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## **The Art of the Dress: How Getting Into Costume Affects an Actor's Self-Perception**

Ella Embry  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

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The University of Southern Mississippi

The Art of the Dress: How Getting into Costume Affects an Actor's Self-Perception

by

Ella Embry

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement of the Degree of  
Bachelor of Fine Arts  
in the Department of Theatre and Dance

May 2018

# COSTUMING AND AN ACTOR'S SELF-PERCEPTION

COSTUMING AND AN ACTOR'S SELF-PERCEPTION

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# COSTUMING AND AN ACTOR'S SELF-PERCEPTION

## Abstract

Both actors and psychologists devote enormous amounts of time to understanding how people think, act, and respond even if for completely different reasons. While there are psychological studies that look at the way clothing influences attraction, aggression, and attitude, none of it looks critically at theatrical performance. Costuming is a vital part of the theatrical process that has yet to be studied empirically. As such, my study is an inter-disciplinary endeavor dedicated to developing an understanding of exactly how and whether costuming affects an actor's personality perception as a way to contribute to the field of psychology, future theatrical performances, and general knowledge. I achieved this through an interview process utilizing both graduate and undergraduate student-actors at The University of Southern Mississippi who had been cast in the Spring 2018 show *You Can't Take It With You*. I closely observed and detailed the change of an actor's sense of self, from identifying as their own personality to identifying as their character's personality after putting on their costume for a theatrical production as a unique phenomenon. The main data I reviewed and used as evidence was the participants' usage of first-person pronouns; because, when a person internalizes an experience or feeling they use the first person. Upon review of the data and a thorough analysis, I concluded that there is a noticeable relationship between a shift in sense of self and the participants' degree of costuming.

## COSTUMING AND AN ACTOR'S SELF-PERCEPTION

Keywords: Self-perception, clothing, costumes, theatre, identity, interviews.

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This project would not have been possible without the permission, aid, and understanding of the costume shop manager Kelly James-Penot, the director of *You Can't Take It With You* Burton Tedesco, and the stage manager for *You Can't Take It With You* Emily Cameron.

I would also like to thank Mackenzie Dunn and Rachel Roan for allowing me to include photographic copies of their original costume and makeup designs, respectively, as well as being a part of their fitting processes and including those photos as well.

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## Introduction

For the past 400 years, artists and academics have been asking “To be, or not to be” (Shakespeare, 1599), but what if the question shifted to “Is to wear to be?” Theatrical costumers have asked “To wear or not to wear?” and psychologists have asked “How is a person’s being, or identity, determined?” yet seldom have theatrical art and empirical science crossed paths, especially within the academic realm. This distance facilitates a public impression that these two subjects have little to contribute to each other. However, the opposite is true. The theatrical arts can provide subjective commentary and direction to empirical science’s hard data and discoveries.

Actors often spend weeks, and sometimes even months or years, creating, understanding, and portraying their character on the stage for a theatrical show or shows. This creative process is incredibly physically demanding by way of requiring singing, dancing, stage combat, or even dangerous on-stage stunts such as flying over an audience (Creating Theatre, 2016). It is also intensely emotionally exhausting as performers love, fight, lose, or even die on stage night after night (Andreou, 2014). While there have been different trends of costuming over the course of theatre’s history, it remains an invaluable element in production (Blausen, n.d.). Costumers must not only be well versed in the multitude of ways to create costumes through sewing or crafting techniques (smocking, pleating, draping, patterning, dyeing, etc.) but also must understand a wide range of time, location, and gender specific customs that may or may not be included in their show depending upon the director’s intention.

I have personally observed actors reporting a deeper understanding of and connection to their fictional character when he or she first tries on their costume and how that understanding or connection creates a layer of emotional life in their fictitious character. This deeper emotional

connection may lie more within the psychological realm as the actors literally steps out of themselves and into their character both physically and mentally. My study is dedicated to joining these two worlds into one coherent phenomenology study in order to observe the relationship between an actor's costume and his or her sense of self both as their actual selves and as their fictive character. I wrote this introduction, literature review, and methodology section as the full prospectus before beginning the study itself. Therefore, I will use the future aspirational tense throughout. The write up of the now completed project is written in the past tense.

