“One Man in His Time Plays Many Parts”:

The Causes and Effects of Cognitive Dissonance Upon the Actor

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Presented to the Faculty

Liberty University

School of Communication

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts in Communication

By

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April 12, 2011

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Abstract

Actors in general are passionate about their art. It is a constant balancing act for actors to keep their lives separate from the roles they play on the stage. This paper focuses upon role-play performance, cognitive dissonance, and self-concept development in theater education. The focus of this study is specifically upon the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance in female theater students from three colleges in the central Virginia area. Qualitative research was obtained through the use of interviews. Ten students were each asked a set of six questions based on the roles they played and performances they were a part of. This study concluded that a majority of students do deal with cognitive dissonance and are able to attribute this dissonance to the roles they have played, the productions they have participated in, as well as the overall experience of being involved in theater. There were also significant benefits discovered such as the development of a positive self-concept based on student feedback. It was difficult to measure either good or bad effects of this cognitive dissonance in these actors. The results were fairly even, though the negative effects slightly outweighed the positive effects. These results were attributed to the variety of roles played by each actor and the surrounding conditions of the production and schools represented. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

Key Words: Role-play Performance, Cognitive Dissonance, Self-concept, Qualitative Research

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Darlene Graves, for her all of her guidance and encouragement throughout this process. I am proud to have had the privilege of working with her on a topic we are both so passionate about. I would also like to thank the other two readers on my committee, Dr. Michael Graves, and Dr. Lynnda Beavers, for taking the time out of their busy schedules to read and discuss with me several ways to help improve my thesis.

I would also like to thank my husband, Hans, for his ongoing support for my passion in theater, and for all his patience and love during the highs and lows in obtaining this degree. I must thank my family, including Mom, Dad, Sharon and Grandma, for all their prayers and for believing in me when I had a hard time believing in myself. Out of all the acknowledgements thus far, I am most deeply thankful for and indebted to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His amazing strength, many answers to prayer, His wonderful faithfulness and His astounding love. I would like to give Him all the honor and glory for this achievement because I know I could never have done it alone.

Chapter 1: Introduction

It was just an average rehearsal for the fall musical at my university. I had the opportunity of being cast in a lead role. The character I was personifying was a confident, controlling powerhouse of a woman. This character was considered to be one of the villains of the show, an antagonist preventing the male and female protagonists from their happiness together. Over time I was surprised to notice conflicting thoughts and desires inside myself, a few based on the character and others based on myself. I began to stand aloof from a majority of the cast because I felt ostracized. Other actors in the show treated me as though I was the character I was portraying, both onstage and off of the stage. I could not decide what aspects of the character I admired or desired from a distance and what characteristics I had taken with me and embedded within myself. Forcing myself to bury these conflicting thoughts and emotions became exhausting after nights of rehearsals and eventual performances. I could not help but wonder how many other actors struggle with this same challenge when performing roles on the stage. This struggle within myself through role-play was affecting my self-image through a form of cognitive dissonance, the inner tension between two or more ideas.

Understanding role-play begins with learning the contexts in which it can be used. In life, one takes on several roles on a day-to-day basis, including that of a family member, friend, spouse, student, employee, as well as other numerous roles. In fact, every individual has taken on a number of roles throughout his or her lifetime. Role-play can also be used as a problem solving and therapeutic tool. This is used to understand group dynamics and certain behaviors in individuals. In this instance a facilitator leads a group into self-discovery by lowering each member's inhibitions. They may act out roles of their

childhood, of a family member, or even an ideal self. This in turn forms trust within the group and the healing of personal issues within the group members. Another day-to-day use of role-play is that of an actor personifying a character onstage. The gender specific vocabulary of *actor* and *actress* has more recently been merged to the gender general term of actor when referencing the performer on the stage or in film, which I will be using. He or she often has rehearsals with a director in which a performance will gradually begin to take shape and the actors will begin to work on the characterization of their role. This is most often used as a form of entertainment.

As in any given situation if one of these roles gets out of control or escapes its context, miscommunication will inevitably follow. In the example of the roles we take on every day, if a husband or wife steps outside of their marital role and abuses it, they may take on the part of an adulterer. Consequences such as divorce may follow this abused form of role-play. In therapeutic role-play, if there is no facilitator for the group leading to a resolution, chaos may ensue. This may result in more pain and destruction than healing or problem solving; however, if an actor plays a role onstage there is rarely a safety net for the trouble he or she may run into. Though there is a director involved in the production, that director is generally concerned with the final product of the show. The psyche of the actors in the show may not be of legitimate concern to the director, but I wish to address the issue of the emotional safety factors of these actors. It is an issue because acting requires so much of the self in order for it to be believable to an audience. There is no external emotional or relational facilitator in the rehearsal process. Actors are expected to operate as their own guide in the journey towards becoming other characters onstage. Role-play can often be a dangerous line for actors to walk.

There has been a great amount of study done on the theory of cognitive dissonance and also on individual role-play. A combination of cognitive dissonance and role-play onstage has not been explored as much as is necessary in this field. Harry Mossman, an acting teacher at Butte College in Durham, California, wrote an article based on his dissertation entitled "Dissonance Between An Acting Role and an Actor's Personal Beliefs." He focuses upon the dissonance actors undergo when they play roles that go against their beliefs and character. Though this is a significant study and it is very similar to what I am focusing on, I am looking specifically at female college theater students in three Virginia universities. Before beginning this study I did not assume that these women suffer from dissonance due to personal beliefs, but I did assume that they suffered from dissonance in some way, shape, or form. I was open to hearing a variety of responses as to what may have instigated this dissonance. There are several roles in which actors may desire the qualities of the character they are playing. These may be noble and virtuous qualities that do not contradict their beliefs but cause dissonance in the struggle of trying to make them a part of who they are personally. Actors may be personally challenged by this struggle. As a result, a sense of disappointment may linger inside them or a challenge to rise to the occasion will dominate. On the other hand, actors may wish to take on more devious or negative qualities from roles, resulting in a similar form of dissonance.

Many roles have the potential to either help or harm an actor. Michael D. Robinson, Sarah K. Moeller, and Paul W. Goetz wrote an article entitled "Are Self-deceivers Enhancing Positive Affect or Denying Negative Affect? Toward An Understanding of Implicit Affective Processes." In this article, the authors use four tests, which suggest that self-deception predicts positive priming effects in relation to one's self-concept. In the same study the

authors report that individuals with high self-deception make very good first impressions, but these impressions became more and more negative as their relationships progress with other people (175). Individuals can act and pretend only so much before the reality of who they are is discovered. Deceiving oneself creates a false sense of self. When related to actors, they must take on the responsibility of making a judgment call whether or not to embrace or discard parts of a character. Characterization is not a simple task; actors pride themselves on this art because it takes hours, days, weeks, and even months to connect with a role.

There are several actor-training methods used to help actors with their characterization. Due to this pressured process of becoming a different person on the stage, I believe that actors may take on and cling to parts of the stage role in their own lives. This could mean that actors carry hundreds of different roles, each with its own baggage, along with them into their everyday lives. Some may say this is simply the fate of an actor. Where is the line drawn as to what traits and characteristics an actor should add to his or her own life? The answer to this question must begin with a study of what particularly stirs up cognitive dissonance in these actors. It is unknown what kinds of dissonance emerge from playing various characters. There is a need to discover the positive and negative sides of the struggles within the actor. This study helps to indicate whether these struggles help or hinder the self-concept of the actor on the stage.

This study benefits the communication field primarily because it delves into cognitive dissonance theory and the interpersonal communication among the actors on the stage. The psychology field would find this study interesting due to the effects of cognitive dissonance upon a student's self-concept. The theater arts field would especially take an

interest in how characterization and role-play can have a cognitive effect upon the actor. The purpose of the phenomenological study for this thesis is to discover and understand the reasons for cognitive dissonance within female college students at three universities in Virginia. In the chapters that follow I will present a review of the literature that has been published on this particular focus, an explanation of the subjects that make up the heart of this study, as well as the method by which I have conducted the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to look at the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance in the lives of actors playing roles on the stage. From my initial research I have noticed this topic has not been observed as thoroughly as it could be. There is a potential richness to this focus. Theater is a specified area of communication performance. Oral interpretation, rhetoric, speech giving, and nonverbal communication are just a few of the devices used from the world of communication within theater. The origin of theater is said to have arisen out of myth and ritual. Stories were created to explain humanity's purpose, often involving mythical or supernatural figures. Some of the oldest texts and plays originated out of ancient Greece (Csapo 364). Plays developed during this time were either tragedies or comedies. Tragedy was at its height in Greek society when culture was flourishing, while comedy was popular during the decline of the Greek government, providing a diversion for the population's frustrations. When the Roman Empire took power they borrowed elements of Greek theater and improved upon them. The semi-circular stage of the Greeks was raised and a more vigorous style of acting was employed. The Romans became more focused on crude comedy and its mass appeal in the arena, which eventually involved the martyrdom of early Christians. The greatest impact Rome may have had on theater was to limit the growth of the dramatic arts for many years and, as a result, struggles in opposition to the actor and the stage have existed for centuries.

In the past, theater was considered sinful, especially to the church. Tertullian, a church father in the second-century, condemned theater because he believed it reflected the pagan spirit of Rome. In the sixteenth century, John Calvin banned it in Geneva. Puritans in Elizabethan England condemned theater as an instrument of the devil and at the start of the American colonies, even the House of Representatives in New Hampshire banned an acting company in

1792 because the theater had a "peculiar influence on the minds of young people, and greatly endangered their morals by giving them a taste for intriguing, amusement and pleasure" (Kohansky 139). For centuries actors were assumed to be immoral and lazy because, in contrast to hard work, the acting profession was considered "play." In the nineteenth century, entertainment represented a threat to the social order of the time. "…evangelicals almost universally condemned the theater on moral and theological grounds. It was estimated that seventy percent of the American population in the middle of the nineteenth century thought theater attendance was sinful" (Romanowski 43). Religious leaders called theater a "worldly amusement" or "devil's workshop" which was believed to distract people from their vocation and worship of God. In 1904 a general consensus was established among Protestant and Catholic leaders demanding that the church should take a more moderate position towards the dramatic arts. The participation of middle-class churchgoers added to the boom in entertainment over the next decade. It is evident that there has and will continue to be opposition towards theater. I believe that besides the weight of these outward struggles, actors have dealt with inward struggles concerning theater for just as long.

Throughout history, actors have received ridicule, and disregard from the public concerning their work. Jeremy Collier wrote *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* in London in 1698 in order to speak out against actors and actresses involved in theater. "The business of plays is to recommend virtue, to expose the singularities of pride and fancy, to make folly and falsehood contemptible, and to bring every thing that is ill under infamy, and neglect. This design has been oddly pursued by the English stage" (Collier 1). He continues to humiliate these actors by saying, "…it does in effect degrade human nature, sink reason into appetite, and breaks down the distinctions between man and beast. Goats and

monkeys if they could speak, would express their brutality in such language as this" (Collier 6). Jeremy Collier thought that pretending to be another person was the equivalent to living a lie. He even asks, "To what purpose is vice thus preferred, thus ornamented, and thus caressed, unless for imitation" (Collier 163)? Though these actors were on a stage they were not promoting or glorifying the evil or hypocrisy in their plays. Though the role and the individual are distinct, there is a possibility that they can somewhat merge.

My question is at what point does the actor *play* the role and at what point does he or she *live* the role? The moment an individual's identity is at risk of being lost or even challenged is the point when attention is especially demanded. I have focused on three main areas of interest in reference to this study: 1. Role-playing 2. Cognitive dissonance theory and 3. Self-concept.

Actors carry a great load throughout their day-to-day lives. Role-play performance is a challenging field to enter into, as there is quite a bit of responsibility for these actors. Not only must actors take on the struggles of their personal lives, but also the burdens of the different roles they take on, whether they be the roles of sibling, mother, daughter, friend, etc. On top of all this, these individuals have chosen to take on character roles in a performance. They must be convincing enough to their audience in order to be considered acceptable or effective in the theater trade. The audience wants to believe that what is happening onstage reflects a slice of life. With all of these roles in the balance, something may falter and there is bound to be some form of dissonance that follows. Some of those lines between roles might smudge or overlap. This process of role-taking has the potential for dangerous and conflicting consequences, depending on the role or individual. It risks one's personal identity and self-concept as being distorted or changed on a fairly constant basis from one role to another. In order to be thorough I

researched many different contexts of role-play in society. Though the research may seem minimal it is simply because the primary focus of my research is stage performance.

Role-play

For the purpose of this thesis, I have used "role-play" to refer to the changing of one's behavior to assume a role within the theater. Therefore, my focus is upon role-playing on the stage. I am an actress and I have personally noticed a struggle within myself when it comes to characterization in performance. The separation between life on the stage and life off the stage can be difficult to differentiate. How can one know if he or she is taking the role too far? Within stage performance there is a fine line between fantasy and reality. Nicholas Baxter, from Northern Illinois University, in his masters thesis entitled "Identity Play Among Live Action Role Players: Constructing, Performing, and Managing Fantasy Identities," defines "playing at" a role based on George Herbert Mead's interpretation, "performing the behavioral, role-playing, and imaginative, role-taking aspects of an identity or status" (Baxter 2009). George Herbert Mead, an American philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist who was affiliated with the University of Chicago, is recognized as one of the founders of social psychology. Walter Couto expounds on this "playing at" a role in his article "Role-Playing vs. Role-Taking: An Appeal for Clarification." Mead's understanding of role-taking is that of a psychological concept referring to a mental or cognitive process that gives a human being a remarkable power; it enables him to pretend momentarily that he is another person. While he is "becoming" that person, he acts like him, giving him insight into how that person would react in a given situation. There are two levels to this concept: role-taking on an elementary level and playing at or pretending to play a role. The elementary level is similar to the fantasy life of a child. When a child pretends to be a

milkman, he thinks and performs like one, yet the child cannot be a milkman. "Playing at" involves both the "playing" and "taking" concepts in a make-believe, playful, fictitious or fantasy form. Mead considers role-play to be a sociological concept referring to behavior performance or conduct that matches the position or status one holds in life (Coutu 181).

In an educational setting role-play can work to one's benefit in that it aids in development of the self. The *Science and Journal* magazine contains an article entitled "Role-play in the Science Classroom." This article by Erica A. Worch, Amy M. Scheuermann, and Jodi J. Haney explains the benefits of role-play for K-2 students learning about science. "It [role-play] can be used to support meaningful content learning through socially and emotionally rewarding experiences" (Worch 54). Role-play has been used in the education of all ages. In the article entitled "The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Facilitating Organization Learning: With HRD Managers" by Myra Hodgkinson, fifteen human resource managers, both male and female, who attended a large United Kingdom business school, participated in a facilitated learning role-play exercise. Each of the managers adopted the role of a head teacher in a secondary school. They were all dealt a problem and had to solve it accordingly. Through this exercise they were able to acquire a deeper understanding for the tasks of a secondary school head teacher, especially the knowledge and insight that is required in the trade. The students were later encouraged to break off into groups to discuss their experiences. Through this they were able to build shared vision, establish team learning, as well as thinking in a systematic way (Hodgkinson 367-369). Within a learning environment different forms of role-play can help with classroom management.

