Costume Design for a Production of *The Coast of Illyria*

THESIS

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By

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Abstract

For the completion of my Master of Fine Arts degree in Costume Design, I designed the costumes for the theatrical production of *The Coast of Illyria* by Dorothy Parker and Ross Evans, adapted by Jennifer Schlueter and Cece Bellomy. The production was performed in April 2016 in the Thurber Theatre in the Drake Performance and Event Center and was directed by Shilarna Stokes. The play is set in the early 1800s and uses historical literary figures such as Charles Lamb, Mary Lamb, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge as some of the characters. Due to the nature of the play, I researched the time period as well as the people present as characters in order to give an accurate representation. Because these are not contemporary figures, it is still vital to give the audience a believable image of these well-known British Romantic writers. While some audience members might be familiar with these writers and some might not, I strove to provide a snapshot of each character to enhance the audience’s knowledge.

Another challenge that was presented by this play is showing the mental, physical, and emotional decline of Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Mary Lamb. This change occurs between Acts Two and Three, giving the actors a limited amount of time to make a complete physical change. I worked with the director to use the costumes and makeup to develop the look of a person in a declining state. All of the elements together informed the design of my costumes to create a cohesive, time-period conscious design, while staying true to the nature of the characters.
Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the professors and mentors who helped guide me through the years. Each one of you has shaped who I am today, and each of you has made an impact on me as a costume designer, theatre artist, and an individual.
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Dance

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2016.............................................................................\textit{The Coast of Illyria} – Costume Designer,
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Theatre
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Chapter 1: The Producing Situation

*The Coast of Illyria*, written by Dorothy Parker and Ross Evans and adapted by Jennifer Schlueter, Associate Professor of theatre, and Cece Bellomy, an undergraduate student in theatre, was produced by The Ohio State University’s Department of Theatre in the spring semester of 2016. Performances ran April 14 through 17 and 19 through 21 in the Thurber Theatre, located in the Drake Performance and Event Center on The Ohio State University main campus.

Assistant Professor Shilarna Stokes directed the production. Associate Professor Dan Gray designed the scenery, Sarah Lawler, a second year MFA lighting design student, designed the lighting, and Lindsay White, a senior studying Earth Science and Chemistry, designed the sound. As costume designer for this production, it was my first time working with both of these designers.

Set in 1813 containing characters based on historical figures, *The Coast of Illyria* required realistic, historically accurate costumes. In communication with Stokes, it was clear that because of the nature of the play the costumes should not look like costumes but clothing that these characters would actually wear, meaning that these costumes should reflect the styles of the Regency era in which the play takes place and not an abstraction or adaptation of that era. While some characters might dress to impress,
others might look grungy with ill-fitting and well-worn clothing. Despite the differences in clothing, all of the costumes reflected the middle class status of the characters.

The academic setting of the production had certain influences on the production. Because of the limited number of graduate students staffed in the costume studio, the amount of constructed costumes was restricted, putting certain restraints on the realized designs. This meant that I was extremely aware of the resources available to me and made the most of each of them. Having graduate students to build costumes was a benefit to the production, so I chose certain costumes to be constructed in order to best utilize the graduate students’ skills. In sourcing the remaining costumes, many pieces were rented, and several were purchased as well. Budgets and time constraints also influenced the end product presented.

The Thurber Theatre has a 35-foot proscenium stage with raked continental seating that holds 600 patrons. It is the larger of the two theatre spaces in the Drake Performance and Event Center. This building also houses the theatre department with offices, classrooms, and studio workspaces.

The costume studio, located within the Drake building, is a well-equipped workroom to fit the needs of the Department of Theatre. It utilizes nine domestic Bernina sewing machines, one industrial sewing machine, three domestic sergers, one industrial serger, four cutting tables, three industrial irons, numerous dress forms, and ample sewing notions and tools. In addition to this equipment, the costume studio also possesses hundreds of historical patterns, a wide selection of fabric, and sizeable stock of men’s and women’s costumes spanning from ancient Greece to modern dress.
Because of the busy production schedule for the academic year, projects of varying levels are given to the numerous people who work in the costume studio. Alterations as well as construction of costume pieces are supervised by the Costume Studio Manager Rebecca Turk and Associate Professor and Resident Designer Kristine Kearney and were assigned to the three costume design graduate teaching associates (including myself) and the nine undergraduate students who each work in the costume studio three hours a week. These projects were assigned based on skill level and the needs of each production. *The Coast of Illyria* was the last production of the season, following *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Stupid F***ing Bird*, which meant a sufficient time allowed for the amount of built costumes. The focus for the beginning of the semester was to allow adequate time to prepare both of the other productions first, while beginning builds for *The Coast of Illyria* as time allowed.

Discussions between myself and the Costume Studio Manager began in late November/early December 2015, and the number of builds was decided and assigned before the end of the autumn semester. Final designs were due after the start of the spring semester on January 25, 2016. Mockups of each build were scheduled to start February 15, 2016, with fittings starting the following week. The production went into dress rehearsals on April 6, 2016; however, the rehearsal schedule was an exception to the regular schedule established by the department. The Royal Shakespeare Company, with whom OSU have a partnership, brought a performance series to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the department closed studios and classes to give the staff and students an opportunity to travel to New York to see these performances. This trip
occurred April 7-10, 2016, which meant a break in dress rehearsals which then resumed on April 11. The final performance was on April 21, and the costumes were laundered and dry cleaned and returned to stock or to the theatres and companies in from which they were rented.
Chapter 2: The Producing Concept and Design Scheme

In her director’s concept, Stokes wrote in great detail about her interpretation for *The Coast of Illyria*, the world that the play creates and how the characters inhabit it, in addition to background information on Dorothy Parker and Ross Evans, the original playwrights, and the production history. While the concept itself was not heavily focused on visual aspects, the overall themes discussed were relevant to my approach to the costume design for the production. I found all of this information incredibly inspiring because it gave me insight into Stokes’ direction and further information about the play’s history, but several of the approaches Stokes intended to take were what really attracted my attention. Stokes, in describing the characters in the play, states, “Illyrians love the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers and, of course, Shakespeare” (2015, p. 2). This love of ancient Greek and Roman ideals transferred to clothing as well. The Regency time period was stylistically a hearkening back to the classic Greek and Roman styles, which is mostly seen in the women’s clothing but is also revealed in the men’s hairstyles. This period in fashion history was a time to be freer and cast off the restraints of heavily ornamented and silhouette-altering clothing of decades past. This is a theme I wanted to emphasize in the designs of the costumes, and I looked to Greek and Roman motifs to use as well. Along these same lines, the love of the classics only transfers to certain characters. “The room at first is dominated by Mary’s classical tastes (as arranged
by her maid, Becky), but with visible ‘modern homemaker’ style additions made by Fanny, who is seeking to make it her own” (p. 3). This is an aspect I especially saw manifesting itself in the costumes of Fanny Kelly, an young actress, and Mary Lamb, a Romantic writer. Mary is older and has a more classic, reserved style while Fanny follows modern fashion and only wears up-to-date styles. They live in different worlds of old and new, which is reflected in their clothing choices. A theme I especially noted in Stokes’ concept was that of Orientalism. Stokes discusses, “I am interested in the fact that during the Regency Era, ‘Oriental’ objects, prints, etc. (particularly Chinese, Japanese and Indian) were a source of fascination” (p. 3). This popular fashion trend is something that could be seen in the textiles used, and that is an idea I especially focused on when choosing fabrics.

As evidenced in Dorothy Parker and Ross Evans’ *The Coast of Illyria* (1990, p. 187), this play opened April 4, 1949 and ran through April 23. It was performed at the Theatre ’49, Gulf Oil Theatre, Fair Grounds, Dallas, TX. The original production team included Margo Jones as Director, Jonathan Seymour as Assistant Director and Stage Manager, Jed Mace as Production Designer, and Richard Berstein was in charge of lighting. The original cast was made up of Romola Robb as Mary Lamb, Wilson Brooks as Charles Lamb, Frances Walker as Fanny Kelly, Harold Webster as George Dyer, Rebecca Hargis as Emma Isola, Edwin Whitner as Coleridge, Mary Finney as Mrs. Kelly, Clinton Anderson as William Hazlitt, and John Hudson as Thomas De Quincey. The production ran for a total of 32 performances and was met with good reviews. John Rosenfield of the *Dallas News* praises, “The literary substance is not so much the
characters…as the craft which the authors have incorporated…the period into the text. Then they have added wit and wisdom of their own, worthy commodities from esteemed sources” (as cited in Kinney, 1990, p. 61). However, despite solid reviews during its original run, *The Coast of Illyria* has been little produced since.

Dorothy Parker was a prolific journalist, writer, and poet. “Born Dorothy Rothschild on August 22, 1893, in West End, New Jersey…Parker was a legendary literary figure, known for her biting wit” (Biography.com, n.d., para. 1). She wrote in a wide variety of publications throughout her lifetime. These publications include *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The New Yorker* (para. 1). Parker not only wrote for magazines, but she also ventured into fiction as well. She created short stories and became a playwright and screenwriter while living in Hollywood with her second husband (para. 1, 3). In addition to writing, Parker’s life also somewhat mirrored that of the Lambs. “She formed a group called the Algonquin Round Table...also known as the Vicious Circle for the number of cutting remarks made by its members and their habit of engaging in sharp-tongued banter” (para. 2). Much like the Lamb’s weekly gatherings, Parker held her own gathering to discuss the artist scene in New York.

Parker wrote numerous plays, and *The Coast of Illyria* might be seen as her best work. In his introduction to *The Coast of Illyria*, Arthur F. Kinney, Thomas W. Copeland Professor of Literary History at University of Massachusetts and Amherst and Drama and Performance scholar, states, “*The Coast of Illyria*, long buried, forgotten, and unpublished until now, represents some of Dorothy Parker’s finest and most mature work” (1990, p. 1). Perhaps this is because Parker drew on her own life as material for
this play. “…this too can be harrowingly autobiographical: The Coast of Illyria not only displays Dorothy Parker as the artist she aspired to be but also brings us closest to the woman herself” (p. 1). While Parker and Evans are listed as co-authors, Parker’s voice might be more evident. Having met Evans several years prior, Parker suggested that the two collaborate on a play about Charles and Mary Lamb, although Parker was the more successful writer because Evans had only written a couple unsuccessful novels and a handful of off-Broadway plays (p. 29). It is clear, however, that Parker completed most of the writing. “The Coast of Illyria reads like most other works that Parker wrote herself. At rehearsals in Dallas, cast and crew members recall that Evans said very little, although he helped Parker with revisions” (p. 29). Perhaps it was Parker who did the writing, while Evans completed the necessary research. Kinney continues to suppose:

If fetching books was Evans’s primary function, he nevertheless contributed a great deal, for much of The Coast of Illyria is taken, sometimes verbatim, from the letters and essays of Charles and Mary Lamb, the letters of Coleridge, selected essays of Hazlitt and De Quincey, and De Quincey’s Confessions of an English Opium Eater. (p. 29-30)

However, Evans might not have been the only one to have researched the Lambs and their friends’ intertwined lives. “But the language of The Coast of Illyria shows everywhere that Parker also immersed herself in Lamb’s own writings so as to get the period right” (Kinney, 1990, p. 31). Even if much of the text is taken from direct sources, Parker and Evans were also adept when it came to filling in other material. “One of the most remarkable accomplishments of the play, in fact, is the ability of Parker and
Evans to sustain echoes of Charles and Mary even when they are not quoting or paraphrasing them” (p. 31). Parker and Evans made these historical figures come to life on the page and then the stage, and they did take certain liberties in making this happen. “They collapsed time to intensify Mary’s tragedy, coalescing the portrait of the Lamb circle around 1810 with Charles’s proposal to Fanny Kelly (1819) and his retirement from East India House (1813)” (p. 40). This, in effect, makes for a more dramatic plot, with these important events occurring around the same time.