## **Background**

While it may seem obvious that an actor experiences a shift of sense of self when he or she steps into costume, there is no current literature, empirical or otherwise, to validate this phenomenon. Additionally, current literature that does concern clothing in relation to any psychological theory is limited; theatrical literature outside of the process of creating costumes is also limited (Davis, 1988; Huber, 2000).

There is a professional extension of the theatre business that is entirely devoted to the conception, creation, and conservation of costumes for theatrical performances on the stage; as such, the majority of theatrical writings are concerned with these professionals' jobs in mind (Huber, 2000; Ingham, 2003). In fact, most theatrical writings concern how the actor's costume affects the overall image and direction of the play, the audience's interpretation of the characters, and the physical implications costumes have on actors such as how a hoop skirt limits movement or the in-depth process required for a quick-change (Brueckman, 2012; Effective Costuming, 2016; Lavery, 2011). None of this information is focused on the actor's creative process regarding his or her costume.

The study of psychology is separated into differences of theory rather than differences of practice and various theories have taken a critical look at the way clothing can affect a person. There are four theories in particular that turn a critical eye towards clothing and they are social perception theory, attribution theory, impression formation theory, and the process of categorization. The majority of psychological papers focus on how clothing can be used as a way of communication with others (Frith, 2004; Howlett, 2013; Roberts, 2010; Stangor, 1992; Rosenfeld, 1977), how they may be used to reflect one's personality (Cosby, 2001; Fron, 2007), and the recent fashion and consumer trends and those trends implications (Ayman, 2014; Roux, 2006; Montemurro, 2013).

### **Problem Statement**

The aforementioned studies focus on how clothing affects personal presentation and the cultural processes for understanding that presentation but not how that presentation can affect the wearer. It is my goal to marry the aspects of understanding through the theatrical eye in addition to the psychological eye in order to help bridge the gap between the psychologist and the stage concerning how people think, act, and respond. The purpose of this study is to observe and detail the unique nature of the effect of costumes on an actors' self-perception of their own personality and their fictive character's and determine if there is a relationship between the two. This raises four specific research questions which help contribute to the study's overall understanding.

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1: How do actors connect to their character during the costume transformation process?
- RQ2: How is performance tied to costuming?

- RQ3: How does costuming influence self-referencing of character when in and out of costume?
- RQ4: How does an actor's sense of self change as they transform into the character for a theatrical production?

### **Overview of Methodology**

In order to answer these questions fully, I employed one qualitative method designed to observe and detail an actor's self-perception in relation to his or her costume. My method is a series of three interviews with a follow-up questions after the show *You Can't Take It With You* has opened. My interviews will follow the progression of the actor's costume; as the costumes become closer to their final form the interviews will become more detailed. The first interview took place immediately after the first read-through and before the actors knew what their costume looked like. During the actors' first fitting of their costumes, I conducted the second interview while they were still dressed, whether that be in muslin scraps or in actual costume pieces. The final interview took place during the show's run in between performance weekends. Since the actor was now in his or her final costume and makeup, it was the longest and most in depth. After the show closes, I emailed all participants a follow-up questionnaire in order to give them an opportunity to reflect on their costume's overall impact during the entire process of the show. I reviewed the transcripts of my interviews for pronoun usage, which is indicative of whether or not a person internalizes or externalizes an event. First person pronouns, such as "I/me," mean that a person has internalized a phenomenon whereas third person pronouns, "he/she/they," mean that they have externalized it. The first two interviews were expected to have more "he/she/they" pronouns when I asked the actors about their characters and the final interview and the follow-up questionnaire were expected to have more "I/me" pronouns when

asked the same questions. I expected this shift from third person pronouns to first person pronouns to be indicative of a change of sense of self.

### **Summary**

Both actors and psychologists devote enormous amounts of time to understanding how people think, act, and respond even if for completely different reasons (Goldstein, 2012; Stangor, 1992). There is a glaring lack of literature that includes factors or theories from the two disciplines despite this similarity in interests. Inter-disciplinary studies and collaborative research alike are currently underutilized. Additionally, costuming is a vital part of the theatrical process that has yet to be studied empirically.