Role-playing has also been shown to aid in therapy. According to "Scenario Role Play: The Blees Method" in the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* scenario role-play is

considered a clinical therapeutic option for patients. Robert A. Blees developed scenario role-play therapy in the mid-twentieth century. It allows personalities to free themselves without any negative consequences in a safe environment; assertions may be fully shown with no fear of humiliation or disrespect (McCant 179). There are no right or wrong answers. Therapy focuses on the here and now rather than the past (MacNeilage 158). This therapy, though, is offered in a controlled environment where specific results are often expected.

Cognitive dissonance in some ways can also be a healthy form of therapy because it is a natural part of intrapersonal communication. "Intrapersonal communication can be further defined as an individual's attempt to establish authentic communication with his own self" (Seral 9). Role-playing can be a lasting and generalizeable tool in behavior change. Feelings such as anger, resentment, and despair are strongly rooted in the here and now responses with thoughts, verbal and nonverbal behavior. Though role-play must be monitored and controlled, it offers a way for an individual to express anger and unrealistic fears with communication (Macneilage 160). This lends to the theory that role-play may be a form of eradication and release. In the article entitled "Role-Play and the Art of Teaching Choice Theory, Reality Therapy, and Lead Management" by Robert Wubbolding and John Brickell in *The International Journal of Reality*, therapy is said to help participants increase their skills as well as self-confidence. It is a form of psychotherapy and is considered to be necessary in this form of management training (Wubbolding 43). A new development of role-play has recently sprung up through modern technology. Just as therapy offers several benefits, so does role-play by other technological means.

Online role-play has been used to increase involvement in online activities. This involvement in role-play and discussion has increased through anonymity (Bell 252). Role-play

can even help students develop argument techniques. Richard Beach, and Candance Doerr-Stevens explain in their article, "Learning Argument Practices Through Online-Role Play: Toward a Rhetoric of Significance and Transformation" in the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,* that motivation is increased if student's arguments are based on a rhetoric of significance involving topics relevant to student interests. "In an online debate students adopt roles and positions related to a certain issue and then conduct a debate on a blog or online discussion tool over an extended time period" (Beach 463). Individuals develop a sense of freedom taking on roles that represent their beliefs and stances on major issues. In a fantasy role-play situation, as in video games, young adults can submerge themselves into character roles in a healthy or almost an obsessive way. They take on a second identity and live through this fantasy through the video game. Richard Beach and Candance Doerr-Stevens' study applies the assistance of drama in teacher education and the learning of argument through this online role-play (Beach 460).

Though there are several benefits that result from role-play, this same advantage can be the cause of several consequences. A good amount of research presented on the dissonance involved in role-play is in relationship to constructing, performing, and managing fantasy identities through role-play (Baxter 2009). The management of identities is at least admitting there is a problem or issue within the artistic environment for performers. Most studies are composed of observations on people who may or may not have a background in theater performance. My focus is strictly upon actors in the theater.

There is no doubt that people are aware and concerned of what others think about them and in turn are very impressionable. Most of what makes up our self-image is based upon opinions and feedback from outside sources. Jonathan Thacker, author of *Role-Play and the*

World as Stage in 'Comedia', says "Everyday social role-play is dependent not simply upon the whim of an individual, but upon the nature of the society and the status within it of that individual (Thacker 19). This is all based upon the demands we place on ourselves as well as the demands others place upon us. Role-play aids in disguising our true identities. It can be a defense mechanism for individuals who are not at peace with the reality, world, or character they have created with themselves. The life they live everyday can be viewed as mundane, boring, or disinteresting. Erving Goffman, author of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* says, "Life itself is a dramatically enacted thing. All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify" (Goffman 78).

Character development is a large focus of an actor's trade. There are several strategies necessary in creating a character. According to *Introduction to Acting* by Stanley Kahan there are a few basic steps that he says are necessary in developing a role for performance. The actor must first analyze the play, then begin to analyze the character, observe individuals similar to the character, involve imagination which allows creativity to run wild, learn his or her lines, and develop business that one's character would have on the stage (Kahan 166-175). Along with this great amount of responsibility, a performer carries the burden of being two people, himself and an imaginary person. Sustaining a character is one of the most difficult demands required of an actor. Thought, practice, rehearsal, planning, and imagination all go into this process. The job of the actor is to make the personality of the character visible to the audience (Lee 125). The degree to which this is done will determine either a high-quality or average performance by the actor. A first impression and introduction between an audience and the performer will be as the character, states Charlotte Lee and David Grote in *Theater: Preparation and Performance.* "…While you are making an impression on the audience, the character is also making an

impression on the people in the imaginary world of the play" (Lee 126). Sometimes it is difficult to tear the two apart, for both the performer and the audience.

Actors either play roles "against type" or they are "typecast." Charlotte Lee and David Grote say that to play against type means that the actor presents himself in a way that is opposite of what people would normally expect him to be in life (Lee 127). Typecasting, meaning finding an actor to play a role that fits the character's attitudes and look perfectly, exists only in theory because it is impossible to yield the perfect type for every part within a cast (Cass 200). Some parts are typecast though because they must be in order to meet the fulfillment of that part.

A great disadvantage in educational theater is that the students are temporary. It is to the director's advantage then not to cast the same students in every play. In order to maintain a consistent standard of performance, a director must always have actors ready and at hand to replace others due to the educational inevitability of graduation. It is also imperative to consider the audience's perspective as well. If a director places the same individual in every lead role, then the audience is improperly asked to accept this same actor in another role so close to the previous production. Sustaining belief for the purpose of realistic theater is then lost.

In the article "What Are We Casting For?" by Carl B. Cass, Cass asks if there is any proof that a character or personality of an actor can be changed by experience in the roles he or she plays. I believe this proof exists in the individual playing the part. Most stories and plays involve right and wrong, or good and evil. Who would then receive the honor of playing the parts of prostitutes, gangsters, and weaklings in these performances if everyone played the protagonist or hero? These characters are necessary for the plot to proceed. Individuals who play the parts of noblemen and characters with "character" may over a period of time partake in these qualities and find themselves stronger and more virtuous. Each actor has a distinct range

of parts he can play well (Cass 198, 199). This may be based upon personal experience, raw talent, or the pure enjoyment of the art, if not all three of these.

Much exploration has focused on people playing a role that goes against one's own private convictions. Actors invest themselves in the roles they play and, as a result, facets of who they are become part of the characters they play and vice versa. Harry Mossman, author of "Dissonance Between an Acting Role and an Actor's Personal Beliefs" in the *Educational Theatre Journal,* explains in his article a way to ease this dissonance. Actors can soothe the discomfort they feel towards their roles by either giving in and conforming to their roles by changing their attitudes or they can maintain the discomfort by not conforming and holding fast to their convictions (Mossman 535). The directors have the power and influence over these actors to either help reduce dissonance by emphasizing the "make believe" aspect of role-playing or they can increase dissonance by emphasizing that the audience and actors surrounding him may mistake him for the character being embodied. To some actors this second thought can either create negative or positive effects following dissonance. The negative effects place the actors in the role of victims who must come face to face with the lie that they are portraying what is not true to themselves. The positive effects place a challenge within these actors to keep up this façade or deception to fool the audience. Roles are created in various degrees while the actors frame their behavior. Not only do they openly create and modify the roles they play but they also bring them to light. "The process is not only role-taking but role-making" (Thacker 19).

Cognitive Dissonance:

My study of role-play begins with cognitive dissonance within the actor or performer. In observing cognitive dissonance I found more than enough information on the theory. Through understanding its framework, I have closely observed distinct parts of the theory that apply to the actor. Cognitive dissonance theory was developed by social psychologist Leon Festinger in 1957. This theory presents the question, "How does it happen that persons sometimes find themselves doing things that do not fit with what they know, or having opinions that do not fit with other opinions they hold?" (Festinger 4). Dissonance involves the psychological discomfort between several inconsistencies within one's own mind. These thoughts or cognitions are significant to their reality in some way. This reality is either social or physical, but it is relevant within the individual's related world. An individual's cognitions basically map out what is of most significance within his or her reality. Observation and record of a character's cognitions alone can accurately recreate what makes up an individual. In order to reduce the dissonance created there are two options one can choose between, either one can change his or her thoughts through a shift in behavior or he or she can change his or her facts, knowledge, or opinions about the effects of the choices resulting from that dissonance (Festinger 6). "Cognitive dissonance can be seen as an antecedent condition which leads to activity oriented toward dissonance reduction just as hunger leads to activity oriented toward hunger reduction" (Festinger 3). "If two elements are dissonant with one another, the magnitude of the dissonance will be a function of the importance of the elements" (Festinger 16). Leon Festinger explains that dissonance comes from logical inconsistencies.

Human beings strive for consistency within themselves and with the world. If something does not have "consonance," or balance, then it is assumed that once inconsistency or disorder is

involved, there is dissonance. An individual who holds a belief and who is faced with inconsistent data will be in a dissonant condition. An excellent example of this is given by Dion-Scott Kakures of Scripps College in his article, "Unsettling Questions: Cognitive Dissonance in Self-Deception." He gives an example, stating that if Sally loves him, then that is considered consonance in his mind, but if she says that she hates him and does not want to see him again, then he is in a dissonant situation. An immediate reaction to this is to want to reduce the dissonance, whether through belief that Sally's affections lie somewhere else and he should move on or that they can lead to more dissonance through misinterpretation by finding those who agree with a new constancy, which may or may not be true (Scott-Kakures 278).

A major hypothesis of dissonance theory states that the higher justification a person is given for playing a role that goes against his or her attitudes, the less his or her attitudes will change to conform to the role (Mossman 535). Harry Mossman, mentioned previously regarding role-play, conducted an experiment on college students by asking them to tape personally recorded Shakespearean speeches that were counter-attitudinal to their beliefs or attitudes. All of the students were offered one or two dollars for making this tape. Half of the students were told that those listening to the tape might confuse their beliefs and values for the character that they were portraying. The other half of the students were not told anything regarding this. The results affirmed Festinger's theory in at least a few of these actors. After the tapes were made, the students were asked about their attitude in accordance with the characters. The students who were not informed of this other information had no change in their attitudes or beliefs in reference to what the characters believed. The other half of students who were informed of the confusion of their beliefs and values with the listeners of the tape tended to agree more with the

attitudes of the character. This study displays dissonance arousal and reduction occurring within actors playing counter-attitudinal roles (536).

Harry Mossman says, "While an actor may often achieve peace of mind through attitudinal change after taking a part, it does not follow that he maintains it all the way through to performance" (539). This may include "butterflies" or nerves before a performance. Leon Festinger hypothesized that a drive state is similar to hunger and thirst, which can drive one to the action of eating or drinking to fill that need. It can either be helpful or harmful. Stage fright can drive actors to give their performance an adrenaline boost, especially on an opening night (Mossman 539). It can also cause one to forget lines, speak too fast, or project the lines improperly. "As is the general rule, increased drive hurts poorly learned and helps well-learned behavior" (Mossman 536).

Self-Concept:

There are two levels that make up self-concept: the first is self-image, which is how we see ourselves, and the second is self-esteem, which are feelings and attitudes towards oneself. The self-concept makes up a great portion of how we see the world around us and how the world sees us. These perceptions of ourselves by others have an effect upon how we receive communication from these individuals, and this also influences their perceptions. Many of our attitudes and feelings are not decided on our own but occasionally we allow them to be determined by those around us. "The escape from the distress of seeing ourselves as we really are may in fact be a chronic need, since most of us live in societies in which we may well be wrong but cannot afford to know we are" (Murphy 52).

It is common to deceive oneself on an everyday basis without even the realization of it. Kent Bach, author of "An Analysis of Self-Deception" found in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* says, "Self-deception seems to be, if it is what the name implied, the schizoid act of directly and knowingly getting oneself to believe what one disbelieves (or to disbelieve what one believes)" (351). It can also be considered "lying to oneself" or "fooling oneself." Largely, the major feelings that we have in light of our state of well-being vary each moment. They are messages from inside ourselves, which may be poorly determined. These feelings leading to judgments are difficult to recognize unless one is trained to do so. Gardner Murphy and Morton Leeds, authors of *Outgrowing Self-Deception* state, "Our feelings, especially about ourselves as persons of worth, are often massive, cloudlike, and inarticulate; we may be inclined to love or hate ourselves" (Murphy 15). Self-deception about inner qualities arises from the hazy and vague inner observations of the individual. It is one thing to point out physical, tangible flaws, but it is quite another thing to precisely define and judge the inner self in this black and white way. Seeing oneself in a usual and regular way has value in that it is familiar. An individual puts time and energy into creating a self-image. It is a prized possession. It is when our behavior or the discernment of the world around us does not equal what it *should,* according to our own perceptions, that we find ourselves upset or frustrated by this incongruence. We consider certain specifics to be "constancies," which is the strong inner set or preparedness to perceive something as we have always perceived it (Murphy 19). Self-deception emerges in the context of our self conscious and reflective efforts to settle a question with the answer we desire.

No one wants to be around individuals who are pretending to be someone they are actually not in life or on a regular basis. Adam D. Galinsky wrote a provoking article in the

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology entitled "Power Reduces the Press of the Situation: Implications for Creativity, Conformity, and Dissonance." In this article Galinsky explains that power is not always liberating within oneself because it can cause internal dissonance leading to changes in attitude (463). According to an experimental test made by Michael D. Robinson, Sarah K. Moeller, and Paul W. Goetz, individuals high in self-deception make favorable first impressions, but impressions become more negative with increasing acquaintanceship. Where self-esteem and life satisfaction are lacking, self-deception inevitably follows (Robinson 175).

Through this collective research I hope there is a greater awareness of the need to delve into this area of communication and theater more diligently. I have focused on three subtopics including role-play, the theory of cognitive dissonance, and self-deception to better explain the struggle occurring inside many actors today. I have found that these three areas contain significant information that applies deeply to my study.

As an actor on the stage, I have felt the pushes and pulls as a result of the dissonance within me both onstage and offstage. I had a difficult time throughout my educational development in theater. I felt as though I was missing some key ingredients in obtaining practical knowledge as an actor. I was aided in several areas, but I was also left confused in the area of identity and the ways in which my fellow actors and the audience viewed me as an individual both after and during a performance. Many times I saw little difference in other individuals perceptions of me on and off the stage. I either gave into these perceptions or I would find myself trying to prove to them what my true character was. I am passionate about this topic because it is so closely related to my personal experience. In this study I have aimed to

discover the effects of cognitive dissonance within female actors, what their cognitive dissonance was attributed to and what these students have done to cope with it.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Over two thousand years ago the Greek philosopher Aristotle offered his definition of drama, the "imitation of an action"(qtd. in *Drama: Classical to Contemporary* 4). According to John C. Coldewey and W. R. Streitberger from the University of Washington in their revised edition of *Drama: Classical to Contemporary,* the word "drama" is derived from the Greek verb meaning "to do" or "to act." This action is not real action but imitated and represented, referring to role-play before an audience. "The imitation of action is not the straightforward imitation of life, rather, it is stylized and structured with boundaries such as a plot, climax, and an ultimate resolution, which is not found in life"(1). Perhaps this is why performers long to be a part of this idealized world on the stage, due to its creativity and structure.