In comparing the original to the adaptation by Jennifer Schlueter and Cece Bellomy, several differences are apparent. Before even reading either script, one can see from the lists of characters that the adaptation has fewer characters. While Parker and Evans included characters entitled Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. and Mrs. Crittenden, Schlueter and Bellomy chose to exclude these characters; this also meant cutting any dialogue in reference to them. In my view, the story does not suffer in any way from this lack of characters; in fact, we are able to focus more on the characters who drive the story forward. In the original, Charles and Coleridge discuss the cause of Mary’s absence early on in Act One. Schlueter and Bellomy reserve any in-depth discussions for Act Three, which foreshadows Mary’s ultimate descent into madness. I think this adds more tension that is lacking in Parker and Evans’ original script because the audience is left wondering until the conclusion of the play why Mary is concerned about being sent to Bedlam. The adaptation allows for more build-up to the moment Mary snaps and Charles realizes he can never have a life separate from Mary. In the original there are enough indications of Mary’s insanity that it is really no surprise that she sinks back into madness by the end.
Another major difference is found in the poem Coleridge writes in Act One. The poem Parker and Evans include is “The Ballad of the Dark Ladié,” whereas Schlueter and Bellomy used the text of “Kubla Kahn.” Parker and Evans use “Kubla Kahn” later in Act Two, but Schlueter and Bellomy combine the two poetic readings into one using just “Kubla Kahn,” which I find more effective. Overall, the story remains the same, but Schlueter and Bellomy trimmed down the dialogue to make the play much more streamlined and less talky, allowing the focus to be on the characters’ story.

Since the script is made up of characters who existed in real life during the Regency era, I did a certain amount of pictorial and textual research about these factual characters represented in a fictional world. Parker provides insight into the lives of many of these writers and artists; however, to include a better character analysis on my part, I continued to examine these intertwined lives further. Each of these characters had an fascinating life story, most being intertwined within each other’s; however, much of my research was focused on the relationship of Charles and Mary Lamb and their relationship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. While this paper reflects research found on websites dedicated to the lives of these poets, I also found insightful information in several books written about Charles Lamb and the people in his life.

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) was the youngest of three children born to John Lamb and Elizabeth Field (Wu, n.d., para. 2). His parents imparted the importance of education for their children and gave their sons the opportunity for further learning. “The family was ambitious for its two sons, John and Charles, and successful in entering Charles at Christ’s Hospital, a London charity school of merit, on 9 October 1782” (Courtney, n.d.,
Not only did Charles grow in knowledge while in school, but he also formed long-lasting relationships. It was at Christ’s Hospital that he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a fellow student, and the two remained friends for the rest of their lives (para. 2). Even with his parents’ aspirations for his education, Charles did not remain in school for long. Because university training was generally followed by a career in the Church of England, Charles left school early due to a stammer and in 1791 found work at the East India Company, where he continued to work for 33 years (para. 2). His life was shaped by events that happened when he was still a young man. “On Thursday 22 September 1796 he came home from work to find that his sister Mary had stabbed their mother to death and wounded their father by embedding a fork in his head” (Wu, n.d., para. 4). Charles was partially traumatized by this tragic event and was thus, at the age of 21, bound to his sister for the remainder of his life. “He took her straight to the Islington Asylum, Fisher House, and saved her from permanent incarceration by agreeing in the future to look after her at home, which he did for the rest of his life” (para. 4). His life was forever changed by this tragedy, and yet, he still found success.

Charles began a career in writing early in his life and was successful from the beginning. While focusing on poetry at a young age, he later moved to other forms of writing. “While Lamb was an occasional journalist, a playwright (of small success), a writer for children, and a poet, it is his prose which has endured. He early realized that poetry was not his vocation; his best poetry was written in youth” (Courtney, n.d., para. 1). Charles found love several times, but it was later in life that he first met Fanny Kelly. “In 1818 Lamb published his early Works, and in 1819 he proposed to Fanny Kelly... She
refused him, confiding to a friend that she could not carry Mary's problems too” (para. 17). Because Charles was Mary’s sole caretaker, he remained single the rest of his life, devoting his life to his sister. After falling while taking a walk, Charles died of erysipelas in 1834 (para. 19). While Mary was the elder sibling and struggled with more health issues, Charles died much earlier than his sister.

Mary Lamb (1764–1847) was Charles’ older sister and also a writer. The second of three surviving children, Mary was not sent to school like her brothers; however, she did teach herself Latin, French, and Italian and read a great deal (Aaron, n.d., para. 1). While she did not attend a formal school, Mary was still greatly educated through her own means. Because Mary was 10 years older than Charles, she mothered him, and the two formed a close relationship (Courtney, n.d., para. 4). Charles and Mary remained close throughout their lifetimes. While living together, the two took on the role of their parents’ caretakers after both parents became unemployed (Aaron, n.d., para. 1). This put a strain emotionally and physically on both Charles and Mary, but especially on Mary being the eldest of the two. Working as a seamstress, “Mary was not only burdened with the financial responsibilities of the family but also with the care of a father rapidly sinking into senility and a mother, physically ailing, who required her daily and nightly attendance” (para. 2). It is no wonder that Mary was also emotionally burdened. “Under these conditions Mary's control suddenly snapped. She had previously suffered at least one attack of a mental illness which has been categorized by her twentieth-century biographers as a manic-depressive or bi-polar disorder” (para. 2). She lost control and let her disorder get the best of her. Mary, “during an episode in 1796, killed her mother with
a kitchen knife” (“Mary Lamb,” n.d., para.1). She did, however, have hope of a reduced punishment. “In 1796, persons found guilty of committing an act of manslaughter while mentally impaired were not required to suffer permanent incarceration provided that sufficient surety could be given that they would be taken care of as potentially unstable for the rest of their lives” (Aaron, n.d., para. 7). Because of their close relationship, Charles quickly came to the defense of his sister. “This pledge Charles gave for his sister, and the two lived together for the next thirty-eight years, their lives intermittently interrupted by recurring bouts of Mary's madness” (para. 7). After this tragic incident, Mary strove to maintain a balance in her life. “Kindness and understanding were qualities which according to all contemporary records Mary herself showed throughout her life” (para. 10). Mary’s graciousness is what drew people to her and far outweighed her episodes of madness, yet her illness was always present in her life. “Enduring within herself a double life, one passive and repressively self-restrained, the other, in its madness, self-expressive and active, Mary strove to distance her sane self as far as possible from the act which had destroyed her mother” (para. 15). This was an event Mary tried her best to forget because of its traumatic effects, but it was not something that she was ever able to escape. Her relationship with her brother, however, had a positive lasting effect on her life. “Despite her illness, the siblings developed a collaborative writing relationship and produced many well-known collections of poetry and prose for children, including Tales from Shakespeare (1807), Mrs. Leicester’s School (1809), and Poetry for Children (1809)” (“Mary Lamb,” n.d., para. 2). The two continued to live and work together, although life was not always easy. Charles and
Mary moved frequently because of Mary’s notorious reputation, but Charles continued to care for her until his death in 1834 (para. 3). In fact, Mary outlived her brother by thirteen years. She died in 1847, after being cared for by numerous family members and several stays in asylums (para. 3). Mary lived a long life filled with success; however, it was not always the happiest.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is perhaps one of the most well-known characters of the play. Born in 1772, Coleridge was the youngest of ten children born to Ann Bowdon Coleridge and John Coleridge (“Samuel Taylor Coleridge,” n.d., para. 3). Coleridge’s education proved important in the connections and relationships he made. “After his father died in 1781, Coleridge attended Christ’s Hospital School in London, where he met lifelong friend Charles Lamb” (“Poet: Samuel Taylor Coleridge,” n.d. para. 1). Coleridge’s career path was slightly different than that of Lamb. He had intentions of becoming a clergyman in the Church of England and enrolled in Jesus College at the University of Cambridge, only to change his path due to the people he met, including Robert Southey (para. 2-3). His time at Cambridge was formative and influenced many decisions moving forward. He and Southey made plans to move to America and set up a commune in Pennsylvania, but when Southey married and abandoned their plans to pursue a career in law, Coleridge never returned to Cambridge to finish his degree (para. 3-4). In the same year, several important events happened in his life. “Coleridge wed in 1795, in spite of the fact that he still loved Mary Evans, who was engaged to another man. Coleridge’s marriage was unhappy and he spent much of it apart from his wife” (para. 4). However, it was at this point when Coleridge began his flourishing writing
career. “In 1795 Coleridge befriended William Wordsworth, who greatly influenced Coleridge’s verse. Coleridge, whose early work was celebratory and conventional, began writing in a more natural style” (para. 5). This was one of the most important and influential relationships in his life and affected his future career. “Over the next two decades Coleridge lectured on literature and philosophy, wrote about religious and political theory, spent two years on the island of Malta...in an effort to overcome...his opium addiction, and lived off of financial donations and grants” (para. 6). Remaining addicted to opium, he continued to write until his death. Coleridge died in 1834, the same year as Charles (para. 6). His writing has remained admired long after his death.

After researching the play and its characters, the following step was to begin the costume design for this production. The design scheme for *The Coast of Illyria* is true to the Regency time period in which the play takes place. The clothing is realistic, reflecting the styles and silhouettes worn in England 1813. This meant tailcoats, cravats, vests, and trousers for the men and for the women dresses with higher cut waistlines that fall directly under the bust (or empire waistlines) with fuller skirts. The people in the Regency era were looking back at the clothing of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and this is especially reflected in the women’s clothing and the men’s hairstyles. My emphasis was on the style lines important to indicating the time period and using motifs that were popular at the time. My initial point of departure was with the painting *The Assuaging of the Waters* painted by John Martin in 1840.
This painting, created just a few decades after the time of this play, inspired me immediately. Being set in a coastal area with breaking waves upon a rocky cleft, I felt as though the painting had strong ties to the themes of the play. Not only is a seascape mentioned in the title of the play, but other elements fit in with certain ideas present in the play as well. The painting has an overall romantic, natural look to its style as well as color palette. The Romantic era, which was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that spanned from about 1800 to 1850, focused on embracing naturalism and classicism. I was inspired by the colors Martin used in this painting and translated them to color choices used in the costumes. The sun breaking through in the distance is reminiscent of the hope that Mary holds onto throughout the play, no matter how small
that hope may become. Martin also includes an attention-grabbing dichotomy between the white bird and black bird. Many of the other colors used in the painting are muted and soft, whereas the birds are placed in sharp contrast to their background. Lightness and darkness are present throughout the play in a number of areas. Both Charles and Coleridge cast a heavy cloud over those around them, especially Mary, due in part to their dependence on alcohol and drugs. Mary also struggles with her own inner demons, bringing a dichotomy of lightness and darkness within her own mind; she is the calm before the storm until she becomes the storm itself.

Charles is a part of the Romantic movement, yet he also works as a clerk, which his clothing choices reflect. He, as a character and a historical figure, dresses conservatively, a choice that is reflected in the colors and styles I have chosen for him, as well as to a certain extent, a portrait of him as seen in Figure 2.
This portrait reflects a conservative manner of dress in the cut of the tailcoat as well as the muted colors worn. The colors I chose to use in his palette, mostly greens and browns, complement his sister’s color palette of sea tones nicely, showing an important tie between them. His style is comparable to the other men in the play, using similar cuts in his tailcoat and fall front trousers – trousers that included a panel that buttoned up the front to the waist since this era was before the invention of the zipper. Charles, however, is one of the best put-together men present on stage until his mental decline in Act Three, although nothing about his costume is overly ostentatious or flashy. He mostly keeps his emotions in check, or at least subdued, and I wanted his clothing to be a reflection of his need for control and order. I chose subtle plaids and organic patterns within his color palette that coincide with these characteristics. This sense of order, however, is lost when
he believes he is losing everything, and his clothes become the least of his worries. To streamline the number of costumes, I choose to keep just one tailcoat for Charles that he is able to wear with two vests and two pairs of pants. This gives him versatility within his costumes without the need for a complete costume change within every act.

Mary’s costumes reflect her personality and character progression. I chose to reserve the palest colors for Mary, all of which express elements of the sea. Mary feels directly tied to the twins in Twelfth Night, who are shipwrecked, so I found it important to give her costumes a sense of lightness and airiness with colors that reflect the sea. However, she grounds herself with wearing the same sea green shawl throughout the play; it acts as a type of security blanket. As the play progresses, the colors Mary wears become paler to almost nonexistent. While she first enters in a warm, light-toned salmon colored dress, she finishes the play in a white dress, reminiscent of a hospital gown. As Mary’s lucidity slowly leaves her, it is as if the color is drained from her. While the colors of Mary’s costumes change, the cut of her clothing changes as well. Mary is one of the older women of the play, so her clothing reflects that. She is not fashion forward but wears simple and classic styles; she is not interested in heavily ornamented dresses but in tastefully placed trim. To show a variety of looks for Mary, she wears a different dress for each act in order to better depict her mental decline.

