, bring him on! I can see that it takes enormous confidence to be so vulnerable.

RH: Did you find my movements to be fluid, rigid, or natural?

VS: Your movement is quite fluid. The fights were great. It would be interesting to see you move at even a lighter weight, just because you'd have more flexibility in your trunk.

RH: Did my efforts to build solid relationships before Kent's banishment resonate after banishment?

VS: Yes.

RH: Okay, do any specific relationships come to mind where I might have excelled, or those relationships that could have benefited from further exploration?

VS: You had a relationship with Gloucester, Cordelia, the Fool, Edmund and Lear. It seemed that you loved them and respected them. In so little time, you did well.

RH: In your opinion, did I grow and stretch my limits as an actor throughout the entire process of this show.

VS: You did. You had no idea you had this character in you and it was fun to watch you discover using your own heart to convey heroism and the ability to sacrifice self. Now that exploration must continue. Yes?

RH: I would agree that I lacked some self-trust in acknowledging that this character was somewhere inside of me. But I think that once I figured out what to aim for with being the hero I began to have fun exploring the character. In the future I need to continue distinguishing my heroic characters. Playing a hero that stumbles upon good fortune through heroic deeds, as I tend to do when playing characters in a clownish mindset, is totally different from what I discovered throughout this process. I enjoyed playing with this character and discovering more about who I am as a person and what I can achieve as an actor.

VS: I know. It was great fun to be walking beside you.

RH: Do you have any other comments?

VS: It was fun to go on this journey with you. Robie/Kent was sort of my sidekick on this play. I had to be loyal and heroic as we found the best way to tell this story. By the end we offer our throat to be cut or whatever is necessary. This is all we can give; now take what you can from it.

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