On the other side of the curtain is an objective world that fades once the artists merges themselves into their creative art. There are questions that emerge out of this behavior. At what point in this process does one *live* the role and at what point does one *play* the role? These are the questions that inspired the thought for this study.

The convergence of the actor into a character is no doubt pressing upon that actors themselves. Constantin Stanislavski was a well-known Russian actor and director in the theater world. He had more of a profound effect upon acting in the twentieth century than anyone else because he proposed a relatively new concept, that the actor live the role of the character. Stanislavski quotes a statement made by his former director, Tortsov, in *Building a Character*,

> Each person evolves an external characterization out of himself, from others, takes it from real or imaginary life, according to his intuition, his observation of himself and others…the only proviso is that while he is making this external research he must not lose his inner self. (Stanislavski 6)

This is the spark to the flame of my study. I have explored to what extent it is possible to mesh the inner self of the actor with the inner self of the character.

Female theater students in higher education from ages eighteen to twenty-five are key individuals in the development of self. At this age, in late adolescence, a university experience can be one of the most significant influences in personality development. Jane Kroger states in her book, *Identity Development: Adolescence Through Adulthood,* that late adolescence is the time when biological, psychological and societal aspects influence individuals the most. "The majority of late adolescents have begun to search for comfortable expressions of their sexuality and gender roles" (Kroger 89). With this many aspects of development occurring within oneself, if a college student is involved in theater, then it is possible that he or she may be influenced by a form of cognitive dissonance. It may only be through listening to the thoughts and feelings of these actors that there may be an insight into the causes of dissonance within the artist.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was the most appropriate procedure for my analysis because I wanted to delve into the thoughts and fears within the individual college-level, female actress. This research method employed several different methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. In order to go about this appropriately, I needed to have the

freedom to speak to students personally for my main form of data collection, which carried my research. Much research employs a balance of both qualitative and quantitative research. Though there may be a need for quantitative research in this area of study, I have focused primarily on qualitative research in order to openly hear the responses of individual actors who may deal with cognitive dissonance.

Award winning editors Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln have written *The Qualitative Inquiry Reader* to introduce the critical framework of qualitative research. In 1995 the *Qualitative Inquiry* was the first interdisciplinary international journal to provide a forum for qualitative methodology and related issues in human sciences (Denzin and Lincoln Handbook ix). "Properly understood, qualitative inquiry becomes a civic, participatory, collaborative project, a project that joins the researcher with the research in an on-going moral dialogue" (Denzin and Lincoln Handbook ix).

I anticipated that through the use of nine interviews I would receive first-hand reflection of experience from individuals who have presumably experienced cognitive dissonance in theater. Through personal interaction with a variety of students I have obtained more than enough information to aid in answering my research question. There is one central question this study has explored. Research Question 1: What are the effects of cognitive dissonance among female theater majors in higher education, positive effects or negative effects? My two sub-questions help to answer the research question. Sub-question 1: What are the causes of this cognitive dissonance in these women? Sub-question 2: How does cognitive dissonance through character portrayal affect female self-concept? These questions are reason enough to take a deeper look into the actor's work.

A performer must allow her lines the freedom to take her wherever the script wills. In theater, effective character work begins and develops as the lines are spoken, giving birth to the life of the role. Harold Guskin, a prominent dialogue, dialect, and theater coach, wrote the book *How to Stop Acting*. In this book he states, "…Making mistakes, doing stupid, outrageous things, and simply exploring my responses to the extent are not only acceptable, but also necessary steps (in characterization)" (13). This is profound because it is at the point when an actor chooses to look foolish in front of others that he has broken down his walls of fear.

A performer's world is quite subjective, at least until a live performance, when one's work is shared with an audience. At this point the action of the stage can be enjoyed or looked in on by others, but the audience is usually not invited to cross the line into the actor's world. There is an attempt in making the momentary acting so real that the audience actually believes it is taking place before them. Within the realm of theater there is great freedom for the actor to be whoever he or she wishes to be. Everyone has dreams of who they wish they could be, and a role can open up the doors to this possibility. Even characters that go against an individual's beliefs can be exciting to play, especially villains. In most of literature, drama, and even in life, good triumphs over evil. Theatre is one of the only environments in which these characters can be played, but the consequences of their actions do not have to be endured by the actor. This is the magic of theater, role-play, and performance. I have delved several layers beneath the exterior implication of role-play, in discovering the absorption of self into character. I have seen the ways in which role-play is responsible for cognitive dissonance within the actor.

Leon Festinger was the American social psychologist responsible for creating cognitive dissonance theory in 1957. Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance expresses that a person's cognitions basically map out what is of most significance to him or her within his or her reality. The more dissonance created means more behavior change is anticipated because of the desire in the individual to return to consonance, which is a state of equilibrium where there is less tension. In role-play, cognitive dissonance can create both positive and negative effects, depending upon the roles actors play and their experiences playing them. Cognitive dissonance is applicable to theater students because it is an uncomfortable tension between two conflicting thoughts in one's mind at the same time. These conflicting thoughts include the playing of a character while maintaining the self-concept of one's own personhood. This dissonance increases with the lack of ability to rationalize and explain away the conflict. As a result, an individual may often be motivated by the dissonance to either make a change or to push the conflict away and continue to struggle with it (Festinger 10).

I have applied this theory to female theater students because role-play on the stage involves commitment to a character, and there are conflicts between characters and the self. It is possible for these roles to become interchangeable and, therefore, difficult for the actor to distinguish between them; thus, dissonance escalates and may erode the self-concept. Cognitive dissonance acts as the struggle inside oneself, in other words knowing what should be done and not having the capability to do it or choosing not to do it. Cognitive dissonance may act as a conscience to some. Self-concept and self-image are struggles that are found in many individuals. There is often a fight within oneself to create an image that is pleasing to the self as well as others. The concern of this thesis is for the

actors playing roles contrary to their personal values and the consequent dissonance that may occur. In some cases it may be ultimately detrimental to a positive self-concept or it may help to establish it firmly. The readers of my research should be able to relate in some way to these concepts of struggle within themselves.

Though this research is not as familiar with those outside the theater realm, it has primarily been conducted to benefit actors and actresses in theater arts. Role-play is an everyday activity for these artists. They devote a large part of their education and a significant amount of time toward a form of submersion into another world, another distinct individual, a worded script, and a different state of mind. This may have an effect upon the mental balance of these individuals. I have seen that there is a struggle and what the struggle specifically is within a small sampling of female theater students when it comes to role-play. It is my hope that this study creates an awareness of the benefits and consequences of role-playing on the stage.

The Researcher's Role

When I was an undergraduate theater major in college, I acted in several shows upon the stage. I know there is growth and development within the higher education experience. Within theater I personally have been typecasted into specific roles, particularly as the sexual and worldly wise "tease." As a result of my characterization into each of the roles I had difficulty separating out life on the stage from life offstage. The roles often became intertwined. Due to the fact that I had been typecast several times into that particular type of character, I began to adapt features of the characters I have played into my everyday life. Though I never acted out these character's lifestyles, I did take on a bit of

their personalities. I perceive this dissonance created a communicative distortion within myself and in my relationships with other people.

I have invested interest in this study despite the cognitive dissonance with which I personally struggled. I know I will nevertheless continue to act and be a part of the theater experience. Creative expression and expression of imagination are engrained within me. This study will not deter me, nor should it deter anyone else from continuing to pursue a theater profession. The love of the art goes deeper. Cognitive dissonance is found within the actor. This study puts forth the premise that there is evidence for an actor's struggle with cognitive dissonance within the field of theater.

I have focused on phenomenological research as my strategy of inquiry. My study is highly based upon human experiences as described by the participants. Through a manageable number of subjects, I have been able to determine on a more personal level the ways in which specific role-play acting in theater performance creates cognitive dissonance. Through the personal interaction with another individual and taking in vocal variety, body language and posture, comfort, and facial expression, I was better able to take into account an effect, which occurs below the surface of an individual. I set aside my own thoughts about the issue leading the discussion and patiently listened to the experiences of the participants in my study (Denzin and Lincoln *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* 34). Before beginning the data collection, I contacted the Institutional Review Board in order to receive permission to conduct this study.

I personally functioned as key instrument in obtaining the research for this study. I am aware that my ethical and personal issues played into the qualitative research process. Due to my attachment with the subject matter and my own personal experience with

cognitive dissonance in role-play, I know that it did affect my perspective on the experience as a whole. As stated previously, I postulated that cognitive dissonance has an affect upon actors and actresses through role-play, but whether it causes a negative or positive outcome was unknown to me.

Data Collection

The information I needed was retrieved through the use of interviews. Originally I had planned to interview nine female theater majors from three universities in the central Virginia area including Sweet Briar College, Liberty University, and Lynchburg College. I desired to be consistent throughout this study. I chose these three settings due to the perceived variance in teaching methods, and the religious and cultural variances among the colleges. With the permission and recommendation of the chairs of each individual theater department I was able to contact ten interviewees: three current and two recently graduated theater majors at Sweet Briar College, three current theater majors from Liberty University, and two current theater majors from Lynchburg College. Due to some minor complications I was unable to reach any more than two students from Lynchburg College. As an adjustment, I chose to open up my research to include recent graduates because of their willingness and availability to participate as well as the added dimension their points of view might add to my study. These two unplanned interviews were conducted over Google video chat and over the phone because each of the interviewee's were out of state.

Prior to the interviews, I handed out a consent form to each of the students with the purpose of the research, the presence of audio taping equipment, and the confidentiality of their answers and names within the study. Though the students were allowed to keep the

first two pages of the consent form, I collected the page with their written permission to participate in the interview. Interviews were scheduled with myself through email. Prewritten and organized questions were prepared before the interviews and asked consecutively, one after the other to the interviewees. These interviews were anticipated to be anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour in duration. The average interview was thirty minutes in length. Each session was recorded by an audio tape recorder for transcription purposes.

I decided to use a purposeful sampling for my choice of participants. The participants were taken from a pool of theater students between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five. Through personal interaction with directors and chairs of these distinct theater departments, I have been able to thoroughly conduct my research. I primarily chose my sample from intermediate acting students who had former experience on the stage, as well as current enrollment in higher education. Though I planned not to be acquainted with any of these participants, I was not able to ensure this factor entirely. Since I was personally a theater major at Liberty University, I interviewed three fellow theater students who were in classes and productions alongside me. I would prefer this to not be the case, but I was not opposed to using students with whom I was already familiar. If anything, I believe this may have even guaranteed an element of trust in personal disclosure.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data recorded from ten interviews required making sense out of quite a bit of text. Before the observation of the text, clear and detailed transcriptions were

completed. I transcribed the interviews personally. These interviews contained emotionally compromising material and for the sake of the participants I wanted to ensure complete trust within our relationship. After the interviews were transcribed, the coding began. I also personally completed the coding. I organized and prepared the data for analysis by reading through all the information I obtained from the interviews. I wanted to receive a general sense of the information as a whole. From here I coded through organizing the material into segments of texts based upon patterns and themes that noticeably arose. I specifically focused on discovering the subjects' ways of thinking about people and situations in each of their environments. I left room for possible changes based upon the information gained during the data analysis. After the information was analyzed and patterns and themes were identified, I drew my conclusions. At this concluding stage I reverted to my two sub-questions in order to answer my research question fully.

I am committed to the subject matter at hand in this study. I have felt the personal effects of cognitive dissonance as a female theater student in higher education. At the time of my role and experience, I was not aware that what I was going through was a form of cognitive dissonance. I suspected that cognitive dissonance occurred due to the characterization of the roles I was playing. This, in turn, affected my self-concept and presented itself through my own intrapersonal communication. Through my research I have found both positive and negative aspects to this struggle within oneself. The fight within myself could very well have helped to develop my personal character and perhaps will assist me in more difficult situations in the future. I have discovered ways that this struggle of cognitive dissonance can begin in others and the effects it can have. In

obtaining this information I hope to help others become more aware of the pressures demanded of actors who take on theatrical roles.

Chapter 4: Results

The main purpose of this study is to distinguish where the line is drawn between playing a role onstage and living one's life offstage for female actresses in academic theater. Through the data both obtained and recorded in ten interviews I have been able to answer my research question through my two categorized sub-questions. Research Question: What are the effects of cognitive dissonance among female theater majors in higher education, positive effects or negative effects? Sub-question 1: What are the causes of this cognitive dissonance in these women? Sub-question 2: How does cognitive dissonance through character portrayal affect female self-concept? I was able to categorize my interview questions under each of these two sub-questions in order to accurately answer my research question.

Overall I asked all of the interviewees six questions: 1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you've been cast? Please explain. 2. Have you ever played a role that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for? Please explain. 3. Have you ever played a role that challenged you to become a better person? Please explain. 4. Have you ever taken anything away from a role into your personal life? Please explain. Whether it is good or bad? 5. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a production/role once a show has ended? Please explain. 6. Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person? Please explain. Many of these questions are closed but I purposefully chose to do this for easy analysis later. Following each question I asked the interviewees to expound on their experiences; in this sense each question became open ended. Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 are classified under sub-question 2 and questions 4 and are classified under sub-question 1.

Interviews

I have chosen to code each of the ten interviewees using a series of corresponding numbers and letters. Interviewees A1, A2, and A3 are present Sweet Briar College theater students. AA4 and AA5 are graduated Sweet Briar College theater students. Interviewees B1, B2, and B3 are current Liberty University theater students, and interviewees C1, and C2 are present Lynchburg College theater students. These students have been categorized using these letters to easily differentiate the schools they represent and to keep each student's identity anonymous. Each response is sorted by questions.

Interview Question 1: Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast? Please explain.

- A1 – She reads the script, researches information on the production, biography of character, plots, and music.
- A2 – She reads the script, researches the time period, and discovers the strongest choices her character can make.
- A3 – She has not had to do research before for a role. She creates a background story on her character, and she draws from her personal life.
- AA4 – She reads the script and observes how other characters view her character. She then develops subtext for each of her lines, and eventually discovers the character through movement and blocking.
- AA5 – She reads the script before auditions, and creates a back story for each character. As soon as she is given a role she usually uses method acting to become somewhat like her character.

- B1 – She usually researches the time period, and often she will look up Youtube videos to see how others have played the role before.
- B2 – She is required to keep a journal, and in it she records her research on historical information from the play, the character, or time period.
- B3 – She researches the history, reads the script, and look up others who played the part in the past for reference.
- C1 – She will research the time period of the show, read the script, and mainly use paper research for background.
- C2 – She reads the script, and will create a character off of the director's vision once rehearsals have begun.

These results indicate that seven out of ten students read the script in preparation for a role, eight out of ten do research of any kind, and two out of ten do no research at all.

Interview Question 2: Have you ever played a role that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for? Please explain.