Fanny Kelly is a young actress who is concerned about appearances, which means her costumes greatly differ from those of Mary. While Mary wears more classically conservative styles, Fanny wears more up-to-date, fashion-forward styles. She wears lower cut, more colorful styles reflecting her youth and vivaciousness. I was inspired by
the colors of the sky in the research painting for Fanny’s color palette, mostly purples and pinks with hints of green, yellow, and white, giving a feminine appeal to her clothing. Many of her fabrics I chose to dress her in are soft floral prints. A portrait of Fanny Kelly herself also inspired me.

Figure 3. A portrait of Fanny Kelly

While many silhouettes and styles of Regency dresses were similar with high waists and long skirts, I chose to add a little more variety in Fanny’s dresses than Mary’s. I varied the necklines, skirts and sleeves to demonstrate Fanny’s adherence to fashion and also included much more trim and decoration. Being an actress, she is deeply concerned about her appearance, and she needs to best represent herself to the new people she is constantly meeting throughout the play. Everything about Fanny’s clothing suggests
femininity and youth. I also chose to give Fanny three separate dresses because both she and Mary are the female characters who spend the most time on stage.

Mrs. Kelly, Fanny’s mother who is an extreme stage mother, has a style similar to her daughter’s but a little more mature and ostentatious. She is highly concerned about presentation, and her clothing is no exception. I chose richer colors for her costume, focusing on gold, deep red, and dark green to emphasize her desires for a high social status and the need to present herself in the best of advantage. This is further accentuated by the large amounts of trim adorning her dress from neck to feet.

George Dyer is a middle-aged writer and translator who spontaneously began living with the Lambs a few months prior. He is striving to be as fashion-forward as possible but falling incredibly short. I chose to highlight this specifically in his clothing by giving him an older style than the other men because it adds to the comic nature of his character. He wears knee breeches, which were going out of style at the time, and white tights. This is paired with an older style coat and a bicorn hat. All of these clothing items were popular in the early years of the Regency period but were not fashionable in 1813 when this play is set. I looked to a portrait of Beau Brummel, a fashion icon of the early Regency period, as the main inspiration for Dyer’s costume because it would reflect Dyer’s idea of being fashionable but not quite meeting the mark.
The colors I chose for these items imitate his personality. He is warm and caring, although a bit forgetful, and so his clothing is rendered in warm earth tones, such as browns and reds with touches of greens. In order to limit the number of costume pieces for three acts, Dyer wears the same coat, shirt, and breeches for each act while trading out vests and cravats.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is a drug addict who has abandoned all family ties. While his career might have once been on a steady rise, he is now at his lowest point, and his clothing is the least of his worries. He is overall a mess and extremely unkempt. Although he might be wearing all the correct clothing pieces that would have been appropriate for a regency man, those pieces are not quite in order and perhaps not worn exactly how they should be. His clothing should look well-worn and lived in; perhaps these are clothes that might have been at one time nice and expensive but now are old and
tattered. Due to his declining mental state as well social status, I costumed Coleridge in much darker clothing, selecting the deeper tones of greens, blues, and browns. None of his clothing items are heavily patterned, and the texture of these fabrics is much rougher and worn. His costume changes are fewer to accentuate his meager financial means.

Becky is a maid and housekeeper who has been with the Lambs for years and, therefore, wears a uniform of sorts. Her dress is simple with very little decoration because it serves a utilitarian purpose; her style is all about functionality rather than fashion. Most of my research of maids in this time period depicted women wearing dresses in various iterations of lighter blue tones, and I chose to remain in this color palette for Becky’s costume.
The shade of blue present in Martin’s painting (Figure 1) of the sea complements Mary’s color palette, which forms a necessary connection between Becky and Mary. I paired this color with a striped fabric to further reinforce Becky’s utilitarian nature. Becky’s costume does not change at all throughout the course of the play because a costume change is not necessary and more appropriately fits the nature of the character.

Emma is a young teenage girl who has recently come to live with the Lambs after being orphaned, and because she is a teenage girl, she dresses much younger than the other women in the play. She wears simple clothing because she is not well-to-do, but she does wear a certain amount of decoration in her self-trimmed dresses with ruffles and tucks. The cut of her dress is much shorter to signify youth, which is paired with a pair of ruffled bloomers and lace-up flat shoes. She is very energetic and eager, and her clothing lends itself to those characteristics. Most of the fabrics used in Emma’s costumes are small-scale floral in creams, pinks, and rusts. Rather than wearing a different dress for each act, she wears the same dress for two acts, which is accessorized in different ways to add variety.

William Hazlitt is quite concerned with his appearance and therefore is one of the best-dressed people on the stage, certainly the best-dressed male. He is a poet and painter and somewhat of a philanderer. Because he is focused on his looks, I chose to dress him in streamlined, fashion-forward clothing. He wears riding boots, which were popular at the time, setting him apart from the other men who wear a flat dress shoe. I chose his color palette to include mostly grays, tans, and blacks, suggesting a sophisticated nature.
I was inspired by a portrait of William Hazlitt, who wears a dark coat with a simply tied cravat and looks quite dark and brooding.

Figure 6. Self portrait of William Hazlitt

He wears one tail coat and one pair of pants for Acts Two and Three with two vests and two cravats.

Thomas De Quincey, a 19 year-old writer and admirer of Charles Lamb, is the youngest male and therefore must look the part. His style is a little more relaxed than the other men, as evidenced by an open collar shirt and no cravat. This style was taken
directly from a portrait of a young man that inspired me for the design of De Quincey’s costume.

Figure 7. A Young Peasant Boy by Jean-Baptiste Greuze

The colors worn by this young man, blue and rust, are the colors I used in this costume as well. He is living on the streets, so he should look slightly destitute, but not at the same low level as Coleridge. Because of this quality, De Quincey wears the same costume throughout both acts in which he appears.
Chapter 3: Character Analysis

*The Coast of Illyria* takes place in the early nineteenth century in England as stated in the stage directions; Stokes chose 1813 to be the exact year. It is set in London in October in the home of Charles and Mary Lamb. Many of the characters, including the Lambs, are historical figures in British history, mostly poets and writers. When the play begins, Mary is about to return home after spending about three months in a psychiatric hospital.

At the time this play occurs, Charles Lamb is in his thirties; Stokes chose to place him at the age of 38, the age he was in 1813. He is a writer and seems to be fairly well off because he is able to afford artwork by William Hogarth, which is specifically referred to throughout the play. It is later revealed that Charles works as a clerk for the East India House in order to pay his debts and for Mary’s care. The East India House is the headquarters for the East India Company, which dealt with trading in India and southeast Asia.

Charles is warm and friendly and deeply cares for his sister Mary, so much so that he strives to make everything in the house as well as his love interest, Fanny Kelly, perfect upon Mary’s arrival. However, it is clear that he is hiding something. He does not seem to be completely honest and open about his life since Mary’s absence for fear that it might upset her. He has been known to drink, and yet, he seems to at least try to
hide this fact from Fanny as well. When any kind of hardship arises, Charles uses his drinking to cope and falls hard back into that habit as soon as Mary returns. However, it is almost as if he is able to snap out of this habit as soon he wants because once he receives the news of his forthcoming pension, his whole mood and demeanor changes; he is a brand new man who no longer needs to drink his sorrows away. This change is only skin deep though; he knows he is eternally bound to Mary. They are each co-dependent on the other, and Charles knows he can never truly be happy as long as Mary is alive.

“What a couple we are. She is her constant danger, driving me to this; I with my stinking drunkenness sending her quicker to her hells” (p. 88). This idea is further reinforced throughout the play. Because they both are afflicted by mental disorders, they, in turn, deeply affect the other’s happiness. “Our love for each other has condemned us both to an eternity of dual loneliness. I watch her suffer. I wish she were dead” (p. 89). Much of the relationship between Charles and Mary is expressed through Charles’ interactions with other characters. Through his relationship with Fanny, it is clear that he wants to start a new life for himself, away from his drinking and away from Mary’s influence on him. Conversely, it is revealed through the course of the play that he knows this is not a viable option for him. “I have spent so long seeing hope when there could be none. Hope that Mary might be cured. Hope that my writing would one day earn enough to purchase our safety. Hope of having the life of a man, not a brother” (p. 88). In the end, Charles knows that this hope is just that; a life away from Mary, a life that he could live on his own with Fanny, is not a reality.
Mary Lamb is slightly older than Charles. With Charles being 38 years old, Stokes chose to place Mary at 43 years old, tightening up the age distance between them. She is also a writer and is currently working on a compilation of Shakespeare adaptations with her brother. It is unclear how long this project has been in the works, especially since she has just returned from a stay at a psychiatric facility. She is in the same social class as her brother, but it does not seem as though she is able to support herself by any type of financial means and relies solely on the support of Charles.

Mary is calm and tries to maintain order throughout most of the play. She is concerned about others over herself and does not want to be a burden to anyone. As soon as she arrives back home, she is ready to begin work with Charles on their Shakespeare collection. While on the surface it might seem as though she is genuinely eager and excited to be able to write again, there could perhaps be a deeper need for Mary to keep busy. While she is working, she remains mostly calm and collected, although she seems a little bit obsessed over her work. She is friendly and welcoming to all who enter her home, especially Fanny and her mother. She needs to make a good impression on both of these women since they both surely know the news and/or rumors about Mary’s stay at a psychiatric facility. Many of Mary’s old friends come to visit as well, so she must assure them all that she is healthy as well as physically and mentally strong, as to not cause any concern. For most of the play, Mary does seem healthy or at least is good at putting on an act to appear healthy. However, her dependence on her brother and their work might be the only thing keeping her sane. She completely breaks down after Charles receives the news that he will receive a pension from the East India House; perhaps she realizes
that they will no longer be dependent on each other. Charles can now financially provide for himself and a future family, and perhaps Mary believes that he will no longer need her love to support him. With this money, maybe she believes that he will no longer need to write, or at least not with her, which would be another reason she might not feel needed. Despite these conjectures, it is clear that something inside of Mary snaps and the healthy, happy façade she once had is gone. Just as she fixates on her work, she finds other events to obsess over, such as an imagined trip to Cambridge she took with Charles and the murder of her mother. She has an obsessive nature, and that nature latches on to Charles as well. However, she is aware of her dependence on Charles and even acknowledges it as the play closes. She cannot be left alone without her brother, and she knows that the only way for Charles to live a happy life is if she dies first.

Fanny Kelly is an aspiring young actress in her early twenties; Stokes chose the age of 23, placing her exactly 20 years younger than Mary. The script describes her as elegant and poised. Due to her graceful nature, she is a peacekeeper; she wants things to be just so in order to make the best impression. Fanny needs to please everyone, but she is eventually torn between her family and her love for Charles. Although it is revealed later that she was not brought up with the best of means, she has high expectations for herself and the man she plans to marry. Upon the introduction of her mother, it is clear that these standards were instilled into her by a mother who is very conscious of social standing. It seems as though even though she is willing to marry Charles despite the rumors of his drunken behavior, there is still a part of her that greatly looks down on him for that aspect of his life. Fanny strikes me as little flighty. She is eager to please
Charles and his sister, but as soon as the situation takes a turn for the worse, she leaves him to please her mother. Once things begin to look better for Charles, she immediately is willing to start a life with him again.

Mrs. Kelly is in her late forties and a definite social climber. The script describes her as a stage mother to the extreme, which is made evident by her actions in the limited time she is on stage. She is very overprotective of her daughter, but it is clear that she would also do anything for Fanny. Fanny discusses in the script that her father was a drunk who left them and her mother had to raise her on her own. While it might seem a little ridiculous that Mrs. Kelly will not allow her daughter to be involved with the man that she loves, it is more understandable why she has the standards to which she holds herself and Fanny. Since Mrs. Kelly herself was married to an alcoholic who wasted all their money, it would make sense that she would not want the same fate for her daughter. Because of her own societal climbing, Mrs. Kelly is aware of status and looks down on those who she believes are beneath her, especially writers. Despite her obvious disapproval of lower social statuses, she herself is not of the upper classes. She has had to work for what she has now without a husband to support her. In the Regency time period, it would have been difficult for a woman to support herself and a child, but it is clear that Mrs. Kelly has been successful.

George Dyer is described as a small, unkempt, kind man in his sixties. However, in casting this role, some of these descriptors have changed. Stokes chose an actor who is stocky and tall, and she placed him at 45 years old. His unkemptness also manifested itself in its his mannerism rather than his clothing. Overall, this does not make much
difference in how the character itself is portrayed. Physically, Dyer is an ever-present character; however, he is not always present in the conversation. He speaks when necessary, although that might just be when he is actually aware of the conversation happening. He seems a little absent-minded but is quite good-hearted. When the other characters describe him, it is learned that he is also a writer and he came to the Lambs’ house for breakfast in May and never left; this speaks to his character a good deal. He must be agreeable enough for the Lambs to tolerate his presence in their home, but his prolonged stay also shows that he must be able to make himself comfortable wherever he is. Dyer describes himself as a “slave of fashion,” yet, being middle-aged, I considered that a contradiction to what the character actually wears. He might think that he is following the latest fashion trends, but he falls a little short, which makes that line more comedic. Consistent with that, Dyer seems to be the comic relief of the play.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, or Coleridge as he is referred to in the play, is 38 years old and a renowned poet. The script describes him as “not handsome, but arresting,” “haggard,” and “jittery.” Despite his work being famous, his reputation is notorious. Coleridge is addicted to laudanum, an opium-based painkiller popular in this era. Because of his addiction, his clothing is unkempt and unattended. He is constantly disheveled and has no respect for his appearance. He has abandoned his wife and child and seems to have no regrets to cutting all ties to his family. Coleridge’s closest friends are Charles and Mary, and he is thrilled for Mary’s return. While he loves Mary, he is ultimately selfish and mostly focuses on how Mary can help him. Every little problem is a dramatic crisis for him. Along with these characteristics, Coleridge is exuberant and is
easily excited about the smallest of triumphs. He lives life to the fullest, even if that is with the assistance of laudanum.

Becky is “a bristling maid, too long in the service of the Lambs.” However she is much more than a housekeeper, but Becky appoints herself as the overall peacekeeper in the Lamb household. She is 35 years old and single with no family. It seems as though she feels fulfilled in her household duties because it gives her purpose. Becky continually keeps everything running smoothly and needs all aspects of the house to be precise at all times. She will not allow for laziness or ineptness. She imposes herself as the moral compass of the family and those who associate themselves with the Lambs. Becky makes it abundantly clear that she does not approve of Charles’ choice of Fanny because perhaps Fanny is only interested in Charles for his fame or infamy. Becky is protective of her family and does not approve of the company they choose to keep. Even though her intentions might be misplaced, it is clear that her primary concern is for the Lamb family.

Emma Isola is a 14-year-old girl who has been taken as a ward by Mary Lamb. She was orphaned, and Mary took pity on her and brought her into her home. Emma is “endearing in every way.” She is sweet and innocent and perhaps a little absent-minded. Becky is constantly reminding her to help with the housework. Emma does not speak much in the play, but when she does it is to express her excitement about meeting famous writers and to ask for their signatures in her book. She brings youth and life to even the darker situations.
William Hazlitt is 38 years old and “has been spared a great many of the hardships of life.” He has also abandoned his wife because he pursues his passions, no matter how carnal. He is a writer and a painter, who was quite prolific at both. Hazlitt is completely focused on his appearance, and therefore, dresses much better than the other men and appears conceited. He is quite disconcerted when he is splashed with mud. Hazlitt is passionate and transfers that passion to all of his interactions.

Thomas De Quincey is 19 and a lover of the writings of Charles Lamb. He seems to have followed in his mentor’s steps because he is described as “emaciated, drug addled, and luminous.” He comes from a well-to-do family and has chosen to live a life on the streets. Mrs. Kelly calls him a beggar when he first enters in Act Two, so he clearly does not look well put together.
Chapter 4: The Process

Once my preliminary designs were presented on November 30, 2015, my next step was to further refine and define those designs. Overall, the designs did not change much in the almost two months between preliminary and final designs. I mostly refined each character and further defined each one’s color palette.

Over winter break, I further developed each sketch and began painting. My goal was to have much of my painting done over the break, but I became very hesitant in putting paint to paper because I felt as though many of my designs were still very uncertain. I had an idea of the pieces the costume studio would build, but other than that I did not know exactly what each of the other costume pieces would look like because I planned to rent many of the other items to fill in the gaps. At the time, I was in the process of requesting information from several rental houses and theatres, so I was unsure of what pieces I would be renting from where. I wanted my paper designs to reflect the actual designs seen on stage as closely as they could but I did not know yet what all of the pieces would look like yet, which gave me reservations in my painting process because painting felt so final. However, I gained my confidence once the semester started through discussions with the director and the costume studio manager and through further research and sourcing. Therefore, I made great progress moving toward the final designs, confident that the aspects of the design began falling into place.
We had a design refinement meeting on January 11, 2016, and I provided research for outerwear along with the preliminary designs. I did find out at this meeting that role of Emma was being recast, but the actress who was chosen was similar enough in size that this did not cause any changes in the course of finishing designs. Following this meeting, Stokes and I met privately to thoroughly discuss specific characters. Several major changes ensued. We met for about an hour and worked through the whole script, making sure we were both in agreement as to what everyone should wear when and how they should look wearing it. Since most of the characters come in from outside throughout the play, I had originally researched and designed outerwear and hats for all of those characters, as stated previously. This included Fanny and Mrs. Kelly, however, Stokes envisioned the staging occurring in a manner that the audience would never see the women in their outerwear and bonnets because they would remove them in a receiving room, not the drawing room in which the place takes place. While the styles of women’s coats and hats were very intricate and interesting and could have added more layers to these female characters, not having to source or build these items saved me and the costume studio time and money. We also discussed options for Mary’s Act One costume because she mentions needing to change out of the heavy gown she is wearing. Having already designed three costumes for Mary, I did not think it was necessary to add another in Act One. During my research, I discovered an image of an over gown or overdress that was popular for women during the Regency time period. I suggested that perhaps Mary could enter wearing an overdress over the dress I had already designed for Act One that would be of a heavier fabric and could be easily removed. Stokes and I
both agreed that this would be a perfect solution Mary’s line in the script without giving her a complete costume change within the same act. Another discussion we had was concerning Fanny’s costumes. Stokes mentioned that in Act One Fanny is off to rehearsal and therefore would not necessarily be wearing her best clothes. I had originally for Fanny a short-sleeved dress with rows of trim at the bottom for Act One and a much simpler and slightly more casual dress with longer sleeves and a fichu, which is a half-circular or triangular neck scarf, for Act Two. Stokes and I decided it would be best to switch these two dresses, making the more casual dress her rehearsal dress and the more heavily trimmed dress the dress she wears when her mother meets the Lambs. We discussed further what the physical state of some of the characters should be like at different points in the play, which helped me further define specifically how Coleridge and Charles would appear at the different states of their separate declines. These few changes and further refinements, however, were the only substantial ones that occurred between the presentations of preliminary and final designs.

While working towards final designs, I began sourcing items to give me a better idea of specifically what items were coming from where. Before the end of the autumn semester, I met with Rebecca Turk, Costume Studio Manager, to discuss builds for the production. Because the department has very few costume pieces from the Regency time period, we were able to have a slightly larger build list in order to add to our stock, and the production schedule for the semester allowed for time to spend on those builds. At that point, the list included: Mary’s Act Three dress, Fanny’s Act One dress (now Act Two dress) with a matching spencer, a women’s cropped jacket, to be worn throughout
the show, three pairs of fall front trousers, three men’s shirts, two vests for Charles, a tailcoat for Charles, and various accessories. I discovered through initial sourcing that the production might be better benefitted with a slightly different build list. The dresses I originally thought I wanted built by the studio I had now discovered that I could find rental options that would work just as well. Kristine Kearney, my advisor, found fall front trousers through an online vendor, Gentleman’s Emporium, which specializes in historical men’s and women’s clothing. My discussion with Stokes also influenced a decision in regard to the build list because it made more sense to me to build Mary’s Act One dress and an overdress to coordinate with it rather than trying to piece together rental options for a complete costume. In a follow-up discussion with Turk, we finalized a build list that now included Mary’s Act One dress and overdress, Fanny’s Act Three dress, three men’s shirts, two vests for Charles, a tailcoat for Charles, and a turban for Mrs. Kelly.

As I briefly mentioned, purchasing and renting costumes became the main source for the costumes for this production due to the smaller amount of stock items that the department owns for this time period. Before my preliminary designs were due, I began searching through our costume stock, with the help of Turk, to pull anything that could possibly work within the world of my designs. In order to have a better idea of what additional pieces I still needed to find sources for, we scheduled fittings for actors for which I had pulled options during the second week of the semester, which was before final designs were due. This process was extremely helpful in moving forward with rental searching and purchasing. In the stock of costumes, the Department of Theatre has
three pairs of fall front trousers in stock, and I was able to use two out of the three for Coleridge and De Quincey, both for whom I was able to pull shirts for as well. I was also able to find a couple coat options for Coleridge and Hazlitt and vest options for Coleridge, Dyer, and Hazlitt. I was slightly less successful with the women but was able to find options for Fanny’s Act Two dress and Mrs. Kelly’s dress. Both of these dresses were the inspirations my renderings, with the addition of trim.

With these options in mind, I was able to move forward in pursuing rental options and then further filling in with purchased items. Having been involved in several productions in the past that used quite a few rental packages, I was already familiar with a few rental companies, but Turk provided me with further options. The company I had the most interest in was Oregon Shakespeare Festival because of their extensive stock, all of which is online for perusal. I began my search within their stock early on in my design process and found quite a few feasible options but did run into some roadblocks with not finding costumes in the styles and sizes I needed and quite a few of their Regency pieces being unavailable until November 2016. Turk recommended the Guthrie Theatre’s costume rental company to check with as well, so I did some research into their stock and contacted them for further information early in January. After finishing preliminary fittings with the items I pulled from stock, I sent information to Costume Rentals at the Guthrie Theatre that included actors’ measurements, specific pieces I was looking for, and research and sketches. Their staff then pulled pieces from their stock based on this information and compiled a list of items, most of which included pictures for me to peruse. I was given five business days to contact them with a decision of which pieces I
would like to rent. Costume Rentals was able to provide mostly menswear, although they
did have a limited number of options for women as well. I was able to choose several
options for Coleridge, De Quincey, Dyer, and Hazlitt but did not choose anything for the
women because the options were not viable with my designs. These items were shipped
and arrived on February 19, 2016, and we scheduled fittings for seven of the ten cast
members for the following week.

Additional options for rentals were regional theatres within the state of Ohio as
well as Otterbein University, with whom we have a borrowing policy. Kearney
suggested contacting both Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Cleveland Playhouse
because she has worked with both companies and knows their costume stock. Having
previously designed for Cleveland Playhouse a production of *Emma*, which also takes
place in the regency time period, Kearney was familiar with several items that would be
feasible options for my design and would be available to rent. I contacted both theatres
but did not receive any correspondence following; this is partially because both theatres’
websites had very little contact information. Kearney then emailed both costume shop
managers directly and made contact with both of them. We pursued a rental at Cleveland
Playhouse, and I set up a date and time with Jeffrey Van Curtis, the costume shop
manager, to visit their costume shop and look through their stock. The Cleveland
Playhouse costume shop allowed designers to visit stock on Mondays and Fridays, and
Friday worked best with everyone’s schedule. Kearney hoped to include Sarah Fickling,
third year MFA in costume design, and Sierra Johnson, first year MFA in costume
design, in the excursion as well, so we chose Friday, February 19, 2016, which was after
A Midsummer Night’s Dream had finished its run at the Lincoln Theatre and things had slowed down a bit in the costume studio.