- A1 – No she hasn't been placed in that position before.
- A2 - Yes, in acting class, she is not opposed to it in the future but she would not seek it out.
- A3 - Yes, in acting class she has played roles she did not morally agree with. She is not opposed to it in the future because she believes it would cause her to question her senses and what is right, though she draws the line at unethical behavior for the sake of being unethical.

- AA4 – Yes, often she has played characters like sexual deviants, she justifies these roles as a costume one puts on but would not normally wear out into the world.
- AA5 – Yes, in the role of Dionysus in *The Bacchae*. She justified the behavior of the character in her own mind and for audience members.
- B1 – No, she is not opposed to it in the future but only if it helps the audience leave with the purpose of the show.
- B2 – No, she is not opposed to it in the future if she could make more of an impact by taking the role than not.
- B3 – No, she is not opposed to it in the future, there are things she would not want to do onstage if the message is portrayed in a bad way, glorifying the evil or bad qualities of a character.
- C1 – Yes, in acting class she has been uncomfortable before but has learned to adapt by putting her hindrances behind her. She tries to keep her personal values away from her acting.
- C2 – No, she is not opposed to it in the future if it makes the audience think or moves them then she believes it is worth it.

According to these results half of the students have played a role that went against their values or beliefs. All students that said that they were still willing to play a role like this. They began to justify why it would be acceptable.

Interview Question 3: Have you ever played a role that challenged you to become a better person? Please explain.

- A1 – No, but she does look up to certain characters and is drawn to strong female lead roles.
- A2 – Yes, by playing Tresius in *The Bacchae* she learned about foresight, which provoked her to think more rationally about consequences. She admires and respects the lead character in *Angels in America.* This character inspired her through his ability to overcome terrible things.
- A3 – No, she has never played a character that was kinder or nicer than she is. She has learned to have a more mature mental mindset. She has also learned how to bear difficult experiences through these characters. She admires Mama Nadi in *Ruined* because of the aid she gives many women in the Democratic Republic in the Congo.
- AA4 – Yes, she played Joe March in *Little Women,* which inspired her to have more enthusiasm and focus to excel in whatever she was invested in.
- AA5 – Yes, she played Tilly in *Melancholy Pla,y* which helped her to be more in tune with the world around her and in paying more attention to detail.
- B1 – Yes, she says every role she has played has taught her something. As Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun,* she learned not to take herself so seriously. She admires characters such as Jane Eyre, who has such a good heart and attitude, Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* because of her goodness to her husband, and Marmee in *Little Women* because of her strength for her family. She says she is mainly challenged by the relationships on the stage rather than the characters.

- B2 – Yes, she played Tracy in *Hairspray* and as a result was inspired to persevere for what she wanted in life. She also learned to find joy in herself rather than her circumstances.
- B3 – Yes, she played Jane in *Jane Eyre*. She was challenged in a religious sense to always look to God for answers and direction.
- C1 – Yes, she played one of the lead characters in a student directed show called *The Mercy Seat*. She learned more about the emotional side of herself. She also learned from the mistakes of her character.
- C2 – Yes, she played a lead character in *The Children's Hour*. This role challenged her to have a more mature mental mindset and to become more aware of how she presented herself to others.

Eight out of ten students have played a role that challenged them to become better people. Four out of ten students explained the types of roles that have inspired them or that they admire.

Interview Question 4: Have you ever taken anything away from a role into your personal life? Whether it is good or bad? Please explain.

- A1 – Yes, negative experiences including stress, night terrors, and panic attacks.
- A2 – Yes, she has experienced this in rehearsals for a current show, *Crimes of the Heart.* She had a difficult time disconnecting from a visualization exercise. The emotion from this exercise made it difficult for her to go home after rehearsal, as if nothing had happened.

- A3 – Yes, positive experiences including time management skills and a boost in her confidence.
- AA4 – Yes, she gave examples of both good and bad experiences. When she is in a play it tends to consume her life. The emotions she taps into as a character in a show usually make their way into her own life.
- AA5 – Yes, good and bad experiences based on a role that helped her to become more feminine because she was a tomboy. By playing Tilly in *Melancholy Play* she became immersed with melancholy feelings, equivalent to light rain, for a few months after the show concluded.
- B1 – Yes, she had a bad experience that turned out to be a good experience. In a recent musical she had a dance partner who she became involved with. They broke things off during the middle of the show but she had begun to parallel a dance onstage with the drama that was occurring offstage. Though this was difficult, she believes this helped her to become more emotionally involved in the scene.
- B2 – Yes, she had a difficult experience in playing a character that had to leave everything she was familiar with to be with the one she loved. By reliving this day after day she found it difficult to shake off because she was so deeply immersed in the emotion.
- B3 – Yes, good and bad experiences. A play she was in a year ago taught her that no matter what is falling apart one can have assurance that it will be worked out. Another musical she had a lead in taught her to revert back to scripture in God's Word for guidance because the character she played

always did that in every area of opposition. On the other hand she had a negative experience with the actor she was playing opposite of romantically. When they left rehearsals they were still treating each other like their characters. This became a big issue in their personal lives since they were both in relationships with other people. To this day she still has not gotten closure on that issue but she has since learned from it.

- C1 – Yes, she was a part of a student written and directed performance that deal with a very heavy subject. This play was based upon the historic event of 9/11. She watched videos of the planes crashing so much that there are now certain videos she will never return to because it brought out so many emotions within her. She said it took her a few months after the show to shake off and decompress from that emotional state of mind.
- C2 – No, she says that she is easily able to separate her life from the character and show. She admits to being a high stress individual, but when she goes home at the end of the day she is able to de-stress and not think about anything from the show she is participating in.

Nine out of these ten students have clearly taken away something from the roles they have played into their personal lives. Three of these women admitted to strictly negative aspects of the character entering into their lives. Only one out of the ten spoke of strictly positive aspects, two mentioned a combination of good and bad experiences, one said that the things that follow her off the stage are neither bad nor good and one student said her bad experience turned out to be good. One student says she can separate these things easily and has no evidence of the role in her life.

Interview Question 5: Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a production/role once a show has been completed? Please explain.

- A1 – Yes. The senior show she was a part of was difficult because she was the lead and it was a highly emotional show. She had to bring herself to a dark place throughout rehearsals and performances. She said the show was written as a monologue from the point of view of the writer and director. This made the experience more real for everyone involved.
- A2 – Yes, she finds it more difficult to detach while the show is going on as opposed to when the show is completed. She says it's nice when a show is over because she finally has time for other things. She also says it's difficult to invest in a character while living her life at the same time.
- A3 – Yes. She said that as sad as it is for a show to end she is glad that much of the stress in her life has come to an end at that point. This also means that there is a chance for something new to come along. She finds detaching from a character to be more difficult than detaching from the show because one never really leaves a character. She continues by correlating this to memory recall. Each character she plays is often similar to the one she played before. Up until this point *The Bacchae* was the hardest show for her to leave because of the strong connection to the anxiety and emotion she drew up for each performance.
- AA4 – Yes. There is a period of elation followed by depression and let down when a show comes to a close. She also finds detaching from a character to

be more difficult than leaving a show. She even compares moving away from a character to carrying a "character baby" for a term.

- AA5 – Yes, she becomes depressed after a show is completed because she gets so involved in the world that was created on the stage. She says that she is usually involved in building the sets as well as acting in the production. By the end of the show she feels the intensity of letting go when she is breaking apart the set.
- B1 – Yes, most recently there have been two shows that she has felt a special connection to. She finds that the bigger or more attached to a role she gets, the harder it is to break away from it.
- B2 – Yes, it's difficult to let go of things she connects and falls in love with. She finds it difficult to detach from the characters, and the moments and beats with other characters. She says she is truly able to detach after stripping the set on the closing night of the show.
- B3 – Yes, it usually takes a few weeks for her to detach from a show. She compares the experience to a small breakup: cry about it, acknowledge it's not something you want to forget, take away the good stuff, accept the fact that it's a part of life, don't lose contact with the people you get close to but allow yourself to be open to another experience.
- C1 – Yes, she goes into a performance knowing that it will eventually end before the process begins. Most of the time she's more upset to see the cast members go than the show itself. She explained that this letting go process is

less of a getting out of a show or character and more of a taking what she can from a character and show while leaving the rest behind.

- C2 – Yes, it is more difficult to detach from the cast than the character. She said that the time spent with the cast every day, while they work so hard, brings them closer together. When it is all over it can be very abrupt.

Though all the students agreed that it is difficult to detach from a production or role when it is completed, I divided up the areas in which the most difficult separation was indicated. Two students found it more difficult to leave the play, two were more attached to the character, two had a closer connection with the cast, one agreed a combination of the character and cast was difficult to leave, and one agreed a combination of character and the play was most difficult to detach from.

Interview Question 6: Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person? Please explain.

- A1 – Yes. She says that by proving she deserves a role she is given, she has gained a type of strength.
- A2 – Yes and no, she said that when she is mature about specific roles she does but most of the time she isn't as mature, which is why she said no.
- A3 – Yes, the experience helps her more than the roles. Theater has added so much to her life. She wants to add that joy to others lives as well. She believes it has made her a better person.

- AA4 – Yes, she says that she is able to tap into emotions and characters more easily but she finds the experiences more than the roles have influenced who she is.
- AA5 – Yes, she recalls what drew her to each character she played and the things she learned from them. One role taught her strength and determination, and another taught her more about love and appreciation for the small things she might have overlooked before. She says she wouldn't be in the United States if it were not for theater. Theater gives her energy, recharging her and causing her to be innovative and imaginative. Overall, she finds herself judging people less because she has more understanding why people are the way they are.
- B1 – Yes, she discovered through her roles that she is type-casted and the types of characters that work best for her in an audition.
- B2 – Yes, she gave two examples of things she has learned from the roles she has played. Tracy in *Hairspray* influenced the way she looks at life now, and as Consuela in *West Side story* she was able to take with her a better understanding of prejudice and the effects and impact of hatred. She felt that she has become a better person based on her awareness of things like this.
- B3 – Yes, she said that before college she was insecure and did not feel as though she measured up. She found that in playing roles of other people she found different aspects of those characters in herself. She has also learned ways to deal with parts of herself she hadn't before, whether they be good or bad. These roles have given her a sense of confidence.

- C1 – Yes, she mentioned a specific show that helped her to understand what a professional actor feels like. She was onstage a majority of the show and she says it was during this show that she decided the profession of theater is what she wanted to do as a career. It gave her the confidence to realize she could handle it.
- C2 – Yes, she said that she has learned that almost everyone is typecasted in theater. Formerly, she was annoyed by personally being typecasted but now she has learned to accept it.

Nine out of ten students answered yes to this question. One out of the ten answered yes and no based on how she approaches a role. Four out of the nine who said yes attribute their development of self with the experience and five out of nine attribute this development to the roles.

Chapter 5: Analysis

From the ten interviews discussed above I was able to draw several conclusions. As was mentioned earlier, I have arranged the six questions under each of the two sub-questions to better answer my research question. Interview questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 are classified under Sub-question 2 and interview questions 4 and 5 are classified under Sub-question 1.

Sub-question 1 asks what the causes of this cognitive dissonance are in these women. According to the results found in the interviews, nine out of ten female students agreed that they take away something from the roles they have played into their personal lives. One student said the parts of a role she took away with her were neither good nor bad, one said a bad aspect turned into a positive experience, one had specifically good experiences, two had both good and bad experiences, and three had strictly bad experiences. These bad experiences ranged from night terrors and panic attacks to negative or heavy emotions lingering after a rehearsal or show. The causes of cognitive dissonance in these women are based on the depth of emotions they delve into as the character and actor in a given show. This can also be attributed to the different schools' tastes in shows, as represented by the students. Based on the interviews Sweet Briar College productions seem to be more classical in nature, and Liberty University productions and Lynchburg College productions are a bit more modern and recent. Both Sweet Briar College and Lynchburg College also currently use student productions, which are directed, written, and acted out by students alone. Liberty University has not performed a student production in several years. Based on the interviews alone I noticed that the senior shows written by the students are more compromising and stretching for

the student actors involved than the other main stage shows throughout the year. Taking all these things into account could possibly explain the types of characters many of these students are playing and the emotions demanded of them.

Eight out of ten students agreed that there is difficulty involved in detaching from a role or production, two out of ten students found that they either had more time to de-stress and live their lives or they believed they will never fully detach from a character. Each of the eight students who dealt with this difficulty had a harder time detaching from different aspects within the show: the play, the character, the cast, the character and the cast, or the character and the play. The results were well balanced. Two had more difficulty leaving the production, two for the show, two for the cast, one for the character and the cast, and one for leaving the character and the play. This means that the reasons for cognitive dissonance post-production can be directly correlated to the process of letting go from each area of a show.

Sub-question 2 asks how cognitive dissonance, through character portrayal, affects female self-concept. Interview results have shown that after female theater students have received a role, seven out of ten students said that they reread the script. Eight students research historical or background information on the show or character. These results evidently show that theater is helping students to become more responsible academically by teaching them the importance of research and literary reading of the script. This personal research aids in a student's psychological, academic and social development while in college. Yet there is evidence to argue that placing the responsibility in the student's hands alone is not effective enough. Learning how to research a character and the

necessity of rereading the script over and over may need to be mandatory instead of an option or recommendation in theater education.

I was able to determine that out of ten participants, only half have played roles that went against their personal values and beliefs. Since many of these students may obviously differ in their beliefs, it is difficult to draw a distinct line to see what these roles look like. These results may indicate that theater education is not diversified enough in its choice of productions. If students are familiar with playing a stereotyped character or a less challenging role, then these students may never get out of a typecast or their comfort zones. This potentially could stifle their education and preparation for theater out in the real world. Out of the five students who admitted to playing roles that went against their values, three experienced playing these roles for an acting class rather than a main stage production. Many of these students are not being stretched to their academic potential. On the other hand, this may just illustrate that academic theater directors choose specific productions based on either preserving the safety of their students or based upon their audiences and what will bring in the most money as crowd pleasers. By doing this there is little or no danger of compromising their student actors. The five students, who had not played a role that went against their values, said they were not opposed to playing a role like it one day as long as it was justified. A few examples they gave of this justification were if the role aided in the purpose of the show, if the negative aspects of the character were not glorified, if it makes the audience think, or if the role went against a personal list of things the actor would not do.

Based on the various responses from question three, I discovered that eight out of the ten students interviewed have played a role that challenged them in some way to

become a better person. Two students who have not had a role that challenged them in this way and two that had were able to explain the types of roles they would either like to play or roles that have inspired them in some way. All of these female theater students seem driven to become better individuals and better versions of themselves. Throughout each of the interviews I was able to see the student's faces light up with joy when they spoke of characters and roles that moved them to action or simple admiration throughout their education. These positive characters act as role models to these educational theater students. I believe that these roles that challenge women to become better people and better actors aid in a healthy self-concept, especially in an educational setting and at such a crucial point in the discovery of self.

I found that with all of the ten students interviewed, theater has helped each of them discover who they are as a person. The only response that was divided was one who said if she goes about taking on a role the proper way, then she is able to draw good things from the role that help her as an individual, but if she takes on a role in the incorrect way, or frivolously, then she will receive nothing. Out of the nine students who gave a direct answer, four found that the experiences helped to shape them into who they are today more than the characters did; yet, five students said the roles they played helped them in this self discovery.