In the past, I have had the experience of looking through costume stock of different theatres and choosing items based on my designs, but this was probably the most pleasant and organized experience to date. We arrived late morning at the Cleveland Playhouse costume shop, and Curtis immediately gave us a tour of the facilities and pointed in the direction of the sections of stock that would be most applicable. The costume stock at Cleveland Playhouse is extensive, well-organized, and well-lit, making it easy to search. Both Fickling and Johnson assisted me in hanging pieces together and taking notes, which made the process smooth and efficient. I primarily looked for women’s clothing since Costume Rentals at the Guthrie Theatre was able to provide only menswear; however I did look through their men’s stock as well to allow for further options in case the rental pieces coming from the Guthrie were not viable. The female characters I focused on were Fanny and Mary, but I did find some great options for Mrs. Kelly as well that would not require much alteration or additions at all. In my searching, I had been unable to find a dress that would be similar enough to my design for Mary’s Act Three dress, and that was my foremost goal in looking through the stock at Cleveland Playhouse. I did not find any options, but I was able to choose three dresses that all had potential for Fanny’s Act Two dress, which would save time and money to alter the dress I had planned to use from our own stock. We ultimately left with dresses for Fanny and Mrs. Kelly, vests for Coleridge, Dyer, and Hazlitt, an overcoat for Hazlitt, a robe for Charles, a coat and breeches for Dyer, and several period-
appropriate corsets for the women. All of these items were also fitted in the following week along with the rental items from Costume Rentals. Overall this was an enjoyable experience, and it was great to see what other theatres in Ohio are doing and make connections with other costume technicians.

In addition to rentals, I also needed to supplement existing clothing with purchased items; this was an excellent way to customize more items to what I had designed as well as add to our stock without the stress of building every costume piece. Turk suggested a few online options, one of them being Etsy. Etsy is an online marketplace that allows individual vendors to sell handmade or vintage items. Having purchased through Etsy several times previously, I was comfortable doing so also knowing that they do not charge tax, since OSU is an educational institution that requires all purchases to be tax exempt. Through many Etsy vendors functioning as costume makers, I located sources for several of the dresses needed for the production; the biggest challenge I faced was choosing which vendor I should use for which costume item. I also encountered the problem of manufacturing time frames fitting within our production schedule. Several costume makers need up to eight weeks to complete a build depending on their order schedule, which did not fit well with our needs. My final decisions were made for various reasons. One vendor, Historical Designs, was able to produce a readymade vest for Dyer, a readymade dress for Emma and a custom order dress for Emma, which meant most of Emma’s costume pieces being taken care of by one vendor. A second vendor I used, The Modest Maiden, allowed me to choose fabric for Becky’s dress in order to make the dress as close to my design as possible. Charlene, the owner of
The Modest Maiden, was communicative and extremely helpful, taking my research and applying it to the order, offering to make a fichu to coordinate with it as well. For Mary’s Act Two dress, I found a vendor, It’s Not Pajamas, who had a dress similar to what I had designed, but there were enough differences that I contacted Jennifer Spaulding, the owner, to see if further customization was a possibility. She was more than willing to add further customization in lengthening the three-quarter sleeves to full length, removing a ruffle, and giving me further options for fabric to more closely match the color of my rendering. In doing this, she was able to supply a fabric that was exceptionally similar to my design, so once it arrived all we would have to do would be to add trim. The fourth vendor I used on Etsy, Heritage Dressmakers, was one that I found while finishing my designs and actually based the design for Fanny’s Act Two dress on this dress from their inventory. Unlike some of the other dresses I purchased, this one was merely a base, which would need added trim and other accessories. Between these purchases, the rental items, and our own stock, I had covered almost every major costume piece, which was due in the costume studio by February 22, 2016. The exception to this, however, was still Mary’s Act Three dress.

I began sourcing accessories, such as hats, and shoes early in February, yet these purchases were not made until after fittings had occurred, more concrete rental choices had been made, and fabrics had been chosen. Every male character in the cast, except Charles, needed a hat because they all enter from outside, and unlike the women, wear their outerwear into the drawing room area, which is the main playing space on the stage. Through extensive online searching, I sourced hats for all four men through a variety of
online stores. The majority of the hats that were required could be purchased from Gentleman’s Emporium. I had previously purchased fall front trousers from this company and was happy with the products, so I was willing to make another purchase from them. The one hat I had difficulty finding was a bicorn for Dyer. Most options I found would work well for a Halloween costume but were not high enough quality for a theatrical production. Through further searching, I was able to locate a few sources with decent quality hats that could be tweaked to fit more to my needs for the character of Dyer. Fortunately I was able to pull shoe options for every character except Fanny. Luckily I was able to find several options for shoes for her, all of which were lace-up ballet flats. Through my research, I discovered that women primarily wore flat shoes, and during the time in which the play takes place pointed toes and laces were popular. Fortunately, this is a style that is currently popular; however, I ran into quite a few problems in actually purchasing a pair. I had several options: Charlotte Russe, Macy’s, and Zappos, all of which had issues with tax exempt purchases. Through trips to the store, phone calls, and online chats, my best option came by the way of Amazon, with whom we already have a tax exempt account. The shoes I found through Amazon were not my first choice but became my best choice.

Choosing fabric for this production is probably the easiest process I have experienced in my costume design career thus far. At the end of the autumn semester, the costume studio received several fabric donations, which needed to be organized and added to our stock, and through this task, I fell in love with one fabric in particular. It is a beautiful pale, creamy yellow linen blend with warm purple flowers and a design
reminiscent of Chinese motifs; this fabric also has excellent soft drape that would lend itself well to the styles of the Regency era. Stokes mentioned the use of Chinese inspirations, and this fabric was an inspiration for Fanny’s color palette and partially her design as well. Because there was a little less than three yards of this fabric, my initial plan was to make a spencer jacket (see Figure 8), which then presented the challenge of finding three dresses that would all coordinate with that fabric.

Figure 8. Green silk self-striped spencer: 19th century from the Museum of London

However, since a spencer was taken off the build list, I was determined to find another use for this textile. As I completed painting my renderings, I was inspired by this fabric yet again and discovered a perfect use within this production – the underskirt for Fanny’s Act Three dress, which was being built. To coordinate with this dress, I designed a purple bodice and overskirt for the main body of the dress that would coordinate nicely to
the purple flowers and a green trim to pick up on the green leaves. My first fabric shopping trip was to purchase fabric for the three men’s shirts being built, which were for Charles, Dyer, and Hazlitt. While at two different Jo-Ann Fabrics stores, I also perused the selection of fabrics for Fanny’s and Mary’s dresses. While unsuccessful in choosing a fabric for Mary, I did find a couple of options for Fanny’s dress. I focused mostly on different shades of purple textiles and found one fabric that I thought could work but was not my first option. While searching, I came across a green floral that would look beautiful with the yellow floral I had already chosen. I purchased both fabrics because I had been set on using a purple but knew that the green floral would coordinate well and look more period accurate. The green was chosen, and a gold trim that coordinated with the fabric for the underskirt was used instead.

My second round of fabric shopping came during the week of February 14, 2016. All of my fabric needed to be in the costume studio by the following Monday, so I had to make some decisions for Mary’s Act One costume. While I did not find any options in the couple Jo-Ann Fabrics locations I had previously visited, I went back out with fresh eyes to a different location. I found a fabric for the dress and overdress that coordinated extremely well together, even though neither was exactly what I had been looking for previously; they were, however, the weights of fabric I needed for both pieces. The brocade chosen for the overdress was very reminiscent of Chinese and eastern designs, tying back again to Stokes’ concept.

While reorganizing our fabric stock, I was made further aware of the wonderful fabrics we already had. I chose a plaid fabric for one of Charles’ vests from the donation
we received and found a beautiful brocade in our stock, both of which fit well within his green and brown color scheme. For his tailcoat, I was also able to choose a lovely forest green wool from our wide-ranging stock of wools, and we also had linings in stock as well. The only purchase I had to make for Charles’ builds was vest lining and buttons, all of which I was easily able to find at Jo-Ann Fabrics.

Costume construction began the week of February 7, 2016, first with the men’s shirts. We did not plan on making mock-ups but rather start with the actual shirt and make alterations as necessary. The construction of all three shirts continued into the following week, and the shirts were ready to fit by the end of the week. Construction began on mock-ups for Mary’s dress and Fanny’s dress the week of February 14 with the goal of mock-up fittings the following week. Builds for this production were assigned slightly differently than other productions that go through our costume studio in that I, as the designer, was also assigned two builds. This is unusual, but because of the light work load for the previous two productions during the spring semester it was more feasible. I built Hazlitt’s shirt because all three graduate students were assigned a shirt, and I built Charles’ tailcoat because I requested a tailoring project to gain more knowledge and experience in that area of construction. After getting Hazlitt’s shirt ready to fit, I began work on Charles’ coat, which started with tracing the commercial sewing pattern I purchased from Laughing Moon Mercantile, a company that specializes in historical sewing patterns. Even this early in the process, I discovered the difficulties of being a designer who is also building for the production. I expected tracing to take a longer amount of time due to the large number of detailed and complicated pattern pieces, but I
did not realize just how long it might take. Because I had two fittings that week, I also had a certain amount of things to coordinate before and after each fitting to make sure progress continued and work flowed smoothly, which included preparing projects for other graduate students to work on and pulling each necessary costume item for each fitting. I also worked with our practicum students on projects that came out of the fittings such as labeling and changing buttons. Since mock-ups were also started this week, there was a certain amount of communication that had to occur between the drapers and stitchers and me. All of these things pulled me away from my own construction project and limited the amount of time I had to focus on moving forward. The other builds, however, moved forward at a good pace and stayed on schedule according to our calendar and fittings.

Fittings began the week of February 14, 2016, a week ahead of our original schedule. In that week, we fit the actors playing Emma and Hazlitt. Both fittings went well, and we were able to move forward, looking to do minor alterations for both actors. The week of February 21, 2016 was heavily scheduled with fittings because we were under certain time restraints to return unused rental items as to not be charged for them and also needed to be able to fit mock-ups and move forward on builds. Seven out of the ten actors were scheduled for fittings, most of them an hour long because the amount of pieces we needed to fit.

While it was a busy week, every fitting ran smoothly, most finishing ahead of schedule. The schedule began with several of the male actors playing Coleridge, Dyer, and De Quincey, all of whom had rental pieces to be fit. I received five options of vests
for the actor playing Coleridge all being in various stages of wornness. Having
previously fit a tailcoat, a shirt, and a pair of pants on this actor, the focus of the fitting
was finding two to three vest options as well a pair of shoes that would fit and display the
character well. All five vests were rentals, two being from Costume Rentals at the
Guthrie Theatre and three being from Cleveland Playhouse. Because all of the vests fit
Lara acceptably well, the decision of which vests to use came down to which colors
would work best and fit my design. The first decision was easiest because the Guthrie
included a dark purple vest patterned with elephants. I knew that this would be the
perfect choice to put Lara in for Act One because his character quotes his newly written
poem, “Kubla Khan,” which refers to the Oriental themes mentioned in the director’s
concept. While the elephant pattern might not be visible to all audience members, the
overall pattern is organic and lends itself to Coleridge’s ever-changing nature. Stokes
agreed with this choice of this vest as well as a second vest in a lighter tone with added
sheen. This second vest was the first choice for Act Two because the distressing
necessary for the character would be more visible on a lighter-toned fabric. The actor
playing Dyer was also fit that same day. Because he is a larger man, I was unable to pull
any pieces from our stock for his costume, so I rented options from both Costume Rentals
at the Guthrie Theatre and Cleveland Playhouse. My initial plan was to use a dark brown
tailcoat and breeches from Costume Rentals and had only pulled options from Cleveland
Playhouse as backups. However, through the fitting process, I discovered that all of the
rental items from Costume Rentals, which included the tailcoat, breeches, and a vest,
were not feasible due to fit and condition, and I decided to use a tailcoat, breeches, and
vest from Cleveland Playhouse and a vest from our stock in addition to the vest I purchased. Stokes also visited the costume studio after fittings were finished to discuss the options each actor had tried on and to see other options in person.

The following day we continued fittings with the actors playing De Quincey and Fanny. The actor playing De Quincey had very few items to try on because his character only has one costume for both acts he appears in, and these pieces were pulled from our stock and rented from Costume Rentals. He is smaller in stature, making it difficult to find clothing to fit. Fortunately, the coat and vest rented from Costume Rentals fit well and coordinated with the shirt and pants I pulled from our stock. The fitting for the actress playing Fanny ran equally as smoothly, with three rental dresses as Act Two options, a mockup for her Act Three dress, and a wig. My first option for Act Two was the best fitting and my top choice; however, it did require a certain amount of alterations at the side seams to take in the bust. The mockup fit exceptionally, with only minor adjustments needed to the style lines. The wig also fit and worked well with the hairstyle I designed therefore merely needed to be styled.