Based on the interviews I sensed more positive experiences than positive roles. A few of these experiences included proving they deserved the role they received, participating in theater because it gives so much joy partaking in it, being able to tap into emotions and a character more easily, and understanding what it is like to stand in a professional actor's shoes. These are all benefits from participation in theater. On the

other hand, the roles seemed to have taught the students what kinds of characters they are often typecasted in. These roles have given them the confidence to face aspects of themselves they normally would not choose to deal with, and they give the opportunity to learn a variety of things from these characters. The roles themselves seem to have a way of forcing these women to mature and face issues or personality traits that they normally would not have a chance to or even a desire to confront. Many roles often present this clear challenge for actors. Cognitive dissonance can result from learning from the roles these women have played, but dissonance does not seem to be present in simply the experience of being a part of theater according to these interviews.

Now that both of my sub-questions have been answered through the six interview questions, it is now time to recall my original research question. What are the effects of cognitive dissonance among female theater majors in higher education? Are they mostly positive effects or negative effects? As a result of the cognitive dissonance experienced by nine of the ten students who were interviewed, I discovered that there is no specific pattern of strictly good or bad experiences, though based on the interviews the negative experiences slightly outweighed the positive experiences. Overall, five students have experienced the negative effects of cognitive dissonance but many of these students used the situation to their advantage. Only three of these individuals had strictly bad experiences, the other two had a balance of either good and bad or turned the bad situation into a good one. The measure of good and bad effects of cognitive dissonance is difficult to measure based on students' memories from former plays in their educational theater discipline. Students may have only explained a few of the many effects of cognitive

dissonance they experienced or perhaps they chose to remember the good over the bad and vice versa.

Sub-question 1 asks about the causes of cognitive dissonance in these women. I found the major causes to be the depth of emotions these students may delve into as the character and actor in a show. This form of cognitive dissonance is forming during the run of a show and may follow afterwards. Another cause of cognitive dissonance occurs when these women leave the production, the cast, or the characters they were playing, and can even be caused by a combination of each of these catalysts.

Sub-question 2 asks how cognitive dissonance through character portrayal affects self-concept in female theater students. There is a burden for a student to research the role he or she is playing or the history of the show or time period of the play. This motivation for the student to be as knowledgeable as possible on the background of the production is a great attribute to the student's self-confidence, aiding in positive self-concept. On the opposite side of this, lack of research on the student's end may cause dissonance to occur resulting in an injured self-concept. The student may feel inadequate as an actor. She might also feel unprepared for rehearsals and production. The few students who said they have not done much research for past shows did so with reluctance.

Causes for dissonance can be determined by where actors draw the line between what they will or will not do on the stage in a character role. They may justify the roles they would be willing to play that go against their values or they may also be moved to become like a character in some way. Effects from dissonance can be both positive and negative. A variety of roles have taught these theater students to come face to face with parts of themselves that they may not have confronted earlier. Depending on what they

choose to do with each of their educational theater experiences, they are all faced with a choice of whether the dissonance helped or hindered them. I found this to be difficult to measure through interviews alone.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Review

Based on these interviews cognitive dissonance does exist in female theater students. Particular areas of role-play, in the context of stage performance, can cause cognitive dissonance to rise up in an actor. Theater does seem to aid in a positive self-concept for a majority of these students. The culture provided by these different plays and roles as well as taking direction, doing research, and learning to communication with peers all add to the rich experience of theater in a student's life. Though there may be a combination of good and bad effects following cognitive dissonance in these students, both are necessary in the development of self in order to build character and maturity within these actors.

Future Research

To my knowledge, the study of measuring cognitive dissonance in female theater students has not been attempted in the past. I have found a great deal of information through these ten interviews with students from three universities in the central Virginia area. I was pleased with the variety of answers that came out of such an eclectic group of theater students.

Personally, having a background in theater, I found it difficult to stay objective in these interviews. I went into the interviews with an excitement that I would be having a conversation with these young actors about a topic we are both passionate about, theater. I quickly realized that I could not be conversational in my interview approach; otherwise, I would be leading my questions and their answers. In the first two interviews I tried to let

the students lead the interviews through their responses. I asked connected questions expounding upon what the students previously said. This was difficult to keep track of because each interview was vastly different. As I continued on with the rest of the interviews, my pool of questions became slimmer and more focused. The *Coding of Questions* page in the Appendix shows a detailed account of each of the questions asked.

If I were to reconstruct these interviews I would consider using an individual who was completely objective to conduct the interviews because it was so difficult for me to hold back with comments and follow up questions. Throughout the transcription process, I also found myself to be emotionally compromised. My connection to this topic is strong because I developed it based upon my own experiences. As I typed out each individual's answer to each question, I discovered that I needed to take a break every so often because the truth in the text evidently related to my own experiences in theater years ago. I was moved by many of the student's comments and experiences that seemed to hit very close to home for me.

It may also be relevant for future research to interview male theater students at the same universities used for this study in order to measure a comparison on the effects of cognitive dissonance for both men and women. Expanding the study in this way might bring out an entirely different side to the development of male self-concept in an educational setting and also a possible reason for cognitive dissonance between the sexes in theater. There may be patterns with both sexes that are linked to specific theater shows and the roles within them. The same form of dissonance may exist based on the productions alone.

I would suggest interviewing members of one cast to more clearly determine the causes of cognitive dissonance. This could be done on a student, collegiate level or on a regional, professional level. This study could have the potential to compare the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance in both environments within the same show. The aspect of self-concept would clearly be addressed through the progression of age and professionalism. By doing this there would be more organization and rigidity to the study. It could even lead to more accurate results.

My study has informed me of the many different ways that individuals perceive roles on the stage. Each actor playing the same role might approach it differently because of their background, which may or may not be founded on religious principles. Beliefs and values are the core of a human being. They are often the reason for decision-making within an individual. By focusing on actors with different religious beliefs, the causes and effects for cognitive dissonance might be more clearly understood and easier to compare.

Audience members' perceptions of roles might also be interesting and valuable to record. Through similar interviews as this study, it would be fascinating to discover the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance based on the specific perceptions of roles and productions by the audience member. The audience is a key component in the communication process of theater. After all, the lasting effect of the show is taken away with the audience. In order to have a balanced record of the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance in the theater, it would be beneficial to take into account all the members of the theatrical experience.

The use of interviews and focus groups to obtain a larger amount of information on cognitive dissonance, role-play, and self-concept would be welcome as well. I lacked the

time and resources to conduct my research using a wider variety of data collection. Quantitative methods of obtaining research such as a written survey might offer an opportunity for cleaner results. Determining reasons for cognitive dissonance among theater students and discovering patterns for its effects could be easier to recognize.

As I mentioned previously, as far as I know, this is one of the only studies measuring cognitive dissonance in female theater students. There is a lacking amount of study in the area of cognitive dissonance and gender. Even without the theater aspect, there are several other environments in which cognitive dissonance may arise in men and women. Based on the results I've discovered through interviews, there seems to be a connection between relationships and cognitive dissonance. Many of the female theater students in my study experienced different forms of cognitive dissonance based on their relationships with the roles they played, the cast they were surrounded by, and the shows they were in. This may also be the case in the workplace or even in one's home. It would be well worth the effort to discover the causes and effects of cognitive dissonance for both males and females in these environments as well.

Role-play, Cognitive Dissonance, and Self-Concept

Cognitive dissonance can affect theater students through a variety of conflicting thoughts, which have the potential to create uncomfortable tension within their minds. These students may or may not have learned how to deal with it correctly in their education. Late adolescence, the time of higher education, can be considered one of the most influential periods in the development of self. If there are conflicts or differences between the roles played and the actor herself, then there is bound to be dissonance of

some kind. Though there are positive and negative effects attributed to cognitive dissonance, as discovered by these interviews, without proper direction female theater students may allow their theater roles to suggest or dictate who they are even without their knowledge of it. Role-play, though an everyday activity for everyone, is an everyday job for these artists. They devote their education and a significant amount of time toward a form of submersion into another world and another individual. At such an impressionable time in their youth some of their experiences in theater may carry a lasting effect upon their lives.

Earlier I asked if it is possible to mesh the inner self of the actor with the inner self of a character. The answer is yes. There is a fine line between the two and I have discovered that in order to learn effectively from a character, one must be willing to somewhat surrender one's self to the role in order to reap its benefits. Surrendering includes placing parts of oneself into the role as well as taking parts away. It is tit for tat, a give and take experience that leaves the actor with these rich experiences that will define who he or she is.

By using ten interviews of female theater students from local colleges, my eyes have been opened to the positive results of cognitive dissonance upon the actor. As with any other trade, precautions must be taken in order to ensure a beneficial experience throughout characterization. Without even realizing it, my former experience set me up with a bit of fear, thinking that the negative effects of cognitive dissonance trumped over any positive effects of cognitive dissonance. It begins and ends with the actor. I hope this study creates a better awareness for the causes and effects of the cognitive dissonance these young artists encounter and a newfound respect for the art of role-play on the stage.

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Appendix A

Thesis Interviews – Sweet Briar College

A1

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

I read the script depending how familiar I am with the show. I look up stuff about the production before auditions like character bios, and full plot. I listen to the music if it's a musical.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

I haven't played a role against my personal values. Personality-wise I have been different than my characters. In the senior show I was a part of I played the role of an Ecuadorian poet, Delores Veintimilla, a feminist. It was about the fight between the cult Catholicism and the indigenous people. She tried to save an indigenous man for being sentenced for a murder he did not commit. She finds she can't save him, goes mad, and kills herself. It was a tough place to get to.

3. Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

I don't believe I've played a role of someone I aspired to be. I've seen other people play roles like that. In plays, books and literature I am drawn to the strong lead characters that make good decisions, which are hard to make in the world they live in but are the right ones. I always think about what it would look like onstage or playing the role. There are characters that you find and you just want to be more like them. Even the same way you look up to people in real life, they have different experiences that lead them to a certain

place and you can learn something from the experiences that they've had. It's almost easier in literature, for the most part, because it doesn't usually happen, so it doesn't have to be as realistic. There's a whole different world of experiences that you can learn through this.

I almost did look up to her because, despite the whole town, the church, the priest who was condemning her telling her she was a witch, saying she didn't deserve to be alive, she still fought for what she believed in despite all of that. I wanted to make sure I was doing it right, so I delved a lot deeper than I ever had before.

The hardest thing was taking ownership of the role. I was the understudy. I wondered if I was going to be able to do this. I had to prove it to myself; I felt pressure from the first lead role, and because I was the understudy not initially casted in the show. By the end I felt really good about how it went.

4. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

The senior show was difficult. It was a dark place to have to go to, to kill myself by the end of it by drinking cyanide. It required a lot and took a lot out of me. It was only two nights of performance, thank goodness. I was also having trouble with my personal life and the combination of those two things on top of each other made it difficult to stay positive and upbeat throughout the whole thing.

I think it took more out of me emotionally. The senior show was written almost as a monologue of the writer. She took her writings and turned them into what this woman was saying in these experiences. I had to get to an emotional place because they were *her* words. They were real.

4a. Do you believe you take away something from every character you play?

I think that's definitely true. I took strength from the role and fond memories. There are always regrets in a show, thinking I should have done this or that. You learn what you need to work on, trying to take them in a positive light.

In my personal life, from *The Secret Garden*, I took a lightness, lifting up someone who had been down, childlike feeling away. It left an impact.

5. Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person?

I think so. There's always a proving that you deserve the role. I wondered if I was going to be able to do this and out of that there was strength, especially with something tough. I did feel I came out of it stronger. I didn't know how to go that far emotionally into a show. I pushed my limits. There's always something hard in a show that's not what you expect and you have to work on it. Through getting that you can move on.

I think I'm struggling now with making myself realize there's nothing wrong with me. Just because I didn't get a role doesn't mean I'm a bad or terrible actress. Nothing's changed about me. I'm still the same person before I auditioned. I take the competition as more of a competition with myself than anything else. It's all a learning experience, every audition can teach you something and every role, whether it be the lead or chorus can teach you something if you let it.

I work a lot with children's theater. Children have a much harder time dealing with rejection than older people do. Watching them deal with their problems, I'm able to see the wrong way of doing it. I realize I don't want to act like an eight year old because I didn't get a role or I'm disappointed. Through teaching, directing, and stage-managing I feel I've learned that.

5a. How easy is it to balance life and theater?

One of my biggest struggles is in knowing that I have limits. I'm one of those people when someone asks me to do something I say sure no problem. Then I realize what I've taken on and that it's too much and I sort of lose my mind. Learning how to say no is my struggle of the year. I realize I do need time to myself to just be alone and figure myself out rather than always going from one thing to another. In my first two years here I don't think I was ever in my room before ten in the evening between classes and rehearsals. I was never on my own which wasn't good. Since then I've been trying to cut back, leave time for myself in there. I get night terrors, panic attacks sometimes in the middle of the night and at one point they were getting really bad. I realized I needed to take it down a notch. I was so stressed from going to one place then another, then having to work, not getting enough sleep, having so much going on.

I have to get away for a minute, go outside, and take a short walk. After rehearsals some friends and me would go to the bistro on campus where they have food. We wouldn't talk about the show or theater. It was a nice way to de-stress before going back to my room to do work.

5b. Has your director/acting teacher explained separation from character and life?

It's been more in acting classes than life. Our classes are small, about four people. It's a very safe base because we didn't feel anyone was judging us. We were all friends there to support each other.

I went to our director to go over that first show. It was harder than *The Secret Garden*. I used my personal experiences to get to those points but then drew away from them once it was over, not being stuck in that state.

During rehearsals there were times when I need to stop, walk away, get a drink, figure myself out and come back. We worked on matching my emotional memories with the show but things that wouldn't send me over the edge. My fear is that if I didn't get the balance down with the help of my professor then I would have gone completely the other direction and closed off to my feelings.

A2

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

I read the script. I try to figure out the strongest choices I can make in this situation, and deduct which ones are right. I research the time period if it's not present day, and geographically where it is. I also use visualization to get myself into the moment.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

Not in an actual play but in acting class. I hate *Antigone*. I had to do a scene and a monologue and it was really hard to find some good things about her. I did though. I found she makes decisions based on her instincts, and she's a passionate person.

Right now I'm in the role of Maggie in *Crimes of the Heart*.

I don't think I would seek it out, but I wouldn't be opposed to doing something opposite to who I am.

3. Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

I played Tresius in *The Bacchae*. Having a foresight got me thinking more rationally, thinking of consequences.

Angels in America inspired me. The main character has AIDS and the world keeps pooping on him. All these terrible things happen to him. He somehow is able to overcome it. That to me is very inspiring. For anybody, watching adversity overcome on the stage, it's inspiring. People relate. It's inspiring because you want to live that way. I want to take the energy from those characters and get people motivated or get people angry. Theater is meant to inspire. I would love to be able to take an audience on a journey to receive that energy that makes them do something. It's amazing that an audience comes into our life and we have this very intimate moment and then they leave and go home. I think when you know when something has stuck with someone. That's when you've done your job.

4. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

Not so much when the show is completed but while the show is going on. When a show is over it's kind of nice because I have time for other things. While the rehearsal period is going on, if I really connect with a character it's really hard for me to go home and act like nothing happened. Last night in rehearsal we did a visualization exercise. In *Crimes of the Heart* Meg finds her mother hanging dead. We did an exercise where I find my mother hanging dead and when I got home it was hard to not feel anything about that. It is difficult for me to compartmentalize my life. That is a challenge for me. If you want to invest in your character, the suspension of disbelief only goes so far, and if you really want them to go with you have to invest a certain amount. It's hard to balance that. I've been lucky enough that people have told me to stop before I hit my limit. I've been in a very safe environment.

4a. Has your director/acting teacher explained separation from character and life?

It hasn't been discussed in my college career. When I worked at a theater in Santa Monica we did a lot of Improve and it was talked about. We talked about separating real life from fantasy. I think I definitely try to remember that but sometimes it starts to fade. I mean you want to give your all, and we're young and passionate and sometimes we can't control it. When you're eighteen and twenty-five you can't really control that.

5. Do you believe you take away something from every character you play?

I'd really like to say that I do but I don't. I think I do when I get to be mature about certain roles but if I don't take it on like I should that's when I don't. It's all part of the learning process.

It's more the opposite. I take my life into a part. I mean we've all faced adversity. I'm able to put them together so I can use them again.

6.Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person?

Yes, definitely. I've grown so much because of roles that I've played and learned so much about people. I feel like I've learned so much about myself when I'm trying to prepare for the role. The actual roles themselves have taught me something about things I've never thought about, whether bad or good. I'll want to put things into my life or say that's terrible, they're bad and I should not do that. You don't usually think about every scenario in your life, what would you do in each situation but when you're in a play you get that.

I can pinpoint a big turning point in my life: I was in *Dorothy's Adventures in Oz*. I played a gnome and I remember I had so much fun doing it. I got the chance to play the whole time. I remember feeling at that point that this isn't an after school activity anymore, I'm getting

energy back from this. At this point I knew I didn't need to be insecure, people expected me to have fun. It helped me emotionally and I loved it.

I'm a huge defeatist. Sometimes I'll have foe confidence thinking you should want me in your play. Being a woman in theater is really hard. They can always pick who they want. That's something that's discouraging to me.

6a. Have you every mixed the lines of other people from the role they were playing?

We see people on the stage and they play such a nice guy and you want to be their friend and it turns out they are not a nice person at all, or even vice versa. I think it really is a natural thing for people. You share this intimate moment with them, you're in this small space, and you think they're a certain way.

There's a girl at Sweet Briar and she always plays ingénue type roles. She has a very innocent face and when she says something outspoken I get confused because I think she should be naïve.

6b. Have people done that to you?

I usually play someone goofy. People think I'm not a very serious person. People seem to have an aversion when they talk to me because they realize I'm not funny all the time. Sometimes I think I make things goofy because I think that is what people want or I'm just awkward. Some of it is all in my head. I definitely feel like I have to prove myself. I do feel like I have to show people I'm smart and I'm not just a buffoon that waddles around. During auditions I'm very serious because it's something I don't want people to take advantage of me and I don't want to make myself vulnerable, giving myself away. It's hard in the college setting because they see you all the time and in a small school they're

watching you in acting classes. I try to remind them in auditions that I can play other things. I agree with saying that I'm playing a part or role offstage as well.

A3

1.How do you prepare for a role once you've been cast? I didn't start doing that until last year. Unfortunately the only serious leading roles I've had are second messenger, second voice, non-descript, and non-detailed roles. Being a first year student I didn't know how to prepare. For Medlock, I created a background story to justify the way that she treated Mary and Colin and why she was so demanding and bored and abrupt with everybody. I draw parallels from my own life. I didn't have to do any research. I'm sure if I had a serious lead role I would need to research but unfortunately I haven't had the *lead* roles ever. I've needed to know the lines and feel the emotions themselves rather than know the characters.

2.Have you ever played a role that went against your values/personal beliefs or what you stood for? The only example I have happened last semester in my Voice and Movement class. I had to work with a German girl who wanted to explore acting. She wanted to do a skit with me with me playing a captain that abused women on a boat on the way to America. That is kind of where I draw the line. I've never had a role that went against my moral code. Once I had to say a bunch of naughty words onstage, the lustful feelings of two characters from *Under Milk Wood*. That was the closest to cussing on stage that I ever got. If I had the chance to play some sort of Bible thumper or Nazi concentration camp I think that would be exciting, especially if you research it and learn more about it. It makes you questions your own senses. I'm excited for something like that.

3.Have you ever played a role that challenged you to be a better person?

Unfortunately no, as a plus size woman I get stereotyped as the matronly characters or the motherly, overbearing housekeeper. I've never played a character that was nicer or better than me, and that has challenged me to become a better person. I've played characters that have made me bear different experiences or brought me to a more mature mental mindset than I've ever had before.

3a. Have you seen a role onstage that someone else played that challenged you in that way?

Just recently in Contemporary Drama class we read the play, *Ruined*. I would love a chance to play Mama Nadi. She is again the matronly, motherly character but instead of exploring just caring for children she has a conflict within herself, whether to save herself first or to help others. That I feel would definitely explore that wanting to be a better person, understanding how helping people can help yourself in another way. That would force me to be a better person overall with the way in which she had to handle situations. It's set in a third world country where women are abused daily during a civil war. It's a horrible story line, and very violent. That's a character that I would like to play one time.

4.Can you personally relate to any of the roles you've played?

I would say I could personally relate to Mrs. Medlock more than any of the other characters I've played. This is probably because it's closest to the most realistic character I've played in college. Medlock was this misunderstood and elderly woman that tried to make connections with people but went about making them the wrong way. She made me sympathetic and I could really relate to that. You always try to make a good first impression and you want people to like you but it doesn't turn out the way you want. I

think I'm a queen of that. I try to find a personal connection with every character I play by relating something the character is going through to something I've experienced in my own life. My most difficult role was in *The Bacchae*. I had this huge epic monologue that was three pages long that talked about watching a bunch of women tearing a part a man while he's crying for his mother to save him. There's nothing to compare that to but the closest thing I could relate it to was when I saw my first body. I drew from my feelings of that and tried to connect it to the feelings of the character to the audience.

5.Have you ever taken anything away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad?

I've taken time management skills. Personally the experiences I've had as main characters have added to my confidence as a person. In high school, being a plus size woman who is a foot taller than everyone else, I never got casted for anything, as hard I tried to make myself seem like that character. There's always someone smaller, more petite, who can fit into the costume. When I came to Sweet Briar, Dr. Kershner even though I was a first year, threw these roles at me that I was fully unprepared for. In *The Bacchae* I was the second lead character, and I was the second lead character in *Under Milkwood*. When it came to our first musical I got a leading role that had a small solo part that I had never ever done. The fact that he would put so much faith in me was surprising. To hear from other people that they couldn't believe my acting skills onstage or my stage presence really made me see how effective I could be as a person, as a leader and as an individual. I also realized how I could be a role model to others. Acting can be seen as really stressful but I found my experiences thus far to be life enriching and it makes me want to go out and do more, not just in theater. I became an Resident Assistant last semester because I wanted to share my experience

with them. I talk to pretty much everyone now. In high school I didn't have friends. Theater brought many different levels to my life. It brought a sense of purpose where I formerly didn't seem to have one.

6.Do you believe the roles you've played have helped you develop into the person you are today? My whole purpose at Sweet Briar is to become a theater teacher in high school, that's my short-term goal. It's because at my school, art was cut. Nobody cares about the arts. Theater added so much to my life that I want to add it to other people's lives. Theater makes me a better person. I want everyone to be happy about what they're doing. I also want them to be creative or imaginative.

6a. Has anyone ever mistaken you for a role you've had or taken on?

It was after our first performance of *The Secret Garden*. Medlock had an aged face, gray hair, and stood six foot three inches because of my character shoes. I go out in the lobby to see who's there. I asked this little girl if she liked the show. She ran away to her mom. As not nice as that is for someone to mistake you for a cruel person, it's also humorous and a pat on the back that I'm believable as the character.

I would like to break out of my stereotype. It's a little frustrating especially when you set your sights for this one character and you do your research for the play and for the character and you don't get it. Being type-casted as the motherly, affectionate character guarantees me a role. I'm glad I have a guaranteed role but one day I'll have that lead role.

6b. Have you done this to somebody else?

I love doing that. I tell people who are auditioning that they could be this role or do that. A lot of theater is based on stereotypes; otherwise, the audience doesn't get it. It's weird if Tracy Turnblad in *Hairspray* isn't a little overweight.

7.Do you find it difficult when a show ends to detach from the production and/or the role you played?

I get sad because suddenly I'm not spending eight hours a day at the theater. Right now I'm in the first show in six years where I'm not in the show and it freaks me out because I don't make those cast connections. As sad as it is for a show to end, the stress is over. It does also mean there's a chance for something new. It's all new opportunities. One door closes and five open.

Detaching from a production is not so difficult because you always have those running jokes with the cast. Detaching from the character is a little more difficult because I can still recite lines from the characters. I never fully detach from a character. Once you've played the role it's kind of like memory recall. You pick up another character and its similar to the one you played before. It's like a book of things to look at and bring to the front when you need it most. *The Bacchae* was the hardest for me. It was a continual state of depression. It was hard to shake. It took about a week or so. It was good though when we finally got rid of it. It was intense because it was my first experience with emotions as a character, really intense emotions. There was no way to fake that. Comparing it to the only dead body I'd ever seen of a fourteen-year-old child and going back to that place every night of adrenaline rush and fear was really hard. Every night before a certain scene I would isolate myself alone in the dark right before my entrance and start dog panting to get my adrenaline racing. I would pretend to scream and shake my arms and legs to give the sensation of running so that it would appear I had been running through the forest because of that horrible thing I had seen. That anxiousness, shock, and depression you put on stage doesn't necessarily shake off automatically. And it was really hard to go back to real life where

there is no more of that character, I don't have to talk about it all the time or think about it. It digs up hard feelings. I would run offstage after my monologue every night and start crying because the whole idea was not to cry onstage. I had to get it out. It took a week for that one.

AA4

1.How do you prepare for a role once you've received a part?

The very first thing I do is take the script and read it to become really familiar with the words on the script. Then I go through it to see what the other characters say about my character. Then I go into my subtext. I go outward and then in. Then I take my lines and I go through my lines step by step and break down my subtext. When I played the role of Mephistopheles in *Doctor Faustus*, the director wanted to make Mephistopheles a woman. So I took that idea and started looking at different pieces of artwork, old films, and newspaper clippings. Then I'm big on movement because I was a dancer. The way I learn my part is through movement. I start associating blocking with learning my lines. I associate the lines with my movement. Once I start moving then I live in the character to discover who she is, or what she would do in a given situation. I think a lot about the character, the piece and the work outside of rehearsal. If I'm completely missing something and I don't feel I'm getting where I'll need to go then sometimes I'll look at how someone else did it but normally I try not to look at other people's work.

2.Have you ever played a role that went against your personal values/beliefs or what you stood for?

Yes, I don't play the ingénue, I'm usually cast as the sexual deviants and that's not how I am at all. I find that it's fun. I never take it personally. It's like putting on a costume but you wouldn't necessarily wear it outside.

3.Have you ever played a role that challenged you to be a better person?

Yes, I played Joe in *Little Women*. Her enthusiasm and her complete and total infatuation with whatever she was focusing on really inspired me because I think you need to do things deeply and fully. I tended to have a lot of hands in the fire at once, so to aspire to excel in whatever you're interested or invested in at the moment is a good thing I took from her. Ham in Beckett's *End Game* was blind in a wheel chair; it was a horrific place to put myself in as an actor. I liked the refusal to ever give up. When you're an aspiring performer, I found it was important to take from that character that I am who I am and I'm not going to give up ever. I think that's an important trait for survival.

4.Can you personally relate to the roles you've played?

I tend to put a part of myself in every character. Putting who you are individually into your role makes it real because you can only operate out of this one body, this one experience. I can't completely be someone else. I try to find something in that character that I relate to. For one of the witches in *Macbeth* I found I put the piece of myself where I just want to hurt someone or teach them a lesson into that role. In Mephistopheles I found my sexual power over a man can be intoxicating and it was safe to let that out in that play. On a brighter note Joe in *Little Women* I found that I am a personal motivator of myself and other people and I brought that into the role and identified with her in that way.

5.Have you ever taken anything away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad?

I found that whenever I was in a play it consumed my entire life, not that I was the character outside of rehearsal but because I was concentrating on it so much in my own life. I would get snappy or needy or whatever emotion I was really trying to tap into. It would always in some way come into my everyday life. But I don't find that there's any lasting impact. I've learned things from the characters of the shows but I don't think they intrinsically became a part of me.

More negative characters did show up more in my life because they were different than how I am. When I'm doing a role that's angrier and more depressed I think people notice that more because its different than how I am. But it didn't really last after the show was over, I came back out of it.

6.Do you believe the roles you've played have helped you develop into the person you are today?

I would say that the experiences that I've had and the opportunities to have roles and be included in that have helped me. I've had an opportunity to have many leading roles in college, much more so than if I had gone somewhere else. That had a lot to do with my self-confidence. I can tap into emotions and characters more easily but I think it was more the experiences I had that made a difference.

7.Has anyone ever mistaken you for a role you've had or taken on?

Yes. When I was doing *End Game* the director put us in that place where you're alone and the world has ended supposedly outside of the shelter the cast was in. Ham is very dependant on his caretaker. I made my voice very unpleasant. I tried to make it not sound good. People thought that I was harsh, that my voice was bad and I was overbearing. It was when I was a sophomore so I don't think people knew me very well. I think people had

a hard time seeing me afterwards and realizing that I'm not really like that. I took it as both a compliment and a learning experience. I thought maybe the character was a little too close to me, maybe I needed to create the character a little farther away from me.

People notice when I come into a room. My presence is strong and people mistake that a lot of times as haughty or that I'm full of myself. I think I've learned how to soften my facial features when I'm listening to people. Acting taught me that too.

7a. Have you done this to somebody else?

I think people do it all the time but in school not so much because I was in such a small college. I knew everyone already. We do that all the time with movie actors and most of the time that's not the case.

8.Do you find it difficult when a show ends to detach from the production/role you played?

Yes, there's a period of release and elation right at the very end and then some depression and let down. I have to leave this character I've been working and investing in all this time. Now I have to put her on a shelf. I like to get the video recording and watch myself again. The hard thing about theater is that live theater, once it's over it's done. I think that's the hard thing about this art form.

Detaching from the production is a group feeling, missing working with people and having the project. On a personal level, detaching from a character is almost a hurtful thing. This fake person, this character baby, you're nurturing, you're carrying it to term. Sometimes you feel you didn't get to do all the things you should have or that the role deserved or that you wanted to do with it. You don't have the chance anymore. Many times I wanted to do more with it and because of experience, ability or time I didn't have the chance. The

theater people at Sweet Briar are always working together but the personal characters of the play were more intense detachments because you didn't get to work with them again.

AA5

1.How do you prepare for a role once you've been cast?

After reading the play and making up things to fill in the blanks about what I don't know, we do lots of exercises in groups and go through scenes once we're off-book but in our own words. I find that I always end up using method acting. I don't go completely crazy but I certainly do change my own personality because I bring so much of myself into the role. I find what's already the same and then it goes from me to the role and then the role to me. The line is sort of gray. Normally I read the play many times before auditions. I already know a bit about every character to know their back-story because I don't know which one I'll be asked to play. I played Dionysus and I made notes about posture and questions.

2.Have you ever played a role that went against your values/beliefs or what you stood for?

I love Greek history and myth so I already knew about the myths that surround *The Bacchae*. I had to justify what happened. Before rehearsals started I had to come to a point where everything Dionysus does is justified. I had to like my character. My mom had never seen me act. After the show I came out in my costume she was wary of me. When I got out of my costume she hugged me and said, "I'm so glad you're back." I thought that was so strange. The rest of the night at dinner she kept looking at me and said it was so frightening, and wondered why I would kill those people. I tried to tell her that it was called for, and that's when I realized how shocking something could be when you don't

have any idea what goes into it. She didn't know how her daughter could portray someone that was that violent.

3.Have you ever played a role that challenged you to be a better person?

I played Tilley from *Melancholy Play* two or three years ago and Tilley was very melancholy and she would see things in people that we don't notice because we're so busy. Tilley is so in tune with everything. She works at a bank and she notices that people come in, get their money and leave and they don't care about other people. Sure enough it came into my real life and I became so melancholy and I realized everything is so fleeting and sad. I became so tuned in to things that otherwise I would have brushed off.

4.Can you personally relate to the roles you've played?

I can relate to all of them in some way. The way Tilley talks. My mother says I talk like a script sometimes. I don't know if it's when I choose to take pauses. Reading this role I saw that this woman writes exactly how I think. She writes the exact way that thoughts form in my mind. I noticed so many things that the character Tilley said were just like me. There's one scene where Tilley is in bed with her boyfriend Frank and they have this conversation about how they feel so sad like a painting. I had a conversation like that almost word for word. It was remarkable. She's the one I've felt the most like. Even as Dionysus I was going through a breakup with my boyfriend of two years. It helped me not to consider forgiveness, and it definitely helped strengthen me because there's no way that god would have that weakness.

5.Have you ever taken anything away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad?

I played Olympia from *Big Love* and I grew up in Ecuador as a tomboy. I came to an all girls college in Virginia where the girls wear pearls and the color pink. There are three sisters in the show and I played the character that loved men and dressing up. That role helped me become a more girly-girl. There's always something in every single role that ends up staying with me.

When I was Tilley I was already having huge issues with my boyfriend and there had been a huge process in rehearsals. We'd talk about what paragraphs meant or what we wanted to discuss about the play. That one brought out the most feeling and beauty in the melancholy which wasn't a sadness because it was much more active. For those two months there was a kind of heaviness. Two months of light rain, gray days because I was so immersed in this character. Everything she said was so lingering. It was like being in a different world, like an old film.

6.Do you believe the roles you've played have helped you develop into the person you are today?

Yeah, I do. I still remember what drew me to each character. For Dionysus it was the strength which is absolute determination, nothing can come between that power. For Tilley it was that love for everything and appreciation for tiny things that no one every noticed, memory, and the act of being someone else. I wouldn't be in the United States if it wasn't for theater or acting. There's always a month or two between each show. It really is what gives me energy. There's nothing like having to have energy from seven to midnight every night because that's when you have to do your best work. It recharges you. And you have to be so innovative and have imagination and understanding as to why people do things. I find myself judging people less because I have more understanding.

7.Has anyone ever mistaken you for a role you've had or taken on?

Tilley probably most of all because most everyone thought that was me. It's funny because that's how we talk about movie stars. Even though we haven't met these people we make these judgments about them. I haven't done this with other people I've worked with because I've seen who they are.

7a. Do you find it difficult when a show ends to detach from the production/role you played?

Yeah I get so depressed. I hate it because you get so involved in this world. Something was built and now it's going to die and its never going to be the same again. It's very sad. I also build sets and paint so I'm involved in the beginning of the creation and then we have to strike it. We have to literally break this thing. What's so beautiful about theater is how its so fleeting, it doesn't last. It's very sad. I'm sad for about a week.

7b. How easy is it to balance the role onstage from life offstage?

I just go into that state of mind. I start thinking like the character, the way I act not so much. I do really think playing someone so strong like Dionysus helped me in my breakup.

Thesis Interviews – Liberty University

B1

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

I've played several historical characters, so first thing is researching the time period. Before I get a script I'll look up you tube videos of prior people who have done the role, sometimes I do that and sometimes I don't because I don't want to copy. If it's a musical I'll

listen to the music. Things don't really come together until I get on stage. I really start to feel the character once we're actually onstage. Even the memorization came to me once we started working it on the stage. Depending on the role I'll look at back-story. Some roles just don't have a lot of depth. Like *Hairspray*, sometimes too much development of characters can get in the way instead of just having fun. In *Annie Get Your Gun* I just did a lot of research. I've had a lot of chorus and ensemble roles and preparation for that is usually going to rehearsal and learning the music. I don't do a ton of preparation offstage for ensemble characters. Its not about the small ensemble role, its about the whole story. I think if I make it too much about my little ensemble role it will ruin the effect of the whole show.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

I don't think I ever really have. I played one of the girls in *The Crucible* and that's the closest character to one I haven't really agreed with. As long as the character I'm playing contributes to the story in a good way and helps the audience leave with the purpose of the story then its okay. I'm pretty liberal. I was raised in a conservative home but where I was raised I'm not as uptight as some people. For me it's case by case.

3.Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

In every role I've played I think there's been aspects of each character that I've taken with me or wanted to use or have made me think. Like Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun* I showed the fun side of myself, and learned not to take myself so seriously. In plays I've seen or other characters in shows I've been in I feel like sometimes people don't take me very seriously, especially in theaters because of how I look. I admired the character of Jane in *Jane Eyre*

because she wasn't pretty and she still had such a good heart and attitude. I do feel like some people are going to write you off because of a pretty face and not going to take you seriously. Also, Elizabeth Proctor from *The Crucible*, to see the good person she was and how good she was to her husband. I think I look at different relationships onstage and I want certain aspects of that even though I'm not really a relationship type of girl. Even with *Annie Get Your Gun* when I researched her, Frank, her husband, died a little after Annie died because he stopped eating and he loved her so much. I thought that was so sweet. I don't think I look at specific characters and say I want to be like them, but I will look at friendships and relationships and say I want a friendship like that. Obviously there are good qualities in characters but I really pay attention to relationships. Another character I love is Marmee in *Little Women*. She's such a rock, so strong.

4.Have you ever taken away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad experiences?

I think it can get very messy when you can't differentiate between the two. I liked a guy in *Jane Eyre* and we were dance partners. We had to do this love dance together and it was really emotional. He kind of broke things off during that and it became hard to do that dance from then on. I try to keep things separate but I couldn't help but notice how the dance paralleled what was going on offstage. I think it helped my character and helped me get more emotionally involved. It wasn't necessarily a bad thing. *Annie Get Your Gun* was hard because I was mad and frustrated because we never knew if it was the last time we would do the show. Every actor loves their applause and it was frustrating because I got the confused applause looking for the lead man. It was good for me because I had to put everything aside. I wouldn't have said that at the time, but I'm thankful for it. Honestly,

things are going to happen in life and you're still going to have to go onstage. I feel like I'm good at keeping things separate. In *Annie Get Your Gun* I hated him offstage and had to love him onstage. Other than that I haven't had problems with it.

5. Has anyone ever mixed the lines between who you are and the role you were playing?

I was a part of a first impressions assignment for a theater class where we had to go around to random people on campus and ask what kind of character they could see me playing. The thing I got most was the pretty, snotty, popular girl, the bimbo. That was a little bit of a bummer at first because you don't want to come across that way, especially when I'm not that way. Just because you're pretty doesn't mean you're life is easier. It's harder in a way. In an audition I feel like I won't be taken as seriously because of my looks. I also feel like I'm the funny girl. Even in senior projects I know I'll be written as a humorous character. I do feel I've been put into a stereotype. I've never been given a serious role before.

6. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

Hairspray was so much fun and it was a character I'd never played before, the mean girl. I loved that show. Ever since I saw the show on tour my sophomore year I knew I wanted to be in that show before I die. When it was over I got a little depressed. I wondered why am I here, now that it's over what am I doing here? I think that was more senioritis than anything else. *Annie Get Your Gun* was a whirlwind because of everything happening. A lot of shows I'm ready for them to be over. Most of the time because you're tired and there are so many other things to do. I'm pretty ready for them to be over. The bigger role or the more attached to a role you are the harder it is to break away.

B2

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

We're required to keep a journal. I think it's a good motivation because we have something to log our thoughts, and progress. I use it to write historical things the character can relate to. I can go back and see what I wrote as I continue to prepare the things in history I wrote down. *Hairspr*ay was set in the sixties during a time of segregation and the history I found on that stemmed out of my character. You really bring an element of yourself to a play. I got to bring myself into a 1960's characters and how I viewed living in that time. I think you should always find what you love in a character even if they're a villain. Embrace and amplify those things. I'm a big fan of Meisner and Stanislavski and psychological gesture of Chekhov. I like the idea of reacting naturally, in relating it to myself and also putting myself in the show deciding how I would react, including "the moment before."

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

Not yet. I hold my standards and beliefs very strongly on character. I know it's not you when you're up there, it's the character. At the same time I think we can still be an influence and an impact for Christ even in a setting that causes us to question our beliefs. It's a case-to-case type of thing depending on the show. If my integrity and character were in question then I would not do something or take a certain role. If it could be used to further someone coming to Christ or me planting a seed in something then I would do that. If I could impact more with taking it than without taking it then I would do it.

3. Have you ever played a role that challenged you to be a better person?

I think Tracy Turnblad ignited a flame. She didn't fit into the modern stereotype of that time and I think so many people are faced with that today. Everyone is focused on how beautiful they can be. Playing her was eye opening to see what someone against the societal norm would go through. Everything she tried she got slapped in the face for it. But it never teetered her perseverance and determination to fight for what she wants. The fact that she was not what everyone expected didn't stop her. She found joy in herself rather than what society put on her. I struggle with that day-to-day. Even when she was alone in jail she still said one day the world will wake up and see who I am, that I'm not going to change. Her joy was not determined by her circumstances. Tracy had trials but in the end she came out on top. I love that about her. Nothing stopped her. You rarely see her sad. She always bounces back. There's a bigger picture others couldn't see but she saw it. When we can only see a paint stroke God sees the big picture. It's hard when things fail to bounce back but she did.

4.Can you personally relate to any of the roles that you've played?

Most roles have been played by so many people. There's an aspect that the audience wants to see, what can this person bring to the character. Though the audience wants to see it as it's been done before I believe the audience wants to see something new too. Giving a character a part of yourself makes it more memorable. Just for the actor herself, if she just did it the way others have done it then takes away the fun. It' s new for you as well as the audience.

5.Have you ever taken anything away from a role into your personal life? Whether good/bad?

In *Fiddler on the Roof* I played Hodel. She chose to leave her family to go with the man she loved to Kiev. I would always get choked up because she was leaving everything she knew. She was going out into the unknown. That emotional recall of coming to Liberty, leaving my family because we're very close came up. Reliving that day-to-day was hard. My grandfather is Jewish and both his grandparents died in concentration camps and that reminded and related to leaving Anatevka. When something is historical and has happened I think you take a little more away. There is a heaviness you take away. You have to shake it off physically. Time helps. I have to remind myself I'm just an actress in a scene. I've never had an issue with letting an emotion go and moving on. I've never really played emotional characters yet. There's room for improvement.

6.Do you believe the roles you've played and helped you become the person you are today?

Like I said before Tracy influenced my heart how I would look at life. I think you take away from each character something that you found you loved about the character. More times than not it's something you can use in real life. In *West Side Story* I was Consuela. I took away the prejudice, understanding that three people were killed, and the impact of what a massive amount of hatred could do. You become a better person from that.

7. Have you every mixed the lines of other people from the role they were playing?

I met a character from *A Raisin in the Sun* at the gym before he did the show. In the show he was very proper, had a suit on, and the character in the show was so different. He was even different from my expectation of him in real life.

7a. Has anyone done this to you?

I've played a lot of bubbly teens. Some people mind playing the same roles but I think if you find something or a type you do well and like you should embrace it. I'll do things in real life and people will say that's such a Tracy thing to do. Others would say there's a lot of Tracy already in you. It was hard coming out of that character when I was doing other things. I don't think it's a mistake. In *Jane Eyre* I was the school master and people afterwards would tell me they didn't know I could be that mean. I want to say that's not me. I think part of being a good actress is making the audience believe that's how you are. If you're a villain and they hate you when you bow you've done your job. To be able to show the contrast ups your credibility even more than how well you can act. If you're yourself offstage and a different person onstage you won't have to clear that up with anyone.

8.Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

It depends on the show and how emotionally connected you were to it. In every show there's a sadness when it closes. Tracy was a dream role of mine. It's hard to let go of things you connect with and fall in love with. The more connected you are with the character, the harder it is to let it go. Once you find your characters, those moments, and those beats with other characters you don't want to let it go. When we strip the set that's really a detaching point. Usually we strike the closing night. I got to keep Link Larkin's council ring and a can of hairspray I used so I got to hold on to some things that were sentimental. Sometimes when I'm listening to the soundtrack I'll get emotional.

B3

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

Depending on the play, if there's research needing to be done on the history I'll do that. I'll go back to the script and get the way the character talks and how people portray her, and what other characters say about her. I'll get into her mind and how she would react to things. If there's not a lot given then I'll create a story about her. Once you get up onstage you have all that in the back of your head, whether or not you use it. I'd also look up other people that played the part.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

Not in college, only high school experience.

2a. Would you?

Yes and no. It would depend on the show. There are things that I wouldn't want to do onstage if the message is portrayed in a bad way. Not if I was glorifying the stuff that was bad about the character. If it was a person who was a drug addict and at the end it was like, yeah I do drugs, then no but if it was something she has to go through to come out of it then yes.

3.Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

Yes. Jane Eyre. The character always goes back to what God says and follows Him. In my own life it's not always like that but what God wanted for her life always guided all of her steps. Even in research of the novel, it always points back to Scripture. It almost forced you to see what God had to say back in the novel to her. Becoming immersed in that world

challenged me to live that way. I did feel challenged to live that way because people knew I played the role. Even now when I mention that I played that character people immediately get this feel for the character. It's reflected on me.

4.Can you personally relate to any of the roles that you've played?

Yes. Probably in most of the characters I've played there's something in them that I can relate to. I think the biggest one I can relate to is Penny in *Hairspray*. She can't dance, she's kind of this carefree spirit that doesn't really care what's going on because she's just happy being with her friends and it doesn't matter that she's a nerd. She's goofy.

5.Have you ever taken away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad experiences?