The remainder of fittings for the week continued to run smoothly and quickly. The schedule finished with the actresses playing Mary and Mrs. Kelly, on Thursday, February 25 and the actor playing Charles, on Friday, February 26. The fitting for the actress playing Mary was originally scheduled as a mockup fitting for her Act One dress and overdress. However it was scheduled at a time that Graduate Teaching Associate Sierra Johnson, who was draping and building the costume, was unavailable. Rather than cancel the fitting, we fit undergarments and wigs and scheduled a fitting for the following
week to fit her mockup. I pulled three wig options, one made of human hair and two that were synthetic. My first choice was the one made of human hair because it was naturally curly and would be a nice, classic look for Mary, and this wig also happened to be the best fit and style for the actress. While we had a costume option for the actress playing Mrs. Kelly that I pulled from our stock, I had also rented a couple options from Cleveland Playhouse that were close in style to what I envisioned and would require fewer alterations and additions of trim. A floor-length green jacket accompanied the first option, a long sleeve dress made of embroidered rust-colored fabric, with jeweled brooches ornamented both. I pulled a deep red turban from our stock to coordinate with Mrs. Kelly’s costume, which she tried on with both dresses. The second dress, made of gold sari border print fabric, also coordinated with the green jacket and turban, and the actress felt more comfortable in this dress because it was more lightweight and allowed for more movement. I believed both dresses were viable options and waited to receive feedback from Stokes. The last fitting of the week was for purchased trousers, a built shirt, and a tailcoat mockup for Charles. This fitting was a nice end to a busy week of fittings. Very few alterations needed to be made to any of the items, and the builds proceeded after this fitting. With Kearney in the fitting as well, we decided that it would be best to go up a size in the pattern for this tailcoat in order to accommodate for space taken up when the actual coat would be made out of wool and have padding and lining instead of being merely a muslin mockup. This would give the actor more moving and breathing room. Slight alterations to make adjustments in length were also required. While a mockup for the coat was ready for the fitting, neither built vest had been started
yet, so I borrowed a rental vest for fitting purposes that was an option intended for Hazlitt. However, the vest fit the actor playing Charles so well and worked within his color scheme, that I made the decision to use that in Act One and only his Act Two vest would be built.

Another change was made to the build list during this week as well. As previously mentioned, I had been unable to procure a dress for Act Three for Mary. When work was resumed on Monday after the weekend, Kearney and Turk made the decision to build this dress as well. Since Johnson was already building a dress for Mary, the proposal was to adapt the pattern created, making less work in the long run. However, this meant making a fabric decision quickly and then making a purchase that same night. Opportunely, I had just purchased the rest of the fabric required the day before and still had enough money on that purchase request to purchase fabric and notions needed to build the Act Three dress. It was decided that since Johnson was building a dress and overdress for Mary that Graduate Teaching Associate Sarah Fickling would build the second dress based on Johnson’s pattern.

Because of the hectic fitting schedule, I was only able to find pockets of time to progress on the tailcoat mockup I had started for Meyer. Since it was only a mockup, only the shell of the coat was required, which made cutting and sewing much quicker. While the pattern I chose was thorough and extensive, I discovered that the directions included were not always as clear and concise as needed, which in some cases held me up in the process. Because I had never made any kind of men’s coat prior to this, there was a bit of trial and error in the process as well as examining similar regency tailcoats from
our stock. Moving forward after the fitting, I needed to alter the pattern to provide better fit of the tailcoat on the actor. All of these alterations were minor but took time, which was also added to finishing a shirt I was building for the actor playing Hazlitt. A second fitting for the actor playing Charles was scheduled for the Friday, March 4, and Kearney and I made the decision to move forward in fashion fabric, the cashmere wool that the actual costume piece would be made of, rather than constructing another muslin mockup. By the middle of the week, I had mostly finished shirt for Hazlitt, but I had not made as much progress on the tailcoat for Charles as was necessary. I had altered the pattern but still needed to cut it out and assemble it the next day. This fitting was moved to following week and went incredibly smoothly, allowing me to move forward in finishing the coat in the remaining weeks before dress rehearsals began.

While the previous week was filled with fittings with most of the actors, the week of February 29 had very few fittings. We began mockup fitting for Mary’s Act One dress and overdress on Monday. This mockup did not fit as well as desired, but overall both the dress and overdress flattered the actress and had the styles lines and designs that Johnson and I had previously discussed. Because this actress carries a little more weight in her upper body, the sleeves of the dress did not fit properly, and it was decided that it would be best to do another mockup of the sleeves while proceeding with fashion fabric for the body of the dress and overdress. The actor playing Hazlitt was scheduled for a second fitting in order to fit rental options because unused items needed to be returned at the beginning of the following week. His trousers and a vest had been altered, and I had rented a tailcoat and overcoat from Costume Rentals and a vest and overcoat from
Cleveland Playhouse. The vest from our stock that had been altered, which was to be used in Act Two, was no longer an option because it was now too short. I had two other vest options, one from our stock and one from Cleveland Playhouse, and while I had only planned on using one, I had now hoped that they would both work. Fortunately, they both fit, and I pulled cravats to coordinate with both. The other rental items where a bit more challenging. The mint green overcoat from Cleveland Playhouse that was my first choice for Erickson was much too large for him, so I was given no choice but to use to black overcoat from Costume Rentals. I had not wanted to use much black at all in this production, but sometimes it becomes necessary to make concessions. I had also hoped to use a dark navy tailcoat from Costume Rentals because it was closest to what I had rendered for the character of Hazlitt; however, it was too small. I reverted to the back-up tailcoat I had pulled from our stock, which fit this actor well but did need some work to make it look more pristine.

While all of my main costume purchases were made a couple weeks prior, all accessories and wigs were due by March 4. During this week, I pushed to make final decisions and purchases earlier rather than later. A few weeks prior I sourced hats for all of the men and was able to purchase most of them from Gentleman’s Emporium, where I had purchased the fall-front trousers, and I also purchased eyeglasses for Dyer, Mary, and Charles from this same company. Turk helped me source the bicorn for Dyer, which came from a company titled Hatcrafters, who hand makes most of their hats for each order. These hats, as well as previously altered costumes pieces, were fit the week after spring break.
In the week following spring break, final fittings were scheduled for most of the actors, with the remainder being scheduled for the following week. In these fittings, the actors tried on any pieces that were altered to assess fit as well as any accessories that I had pulled or purchased to coordinate with each costume, such as cravats, hats, jewelry, watches, and glasses; the goal was to see final looks for each character.

As previously mentioned, I had ordered a dress through Etsy for the actress playing Mary that was scheduled to arrive at the end of February. However, through mishaps such as issues with fabric and lost packages, I did not receive it until March 14. This dress and Mary’s other two dresses were fit, all of which were moving toward being finished. Even though this dress from Etsy was made according to the actress’s measurements, it did not fit quite right, causing alterations to be made to the shape of the skirt in order to be more flattering. While this alteration was achievable, the dress became too short, and I had to devise a plan to accommodate for this unexpected alteration.

Through conversations with Turk, it was decided that I would purchase fabric that would closely match so that an extension to the hem could be added. When shopping for fabric at Jo-Ann Fabrics, I located the exact fabric used to construct this dress, making an extension much more seamless than previously anticipated.

Other unexpected problems arose with the other custom dresses I had ordered from other vendors on Etsy. As I mentioned, I purchased custom dresses for the actresses playing Emma and Becky. When fitting the dress on the actress playing Emma, I discovered that this custom dress was much too small through the back of the bodice, causing limited mobility. This was unfortunate since the dress was made according to
her measurements, but luckily, I had already planned to hem the dress from its full length to a mid-calf length, giving the costume studio ample fabric to add extension panels for a better fit. The dress ordered for the actress playing Becky also contained a certain amount of surprises. I also received this dress much later than anticipated, causing her fitting to be moved to the following week. When the dress did arrive, the color was not what I had expected. When choosing the fabric through looking at pictures on a computer screen, I thought I was picking a cotton fabric with cornflower blue and rust stripes; however, the fabric was much different than what I had seen on my screen and was actually a light blue and light pink. While a lovely color combination, it did not fit for what I had envisioned for the character or the dramatic nature of the play. Turk was able to dye the dress slightly in order to tone down these brighter colors, giving a look much closer to what I had rendered. So while these dresses all brought their own issues, through the work of the costume studio, each dress was made to work much better with my design for the production.

In the week leading up to the first dress rehearsal on April 6, I had several projects that I needed to complete in order to make sure each actor had each costume piece necessary and that each costume piece was as complete as possible. While there was still a week in between first dress and the first performance of the production, I travelled to Brooklyn with the Department of Theatre immediately following the first dress rehearsal, leaving me no time to complete any other projects over that weekend. I strove to make each detail was in order and that all costumes were as complete as possible. One of those projects included painting the fabric of Mary’s Act One dress. As
mentioned previously, I chose to place a Greek wave motif as a border on the hem of Mary’s Act One dress. Through searching through trims to adhere as well as conversations with Kearney and Turk, we came to the decision that painting the pattern would be the best option to keep the integrity of the dress intact. The fabric that I chose was a very light weight fabric that draped nicely, and no matter how light weight a trim that I could have chosen, sewing it in a curved pattern would weigh the dress down and alter the silhouette as well. I did several paint tests for color, scale, and technique before applying any paint to the actual dress. Once I was happy with my results, I began the process of painting the wave pattern on the dress and completed it within about seven hours, including time for preparation and drying. In addition to adding paint to this dress, I still was in the process of completely the tailcoat for Charles. The actor playing Charles was brought in for a final fitting the week prior to the first dress rehearsal, and all that remained was many finishing details. Much of this required precise hand sewing, which took more time, but I made good progress in the week of dress rehearsal, putting me on schedule to finish by April 6.

Students and staff in the costume studio were primarily focused on putting the finishing touches on the overall production during the week leading up to first dress rehearsal. Conducting a first dress rehearsal in the middle of the week was unusual and also shortened the time in which to finish and add details to the costumes. Because the staff in the costume studio as well the practicum students were all producing focused and efficient work, this shortened time frame did not cause any issues. First dress rehearsal ran incredibly smoothly, with few alterations or additions to be made moving forward.
Moving forward with dress rehearsals proved slightly challenging; however, I was pleased with the outcome. As mentioned previously, the department scheduled a trip to Brooklyn to attend the Royal Shakespeare Company’s productions of *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts I and II*, and *Henry V*. This trip followed immediately the first dress rehearsal, and many of the cast, crew, and production team members, including myself, attending this trip. I felt confident in leaving after first dress rehearsal that any of the notes generated from that rehearsal could easily be accomplished upon my return on April 11. However, I did run into a small problem when Stokes emailed me the following day raising concerns, primarily with the wig chosen for the actress playing Mary. Stokes was concerned that Mary’s wig, both style and color, was unattractive in comparison to Fanny’s wig. Through communication in emails with Stokes, Kearney, Turk, and myself, a new wig was able to be chosen and styled, making it ready to be worn for the second dress rehearsal. Other small alterations were made in my absence, so when I returned I was able to focus on notes that I specifically as the designer needed to address.

The remaining dress rehearsals brought only minor hiccups. The biggest changes occurred with the makeup applications for certain characters and the shawl worn by the actress playing Mary. Because the Thurber Theatre is a large theatre space, the actors with more specialized makeup had to apply their makeup much heavier than many of them were accustomed to doing. It was not until the final dress rehearsal that the makeup for these actors was finally visible from the house. Aside from the makeup, the shawl worn by the actress playing Mary caused a multitude of problems. This actress had difficulties wearing a shawl on stage, so three options were tried before finding the one
that worked best for everyone. Because she continually dropped the shawl, elastic bands
to be worn around the arms were stitched to the shawl in order to keep it on the actress’s
body. This alteration did not prove successful because the actress did not make a
conscious effort to keep the shawl wrapped around her body. The second option was to
have the actress wear the shawl around her shoulders and attach it in the front; this gave
her a range of motion without any concern for the shawl falling. However, the shawl did
fall off the actress’s shoulders, and she had difficulty pulling it back up gracefully. The
last alteration was to add snaps to the shawl and the shoulders of both dresses with which
she wore the shawl. This proved to be successful, and while this was not my first option,
I was able to still use the shawl as a part of the costume design and the actress was able to
wear it without further issues.

Other than these smaller issues, dress rehearsals ran smoothly, and only minor
alterations were made. The production previewed to the department students, staff, and
faculty on April 13, and public performances began on April 14.
Chapter 5: An Evaluation of the Design

Working on this production of The Coast of Illyria as my thesis project has been both a delight and a challenge. I greatly appreciate being able to combine my love of English literature and theatrical costume design in this culmination of my MFA degree at The Ohio State University. While it might be difficult at the moment to step back from the process itself since the production is just now opening, these are my thoughts as of now.

Writing a thesis document to supplement to the costume design of a production while concurrently designing said production was most definitely the toughest portion of this entire process. Finding a balance between designing and writing was difficult, and then finding a balance between those and class work added another challenge. Having deadlines for all three areas that were often close together gave me challenges in time management. I also found that it at times it was difficult to give full focus to every aspect of the design, my writing, and class projects, and I often felt behind in one or more of the areas. While this situation was not ideal, I would say that writing about the process while in the process made for a much richer, more developed chapter IV because I was able to describe events and situations that happened as they were happening rather than having to look back to notes from several months prior for this information.
Looking back to the design process from the beginning, there are a few things I wish had spent more time on or had done differently. The first would be starting my research much earlier in the development of the design. I was first assigned to design costumes for *The Coast of Illyria* in December of 2014, and production meetings did not begin until October 2015. I could have better utilized this time in the interim to complete in-depth research into the play and its characters as to have been much more fully prepared early on, which would have freed up more time to focus on designing and writing. Ultimately, I feel like I have a good grasp on these characters and the world they live in, but I could have made the process easier on myself if I had completed research before beginning production meetings. Secondly, I also could have spent more time further researching women’s clothing styles in particular. While I am pleased with the outcome of the costumes for Mary and Fanny specifically, I found many other appealing styles of dresses after completing my final designs that I might have preferred to styles I chose. The third thing I could have improved upon was communication in all areas. Although communication was continually happening throughout the process, I could have been stronger in the ways I communicated with the members of the costume studio as well as the production team. In a couple fittings, a lack of communication seemed to cause minor problems with the fit of certain constructed costumes. Many questions were raised in the fittings concerning style lines and fit of the garments that could have been answered prior to the fittings; however, I was not aware that these were questions that needed to be answered. Part of that could be on the drapers not asking me questions when they had them, but I could have also been more proactive in checking in with the
drapers more consistently to clear up any confusion. I could have also been more communicative with the Etsy sellers who made custom dresses for the production. While I did converse with all of them heavily when placing orders, after receiving deadlines from them, I trusted that those items would arrive as ordered on the assigned dates. Although each dress from the different sellers I worked with did arrive within the required time frame, each of these dresses was a cause of stress in my process for one reason or another. Understanding better now how to work with these sellers making custom clothing will help in my use of Etsy sellers for future productions. Lastly, my communication could have been stronger in regards to the use of rehearsal costume items during the rehearsal process. Because I provided many items early on, I assumed that they would be introduced in the earlier rehearsals so that the actors could grow accustomed to using certain items such as hats, coats, and shawls. However, I should have made a stronger emphasis on the need for the actors to work with these items before getting to dress rehearsals because I did run into some challenges once the actors were in full costume. While the men were all adept at adjusting to using hats and coats immediately, the actress playing Mary had difficulties using a shawl while on stage, and I think that could have been resolved if she had rehearsed with one from the beginning. Despite the fact that these challenges arose and I could have dealt with each of them differently, none of them affected the production detrimentally.

Overall, I am extremely pleased with the outcome of the costume design of The Coast of Illyria. I could not have asked for a better production team to work with, and everyone in the costume studio went above and beyond to make every single costume
look exactly as I designed it. This process has been rewarding in a number of ways. I feel as though I have grown as a designer, and I have also increased my knowledge of styles and construction methods used during the Regency time period. I have a better understanding of how well I can multi-task when given multiple projects simultaneously and how I can better give the proper focus to each. Looking at the overall stage picture itself is rewarding as well. I adhered closely to my color palette abstracted from the inspiration painting by John Martin, and these colors work well within the world of the play. Communication was strong between the other designers and myself, giving no surprises when all the design elements came together in the first dress rehearsal. We all worked well together and all had a clear understanding of the world of *The Coast of Illyria*, presenting a cohesive, very lovely production.
References


Stokes, S. (2015). Director’s concept for *The Coast of Illyria*. The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Appendix A: Director’s Concept
My aims in this proposal are to 1) describe my interpretation of The Coast of Illyria; 2) articulate an approach to various aspects of the production that align with that interpretation and; 3) provide some background information that situates the play in several useful contexts.

INTERPRETATION: “MAKING YOUR MARK”

Below is a working image of the dynamic that propels the action of the play as a whole, animates and motivates its characters, and creates the vortex of emotional, psychological, and social entanglements that I hope will draw our audiences into the world of the play.

Like the writers who populate The Coast of Illyria, to me, art-making in any form should be personal before it becomes universal and there are more personal reasons driving my interest in this play than I can count. However, while I still have your attention on this first page, I want to head straight into what feels “universal” and explain Illyria in terms of how it opens up aspects of the human condition that I believe are shared by people across centuries, classes, nations and cultures.

What I’ve labeled in the illustration above as the “Creative Self” or “Making Your Mark” refers to the desire each of us has to leave something behind. Whether that thing is a child, a book, a signature, an idea, a painting or some other kind of legacy, I believe that we all want in one way or another to “make a mark” on the world. Every character in Illyria has this desire in more or less intense and visible ways. Illyrians (my name for the characters who inhabit the world of this play) strive to keep their creative selves fully fed and fully free despite the many other needs, demands, obligations and commitments to which they must attend. For the sake of simplicity I’ve divided these into: 1) “Needs and Desires of the Body”; 2) “Bonds of Duty and Affection”; 3) “Reputation and Social Standing” and; 4) “Financial/Material Security.”

Whether in the form of mental illness, addiction, sexual desire, or simply as a result of the need to eat and sleep, our bodies can pull us away from the work of our most creative selves. Whether they are friends in need, partners, or family members who require our care and attention, our commitments to those closest to us
can pull us away from creative endeavors. Our public reputations matter to us and, of course, we have to have a measure of financial security in order to live. These things, too, can often take precedence over the creative work we aim to do every day. Yet, *all the things that pull us away from creative work are the same things that feed and support its development*. Illyrians live in the middle of this conflict and have to work it out one theatrical moment at a time. The balanced picture my illustration gives is somewhat misleading. More often, events out of our control propel us from one area of urgent need to another, keeping some plates spinning ever here, others over there, while other (hopefully less important) plates crash to the ground. Even if they were important, there’s nothing to be done about it because choices have to be made. This image—of a group of people running from one place to another as they try to keep spinning plates in the air, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing—gives a good sense of what the play feels like. What I love about Illyrians is that they bring to light the ironic, painful, funny, ridiculous, compassionate and hopeful compromises made by creative individuals as they strive to make art in a world that seems to constantly throw up obstacles to their endeavors.

**APPROACHES TO PRODUCTION:** **A GUIDE TO LIFE AMONGST THE ILLYRIANS**

The Lambs live in a conventional, middle-class townhouse in Regency-era London (1813, to be specific). The King (George III) has been forced to cede his authority over the Kingdom to his son, the Prince Regent (George IV), because his mental and physical illness has reached a point of crisis and he is no longer able to rule. The world outside the Lambs’ home is dangerous, dirty, and populated by unfortunates. Getting from one place to another means contending with foul odors and filth. The dirt of the world leaves its traces indoors and so there is a nearly constant need to clean up, rearrange, reset and restore. The most important London locations outside the Lambs’ home are the offices of the East India Company (where Charles works), the Drury Lane Theatre (where Fanny is rehearsing), and Bethlem Royal Hospital (or “Bedlam,” where Mary worries she will end up).

The Lambs are not wealthy, but they are still in the upper 30% of English society. Much of what they own is inherited or has been given to them by friends and other family members. It is a patched-together existence, but they have the ability to make it look impressive when the need arises. They tend to reject “fashion,” in favor of simple good taste.

The Lambs and their fellow Illyrians live in a bright world of art, theatrical expressivity and writing. The Lambs’ home is a place where words and images are made and given life. Creative projects, their own or those of other Illyrians, share the space with them. Illyrians love the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers and, of course, Shakespeare. Most of them read and revere books. They know all about politics and history and they generally believe in the need for radical social change at all levels of society. They believe that art can free the soul, and thereby free society. Rousseau’s famous declaration in *The Social Contract* (1762), “Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains” is deeply inscribed in their hearts and minds. Illyrians love to write, record, quote, recite, observe, arrange, describe and perform. They do it with their bodies, their voices, their minds and their tongues. It is how they strive to feel free and to make their marks on the world. Individual style matters.

Illyrians live in a world of shadows where the dividing line between imagination/illusion and reality (or between past and present) is very thin. The movement between them most often occurs in the altered perceptions of the characters. However, there are several key moments in the play where transformations of reality are visible to the audience as well. The minds of some Illyrians are haunted by fantasies and fears that assert their presence at inopportune moments, trying to take over the action of the play. For the most part, the reality of the play stays stable, but the imaginings of both Coleridge and Mary interrupt it. When Coleridge’s imagination takes over, the real becomes sublime. When Mary’s imagination takes over, reality transforms into Shakespearean fantasy or Hogarthian nightmare. This is partly a matter of concern for staging, but also a matter of sound and lighting design.

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Figure 10. Director's Concept for *The Coast of Illyria* p. 2
Illyrians live amidst obstacles. The room in which the play takes place can feel dangerous at times because its rules, its objects and even its furniture is always changing, creating new obstacles and pathways that have to be negotiated. Nothing is ever quite certain, or quite where it was before. It’s never clear exactly where people go when they leave the room or where they are returning from. What’s palpable is the sense of flux bordering on chaos.

The most important things in the room are: 1) the writing desk (its use and misuse registering the degree to which Charles and Mary attend to their creative selves); 2) the fireplace (the fire is a source of warmth as the weather gets colder but is also symbolic of the rising conflict); 3) the liquor cabinet (a Pandora’s Box with a door that seems to stick shut when it is closed and stays open once it’s opened); 4) the front door (a near constant source of tension and suspense); 5) the front door (a near constant source of tension and suspense); 6) the paintings of the girl with the lamb and roses (innocence lost, the idyllic past) and the prints from Hogarth’s A Rake’s Progress (the terrifying future).

The general environment changes somewhat over the course of the play. The room at first is dominated by Mary’s classical tastes (as arranged by her maid, Becky), but with visible “modern homemaker” style additions made by Fanny, who is seeking to make it her own. The mood is hopeful. The sense of bourgeois domesticity is even more evident and more rigid in the scene that includes the visit of Fanny’s mother to the Lamb home. After Charles and Fanny split, the room reflects Charles’ personal hell—a dim chaos of self-loathing that his friends and family have to attempt to wade through. By the end of the play, a kind of incomplete restoration is underway.

Illyrians get around by carriage when they can afford it. Otherwise they are used to walking and standing. They rarely sit down or lie down since there is always something to do or someone to attend to. They have to hold themselves up well despite the mud, dirt and odors that cling to them. This holds true for everyone but Genius Illyrians, who are allowed to lie down whenever and wherever they want. Regular Illyrians have to be clever and kind as often as possible, but their gestures and actions often betray them. It is the duty of Genius Illyrians to speak their whole soul the moment they are inspired to do so. Regular Illyrians make more of an attempt to conceal their true feelings. Conversation is an art form that requires an excellent sense of rhythm, phrasing, and timing. Most Illyrians are either notorious or famous or both, so they expect that other Londoners will notice what they are wearing and how they are behaving when they are in public. Genius Illyrians care much less about this than Regular Illyrians—or not at all.

The language of the Illyrians is musical. The best sense I can give of it is to say that it is like many little brooks and streams that flow into and out of one another, sometimes suddenly converging in great crashing waterfalls that again resolve into brooks and streams. Thinking in terms of genre, Illyrians want to live in the world of romantic comedy, but they cannot. They do their best to keep up the pace and patter of romantic comedy but they keep bumping into elements of horror, fantasy, and farce that increasingly pull them towards tragedy.