I've had both bad and good experiences. I'll start with the good. There've been good attitudes of a character you take into your life like a sense of keeping things under control like Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. No matter what is falling apart you know if can be worked out. Also Jane Eyre going back to Scripture. There have also been the bad things that go into real life. *Jane Eyre* was my first romantic relationship on the stage. The chemistry between the guy that played Edward inappropriately got carried offstage. It got to the point where the line was blurred between what was character and what were real people. When we would leave rehearsal we were still treating each other like our characters, which became a big issue in our personal lives since we were seeing other people. Not the greatest thing. You live and you learn. I know now you have to set that boundary for what's appropriate for the stage and what's appropriate offstage.

There is a lot of good that came from that show and the show itself was a good experience but the things that I regret made it harder to make the separation. I'm the kind of person

who wants closure on every single thing in her life and it was hard because I wasn't allowed the chance to get closure. We had all this bad stuff going on and our personal lives did not allow for it. Even to this day we've not had a closure conversation. Its one of those things that time had me just accept and move on. When there are things you regret it takes a lot longer to move on from it, more so than good experiences.

Distinguishing roles from life offstage gets better with time and experience. When you're new at something its hard to know how to behave in a situation like that. I would say its not so much an issue anymore. I almost needed the bad experience to figure out how I needed to act in situations like that because now I can have an onstage relationship with someone and have a friendship with them offstage but it doesn't become the dependant kind of friendship just waiting for the next time you get to see them. You don't start your friendship until after the role is over.

6.Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person?

Definitely. Before I came to college there was a lot of insecurity and feelings that I'm not good enough. I think it's from being given the chance to portray characters that know who they are and having a sense of I did well with what I was given. I've learned a lot more since playing different characters. Even in just the sense of confidence I've grown through the characters I've played. Which is kind of strange since you're playing a completely different person. You find different aspects of a character in yourself and you learn a way to deal with that aspect of yourself whether they are good or bad.

7.Have you every mixed the lines of other people from the role they were playing?

I remember going to see a show and the lead was a good hero type. I remember talking to people in the cast about that actor and that he was completely different in real life. It disappoints you a little bit because you have in your mind that they're a hero but they're really not.

7a. Has anyone done this to you?

Yes. I'm a little rough around the edges, not exactly a lady. I remember I met someone who saw *Jane Eyre* and that characters is very classy, ladylike, very mannerly and when I opened my mouth and started talking they couldn't figure out where this person was coming from. They said no this isn't you, you're Jane Eyre, that's who you are. I said no I'm not that person. At first it offended me but it's just one of those things you have to accept about yourself. It's not a bad thing. It's just that you're a different person. And although Jane is a very noble person, Katie is not. I thought about it more and I'm proud to be who I am.

It challenged me because you don't want to throw someone off or their perceptions but at the same time you can't change who you are just to satisfy somebody else. It's a matter of finding the balance between not completely changing who you are but also not being so much of yourself or boastful by saying you just can't even think that way about me because that's not who I am.

8.Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

I think it depends on the production and how close the cast got as a whole. Sometimes it's a weird feeling and not everyone is connected like other shows where you become a family. Sometimes I've had a hard time to detach, maybe a couple weeks. If I'm really attached it's kind of like a mini breakup. First you have your cry about it, then you acknowledge that it's not something you want to forget, you take away the good stuff, accept the fact that it's a

part of life, and you make sure to not lose contact with the people you got close to but allow yourself to be open to another experience.

Thesis Interviews-Lynchburg College

C1

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

I'll do research on the time period if I'm not familiar with it already. Less research on people but how life was lived. I'll reread my script six or seven times before I do the show so I'm familiar with it and able to understand the inflections and everything. I try not to start developing character until rehearsals; I try to align my thought process on character with the director. This sometimes backfires. I'll mostly do paper research and reading usually for just the woman I'm playing. Very rarely I'll look up the actor who originated the role, but I try to avoid that because I want it to be an original. I don't want to replicate. It's more about the whole experience and less about how this person should act. I figure that out as I go along. I let the character show herself to me. I try to stay away from set patterns.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

I try to keep my personal values away from my acting, even though that may sound kind of strange. I try to make myself a blank slate before I take on the character. Every now and then there are scenes where I've been uncomfortable but after a while I've gotten more and more comfortable. I haven't worked with directors that say you have to do it this way.

They let me take it at a pace I'm comfortable with. I have a list of things I will and will not do, so if I see a show and I'm not comfortable with doing something in it I won't audition for it.

3.Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

Oh yeah, that's the good thing about working with so many directors. I was in a senior directed piece my sophomore year, last spring, called *The Mercy Seat*. This play involves a man and woman and it takes place the day after September 11th in an apartment two blocks from Ground Zero. She's his boss, he's married with kids, but they're having an affair. I learned so much from that character of what not do as an adult in a relationship, and authority figure. That character has always stuck with me. On the outside she looks like such a terrible person but I dug lower than skin level and I was able to see how she functioned and why she did what she did. That show was kind of an explosive change process for me. Afterwards I was not the same person. I was able to take her good qualities and learn from her mistakes. Its weird because she is words on a page but with the help of my director I was able to grow in so many ways I couldn't have imagined before I took that role. *The Mercy Seat* taught me the emotional side of myself.

I was the lead in a Bertolt Brecht show. It gave me less experience as a person and more experience as an actor because I was onstage for basically the entire show. It was three and a half hours. There were lots of costume changes, and vocal changes. I was playing a woman who cross-dresses as a man to save her identity. *Good Person of Szechwan* helped me to grow as an actor. It helped me to understand what a professional actor feels like. That was the show where I decided that this is what I want to do and that I can handle this.

4. Can you personally relate to any of the roles that you've played?

I try to. I try to find something of myself in every character I play. The only show I didn't see anything of myself in was *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. I replicated the character of my grandmother. That was an outside performance as opposed to an inside performance.

5. Have you ever taken away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad experiences?

The Mercy Seat because it was such a heavy subject. I grew up in Maryland, a half an hour from DC. We watched the videos of the planes crashing I don't know how many times. There's a video that devastates me every time I see it. I can't watch it anymore because I would break down in tears during the preparation for the show. It showed the ground level of one of the towers and you hear these crashing sounds and bodies. I was a miserable wreck during that show because of all the emotional impact that show had on me. That director pushed my co-star and I to make it an internal thing, as real as possible, very Stanislavski, bringing up experiences from my college life that weren't so savory. It was kind of crushing but from being crushed I grew and took away from that.

It took me a couple months to shake it off. I'm an emotional person. Things tend to stick with me. After the show I knew it was over and the emotion was gone but I still had to deal with it in my own life. Officially the youngest person killed that day was three years old but there was a woman who was two and a half months pregnant on one of the planes and to this day it still kills me. I've got the mothering soul and when I read that I broke down. It took me a couple months to get past those things. We had to experience 9/11 every day for three months during rehearsal process so it was opening that scar again and again and again. It was a healing process and through opening that scar everyday I grew as an actor

and as a person. I think the closer, the more recent, and the more real an event is, the more it affects how I prepare for the end result.

I don't like to ask for help. I think that I've adapted to not really asking for help because if I get into a situation I get frustrated and walk away. It depends on the situation or director of the show if I will seek help about my acting or separating stage from life. I feel like I've adapted enough to being able to decompress on my own. I pick up my knitting if I need to decompress. But generally I don't like to ask for help.

6.Have you every mixed the lines of other people from the role they were playing?

I try not to. Because I know that they're actors and I've been in their shoes of playing an iconic role around campus.

6a. Has anyone done this to you?

I don't believe I've been stereotyped.

7. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

Some shows I'm really happy are over, because of the time commitment or I didn't like the character. In my senior year of high school we did *Once Upon a Mattress*. When that was over my world kind of shattered. When *Easy Dead* was over I was a little devastated. I go into a performance knowing it's eventually going to be over, that it is going to end before the process begins. I know the last show of the season this year will be my last show here and I know I'll be devastated when that happens because I've kind of grown up here as an actor with other actors. Most of the time I'm more upset to see the people go than the show. As far as detaching myself from the show, that usually happens if a show is a drama like *The Mercy Seat*. That one was the hardest to get out of. I don't get out of a show completely. I try to learn from every show I do. It's less of a getting out of a show or

character and more of a take what I can from the character and show and leave the rest behind.

The director of *The Mercy Seat* understood what it was like to go through something so devastating over and over again. We both like shows that make you think, dramas. She was very good at the end of rehearsals saying that if we need to scream, walk out of the room. She was very concerned for our emotional well-being. My directors have all been really sensitive to that.

C2

1. Can you explain how you go about preparing to take on a role once you have been cast?

The first thing I do is reread the entire show and look for the character specifically. Sometimes when you read a play you don't look at it from one character's perspective. Once you receive the part you look at it differently. I find it difficult to prepare before I begin rehearsals. After rehearsals and I work the scene for the first time I go home and think okay how can I pull this off. I play off the director's vision so it's hard for me to come up with my own way without hearing what the director wants.

2. Have you ever played a role(s) that went against your values, beliefs, or what you stood for?

Not really.

2a. Would you be willing to do this?

It depends on the play. I have nothing against doing it. People have to understand when you're doing a play its not a portrayal of you, it's someone else. I think if it has a particular

story line to it and it makes the audience think then it's worth it. I think it's interesting to put yourself in that perspective just to see what it's like. I don't go into a role thinking that's who I am or that's how people are going to perceive me. That's just the role of a character. I don't really perceive it as a negative thing.

3.Have you ever played a role(s) that challenged you to become a better person?

Yes and no. I've played a variety of roles. I played a really old woman in *The Children's Hour*, who was strict and old fashioned. It challenged me to grow up in how I acted and presented myself. It also changed the way I presented myself in general. The character was very diplomatic, and she sat up in a straight, elegant manor. I was more timid when I first came into that role. I felt after that I walked a little straighter.

Characters I read like in *Eurydice* always intrigue me. I wondered if I would make the same decisions as the characters.

4. Can you personally relate to any of the roles that you've played?

I think so. I'm a very sarcastic person, not cynical. I love bantering with people. I played Sebastian in *The Tempest*, Miss Flannery in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. They were just hilarious, they were mean characters but they had moments where they were me because they were ridiculous.

I find something I can relate to. I'll try to find a way to connect to the lines.

5. Have you ever taken away from the roles you've played into your personal life? Good or bad experiences?

No. I think a lot of it is just me. I don't feel a strong connection when I leave a play. I don't take it home with me. I'm very involved and dedicated when I'm there but I think I can just

separate myself easily. I'm a high stress person in general so when I go home I'm good at de-stressing and not thinking about anything. Typically I don't think about it.

6.Do you find that the roles you play in theater have helped you discover who you are as a person?

In a way yes, but I feel like in theater you are obviously type-casted. There are certain roles that, especially if the director has worked with you long enough, you're going to play those roles. I feel like I have been shaped because of the roles I've played but because of the way I am shapes what I'm cast as. I feel I'm typecasted. Sometimes it's annoying but you really have to accept it. Obviously you can't always play the part you want but there are so many other good parts out there that you really have to embrace and enjoy. They say there are no small actors and though it may suck, even being in a chorus of a musical you can make your few lines the funniest thing ever. Just have fun with it. I'd prefer being in an ensemble role over a main stage part.

7.Have you every mixed the lines of other people from the role they were playing?

It's always your first impression. There have been shows I've seen and people play such evil roles. You know they're not like that but you go meet them and that's the first thing that comes to your mind. Generally I find that people are the opposite of what they play. Over the summer I directed kids as a children's theater. Some of the plays there were kids that were great as the evil characters and the teachers afterwards would say they were the nicest, best kids in their class. **.**

7a. Has anyone done this to you? A lot of times people will say that part was meant for you.

8. Do you ever find it difficult to detach from a role once a show has been completed?

Its hard detaching from the people though, seeing them is hard. The character not so much, but the cast, yes. The time you spend, seeing them every day, working so hard and then it's over is difficult

Everybody deals with characters differently. I never consider when I take a role that this is who I am now. I make sure there is a distinct line between who the character is and who I am, especially if it's really emotional. Two of my friends were main characters and when they came home they were so overworked emotionally that it was hard for them to calm down emotionally. It really depends on the person as to how emotionally connected they get.

Appendix B:

Coding of Questions

A1

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****
   4a. Take away something from every character? *****
5. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
   5a. How easy is it to balance life and theater?
   5b. Has director explained separation from character/life?

A2

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****
   4a. Has director explained separation from character/life?
5. Take away something from every character? *****
6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
   6a. Ever mixed lines of other people in roles?
   6b. Has this been done to you?

A3

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
2. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
   2a. Seen a role onstage played by someone else that challenged?
3. Personally relate to roles?
4. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
5. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
   5a. Anyone mistaken you for a role?
   5b.Have you done this to somebody else?
6. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

AA4

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****

6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
7. Anyone mistaken you for a role?
   7a. Have you done this to somebody else?
8. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

AA5

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
7. Anyone mistaken you for a role?
   7a. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****
   7b.How easy is it to balance role from life offstage?

B1

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
5. Anyone mistaken you for a role? ******
6. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

B2

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
7. Have you mistaken somebody else for a role?
   7a. Has anyone done this to you?
8. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

B3

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
   2a. Would you play a role like this?
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****

6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are? ******
7. Have you mistaken somebody else for a role?
   7a. Has anyone done this to you?
8. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

C1

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
6. Ever mixed lines of other people in roles?
   7a. Has this been done to you?
7. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

C2

1. Preparing for a role once you've been cast? *
2. Played a role against values/beliefs? **
   2a. Would you be willing to do this?
3. Played a role that challenged to be better? ***
4. Personally relate to roles?
5. Taken away anything from roles in life? Good/bad? *****
6. Roles in theater help you discover who you are?
7. Ever mixed lines of other people in roles?
   7a. Has this been done to you?
8. Difficult to detach from a role once show is completed? ****

Appendix C:

Roles Addressed and Played by Interviewees

A1:

- Mary in *The Secret Garden*
- The lead in an original Senior Project show

A2:

- Maggie in *Crimes of the Heart*
- Tresius in *The Bacchae*

A3:

- Mrs. Medlock in *The Secret Garden*
- A reader in *The Bacchae*
- Second lead character in *Under Milk Wood*

AA4:

- Mephistopholes in *Dr. Faustes*
- Joe in *Little Women*
- Ham in *End Game*
- One of the witches in *Macbeth*

AA5:

- Dionysus in *The Bacchae*
- Tilly in *Melancholy Play*
- Olympia in *Big Love*

B1:

- Amber Von Tussle in *Hairspray*

- Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun*
- Chorus member in *Jane Eyre*
- One of the girls in *The Crucible*

B2:

- Tracy Turnblad in *Hairspray*
- Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*
- Consuela in *West Side Story*

B3:

- Penny in *Hairspray*
- Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre*
- Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa*

C1:

- Lead female in a senior directed piece, *The Mercy Seat*
- The lead in *Good Person of Szechwanf*
- Older woman in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*

C2:

- Old woman in *The Children's Hour*
- Sebastian in *The Tempest*
- Miss Flannery in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*