OTHER IDEAS

I am interested in the fact that during the Regency Era, “Oriental” objects, prints, etc. (particularly Chinese, Japanese, and Indian) were a source of fascination. The laudanum Coleridge consumes is also a direct result of Chinese trade and influence in the period. In seeking to heighten the sense of theatricality at key moments in the play, I may choose to quote Chinese Opera staging and movement in subtle ways and I am curious as to how this might be picked up in design. To me, Coleridge’s imaginative flights to “the Orient” in his Kahlil Gibran and other poems arise from the desire to be free of the material world and to exist in the realm of the sensual and non-rational. This is the desire I want to try to give life to when he recites his poem such that everyone in the room (and everyone in the audience) is able to imagine what he imagines and feel what he feels.

Figure 11. Director's Concept for The Coast of Illyria p. 3
Sound and music do not have very much to do here because the words are primary and there are so many of them. Still, I would like to experiment a bit with offstage clattering of plates, glasses, etc., to heighten tension on stage. These sounds could conceivably be magnified. Something else I might like to include is the crashing of waves and ocean sounds. These would be used in periods where Mary’s mind is leaving her and the feeling that she is “going mad” is about to engulf her. With respect to music, I am considering staging a short series of moving tableaux (done in semi-Viewpoints/semi-nineteenth-century style) at the beginning of each of the three acts. These would need music, which would likely be from the period, but I’m eager to consider what contemporary music would add to the concept. Finally, this of course depends on budget and stock, it would be useful to have a piano that could be played expertly or inexactly in various scenes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Parker and the Play
When Dorothy Parker wrote The Coast of Illyria with her boyfriend, Ross Evans, in 1949 she was already one of the most famous writers in the United States. Known for her poetry collections, short fiction, essays and drama reviews, she turned in later life to writing for the stage and screen. In 1949, Parker was 54 years old and had been divorced from her second husband, the actor and writer, Alan Campbell, for three years. Evans, described by Arthur Kinney as Parker’s “putative co-author,” was thirty-one when the play was written, and likely had little impact on its writing. As she got older, Parker preferred to have writing partners rather than going solo, and it is thought that with The Coast of Illyria she was trying to give Evans a leg up in the writing business. Illyria had a successful run in Dallas, where it was directed by Margo Jones at the well-known Theatre ’47. A Broadway transfer was expected, but never materialized. Parker continued to write for stage and screen, remarrying Campbell in 1950. She suffered from alcoholism and depression most of her life, and was highly active in pro-Socialist, anti-Fascist, and social justice activities. As a member of the Socialist party since 1927, she was called before the House on Un-American Activities in 1955. She pleaded the Fifth Amendment. When she passed away at the age of 73, she left the entirety of her estate to Dr. Martin Luther King. Upon his death, at the bidding of her will, the estate turned over to the NAACP.

Parker’s World and the World of the Romantic Writers
Although separated by more than 100 years, the artistic and literary world in which Parker lived had many similarities with the world in which the Lambs lived. Both Parker in her time as a founding member of the Algonquin Round Table (an informal gathering of writers who ate lunch together at the Algonquin Hotel in New York) and the Lambs in their era (of the Romantic poets) were associated with publicly recognized gatherings of writers and other artists. The capacity to be “bright and bon-vivant,” to use words well, and to manifest a generally anti-bourgeois attitude was as important in Parker’s social circle as it was for the writers and artists who visited the Lambs’ salon on Thursday evenings. Like Parker and many of her associates, Coleridge, Hazlitt, the Lambs, and their friends tended to be socially and politically radical in their views. They were abolitionists with a passionate love of nation and a desire to dismantle Britain’s rigid class structures. Both Parker and the Lambs adored the cities in which they lived (London for the Lambs, New York for Parker) but sometimes found them harsh and unforgiving. Countless artists, writers and other individuals associated with Parker combatted mental and physical illness as well as various forms of addiction. Likewise, this is true of the Lambs and their circle. In both Parker’s time and during the Lambs’ era, middle- and upper-class women were able to succeed as writers and it was considered acceptable for such women not to marry. Seeing herself as a female writer struggling to show a cheerful face to the world despite addictions, dark desires, and fears of abandonment, Parker told the actress playing Mary Lamb in Dallas “I am Mary Lamb. Do you see that?”

The First Generation of Romantic Poets
The best and most concise description I’ve found comes from the website of the British Library. I’ve excerpted the page “Discovering Literature: Romantics and Victorians” below.
"During the Romantic period major transitions took place in society, as dissatisfied intellectuals and artists challenged the Establishment. In England, the Romantic poets were at the very heart of this movement. They were inspired by a desire for liberty, and they denounced the exploitation of the poor. There was an emphasis on the importance of the individual; a conviction that people should follow ideals rather than imposed conventions and rules. The Romantics renounced the rationalism and order associated with the preceding Enlightenment era, stressing the importance of expressing authentic personal feelings. They had a real sense of responsibility to their fellow men: they felt it was their duty to use their poetry to inform and inspire others, and to change society. [Certain] key ideas dominated their writings. They genuinely thought that they were prophetic figures who could interpret reality. The Romantics highlighted the healing power of the imagination, because they truly believed that it could enable people to transcend their troubles and their circumstances. Their creative talents could illuminate and transform the world into a coherent vision, to regenerate mankind spiritually."

http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-romantics

Personal Statement
My father is a psychiatrist, an Indian who studied in the British system of education, and a sometimes poet. He raised me equally on Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Bach, Ravi Shankar, the Moody Blues, Leonard Cohen, Allen Ginsburg, and... on the Romantic Poets (no kidding). He can recite many poems from memory and his favorite poem is a classic of British Romanticism, Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey'. However, as much as I was raised on English poetry, I was equally raised on an in-depth understanding of and empathy for people with mental illness and addiction—people who, like Packer and her characters, feel they have been metaphorically "shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria." "I'm struggling to survive in unknown territory. What drew me to this play is in part the desire to show people who struggle with mental illness and addiction as people who are creative and compassionate. Rather than being demonized or written off as "social problems" that supposedly "normal" people have to deal with, my hope is that such people are recognized for what they contribute with their hearts and hands to our culture. In other words, for how they "make their marks" on the world. Finally, my interest in the play stems from my interest in the growing relationship between my six-year-old boy/girl twins. I wonder often what kind of bond they will have when they are older. What if one of them were not able to live independently as an adult and needed the other to survive? What choices would they make? How would they answer the question of what they owe to one another? I hope our audiences will be prompted to consider their own relations with friends and family and to reflect on similar questions.

* * *

Sebastian and his sister, Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline, were twins. They so much resembled each other that, but for the difference in their dress, they could not be known apart. They were both born in one hour, and in one hour they were both in danger of perishing; for they were shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria, as they were making a sea-voyage together."


Figure 13. Director's Concept for The Coast of Illyria p. 5
Appendix B: Costume Plot
THE COAST OF ILLYRIA
The Ohio State University
by Dorothy Parker and Ross Evans
Spring 2016
adapted by Jennifer Schlueter and Cece Bellomy
Director: Shilarna Stokes
Costume Designer: Rebekah Priebe
Setting: London, England
Time: early autumn, 1813

A. PRINCIPAL MEN:
1. Charles Lamb I – shirt, vest, trousers, shoes, socks
2. Charles Lamb II – tailcoat, shirt, vest, cravat, trousers
3. Charles Lamb III – remove jacket and cravat, add banyan
4. Coleridge I – tailcoat, shirt, vest, cravat, trousers, shoes, socks, hat, overcoat
5. Coleridge II – vest, cravat
6. Coleridge III – vest, cravat

B. SECONDARY MEN:
7. Dyer I – tailcoat, shirt, vest, cravat, breeches, stockings, shoes
8. Dyer II – vest, cravat, shawl, hat, one shoe?
9. Dyer III – vest, cravat
10. Hazlitt I – tailcoat, shirt, vest, cravat, trousers, boots, socks, hat, overcoat
11. Hazlitt II – vest, cravat
12. De Quincey I – tailcoat, vest, shirt, trousers, shoes, socks, hat

C. PRINCIPAL WOMEN:
13. Fanny I – dress, shoes, tights, petticoat, corset, jewelry
14. Fanny II – dress, jewelry
15. Fanny III – dress, jewelry
16. Mary I – dress, overdress, shawl, shoes, tights, petticoat, jewelry, bonnet
17. Mary III – dress, jewelry
18. Mary IV – dress, jewelry

D. SECONDARY WOMEN:
20. Emma I – dress, pantaloons, tights, shoes, jewelry
21. Emma II – dress
22. Emma III – dress
23. Mrs. Kelly I – dress, jacket, tights, petticoat, corset, shoes, jewelry

Figure 14. Costume Plot
Appendix C: Costume Budget Estimates
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Appendix D: Research and Preliminary Sketches
Figure 15. Research for Charles: A *Allan Melville* by John Rubens Smith, B Men's Fashion Plate from *Costume Parisien* 1812, C Portrait of Charles Lamb from *The Charles Lamb Society*
Figure 16. Charles Preliminary Design
Figure 17. Research for Mary: A Woman's Dress c. 1805-1810 from Philadelphia Museum of Art, B A Woman with Two Children Wearing Kashmir Paisley Shawls by Alfred Edward 1815-1820, C Maria Shaum by Jacob Eicholtz, D Morning Dress 1810-20 from the Metropolitan Muse
Figure 18. Mary Preliminary Design
Figure 19. Research for Fanny: A *Portrait of a lady wearing a Kashmir Shawl*, B 1810 La Mode Illustree, C 1818 - Ackermann's Repository Series 2 Vol 6 - September Issue, D Portrait of Fanny Kelly
Figure 20. Fanny Preliminary Design
Figure 21. Research for Mrs. Kelly: A *Portrait of a Lady* by Louis-Leopold Boilly, B Fashion Plate depicting Afternoon Dress for 1800 located at Scripps College, C Fashion Plate depicting Evening Dresses, 1810 located at Scripps College, D *Portrait de Femme en Robe* by Francois-Joseph Kinson
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Figure 23. Research for Dyer: A Portrait of George Beau Brummel by Robert Dighton, B Man's Brown Velvet Coat 1811 at The Charleston Museum, C Henry Moyes by John Russell
Figure 24. Dyer Preliminary Design
Figure 25. Research for Coleridge: A Men's Fashion Plate from Costume Parisien 1810, B Men's Fashion Plate from Costume Parisien 1819, C Portrait of Samuel Taylor Coleridge from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Figure 26. Coleridge Preliminary Design
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Figure 28. Becky Preliminary Design
Figure 29. Research for Emma: A Two Printed Cotton Infant Dresses, 1810 from Augusta Auctions, B Children's Fashion Plate from Journal des Dames et des Modes, 1813, C A Woman with Two Children wearing Kashmir Paisley Shawls by Alfred Edward 1815-1820
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Figure 32. Hazlitt Preliminary Design
Figure 33. Research for De Quincey: A Portrait of a Boy by Nicholas-Bernard Lepicie, B Fashion Plate from Costume Parisien 1813, C A Young Peasant Boy by Jean-Baptiste Greuze
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Figure 36. Charles Acts Two-Three
Figure 37. Mary Act One
Figure 38. Mary Act Two
Figure 39. Mary Act Three
Figure 40. Fanny Act One
Figure 41. Fanny Act Two
Figure 42. Fanny Act Three
Figure 43. Mrs. Kelly Act Two
Figure 44. Dyer Acts One-Three
Figure 45. Coleridge Acts One-Three
Figure 46. Becky Acts One-Three
Figure 47. Emma Acts One-Three
Figure 48. Hazlitt Acts Two-Three
Figure 49. De Quincey Acts Two-Three
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Figure 51. Production Photo - Emma and Becky Act One
Figure 52. Production Photo - Dyer, Mary, and Emma Act One
Figure 53. Production Photo - Charles and Mary Act One
Figure 54. Production Photo - Mary and Fanny Act Two
Figure 55. Production Photo - Charles, Mrs. Kelly, and Fanny Act Two
Figure 56. Production Photo - Charles, Coleridge, and Mary Act Two
Figure 57. Production Photo - Charles, De Quincey, Emma, Mrs. Kelly, Fanny, Mary, Coleridge, and Hazlitt Act Two
Figure 58. Production Photo - Mary and Charles Act Three
Figure 59. Production Photo - Charles and Fanny Act Three