My study is dedicated to developing an understanding of how costuming affects an actor's personality perception as a way to contribute to both areas of knowledge as well as to general knowledge. I will do this through an interview process utilizing both graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Southern Mississippi who have been cast in the 2018 show *You Can't Take It With You*. I will closely observe and detail actors' change of sense of self, from identifying as their own personality to identifying as their character's personality, after putting on their costume for a play. While I have given a general overview of the current literature and intended methodology for this study, a more detailed approach is to follow.

### **Literature Review**

While the public generally perceives clothing as a way to express one's identity and communicate social roles, few studies attempt to understand the psychology behind clothing and how dress affects both personal and outward perception. Of the existing research, scholars have employed four main theoretical perspectives: (1) social perception theory, (2) attribution theory,



(3) impression formation theory, and (4) the process of categorization. These perspectives have been explored using one of three types, or a specific combination, of methodology: (1) presenting a visual stimulus in order to gauge and record reactions, (2) distributing a questionnaire, or (3) posing open-ended questions that were responded to in short answer format (Davis, 1988). I also found that the majority of studies published focused on the way a person's clothing choice affected the first impression others had of them.

Previous studies about communication have yielded curious results as these studies usually include clothing as a secondary factor to an overall study about a different theory of psychology, personality, or perception. In 1977, Rosenfeld conducted an in-depth interview process with a large number of undergraduate students in order to determine characteristic traits based on gender, clothing consciousness, exhibitionism, practicality, and designer attitude, or interest in fashion. The results of this study show their age as they are blatantly biased, often contradictory, and include unprompted or unfounded conclusions about seemingly random personality traits, such as "low desire for heterosexual relationships," or "belief that people are easily manipulated (Rosenfeld, 1977 pg. 28)." Additionally, studies devoted to how attractiveness is determined have found that certain colors, primarily red closely followed by black, make the wearer perceptively more desirable to others (Roberts, 2010). While this study found that clothing color can affect perception, Howlett and Stangor found that the cut of one's clothing has more of an overall effect on instant judgment, with professional or well-tailored clothing eliciting the strongest positive responses. The majority of studies have focused on women; however, research has illustrated that men do invest in their clothing choices and strategically choose clothing in order to manipulate how others view them (Frith, 2004).

Bem's self-perception theory delineates that people develop their individual attitudes based upon observation of their own behavior and subsequent rationalizations they propose in order to explain their behavior. Put simply, people study their behavior and their environment in order to come to the conclusion of what their personality is, such as attitudes or beliefs towards a certain subject. Bem's study primarily explores the cognitive factor of this deductive process, but selection of clothing can easily be considered a behavior that one factors in when determining likes and dislikes, values and beliefs, and other aspects of personality (Bem, 1972).

Additionally, Cosbey found in 2001 that the degree of clothing satisfaction subjects had for their outfits correlates to their self-perceptions of sociability, emotional stability, and dominance; the study also suggests that clothing can be used to enhance a sense of security. While a person's immediate mood has been found to be a primary predictor of clothing choice, personality also has an important, if moderate, effect and has connections to the way different individuals react to the same outfit (Moody, 2010). Clothing can also affect body perception and satisfaction, especially among dancers. Tight clothing has been linked to higher rates of eating disorders and lower rates of self-reported dancing ability whereas loose clothing has been linked to higher rates of body satisfaction and lower rates of anorexia and bulimia (Price, 2006).

Recent studies have been largely within the area of fashion merchandising, as those in the fashion merchandising field begin to realize the benefit empirical analysis can have on helping them reach target demographics. In addition to statistics about consumer habits, Ayman's 2014 study concluded that a large majority of people think that their clothing style directly reflects their personality and thus their intimate sense of self. Additionally, researchers have explored consumer habits concerning purchasing second-hand clothing which has unearthed the unspoken

notion that clothing is used to either pervert another person's intimate aspect of personal existence or perpetuate one's own sense of extended self (Roux, 2006).

Ultimately, Montemurro's 2013 interviews illustrated how women expect their sex to abide by severe laws of fashion that are dependent upon their age, socioeconomic status, and social role that extend beyond the woman herself to include the actual article of clothing that are indicative of a woman's promiscuity.

A less familiar route that a handful of recent studies have taken in examining clothing and personal expression is through the gaming world and "geek/nerd" subculture. Fron, Fullerton, Ford Morie, and Pearce compiled a survey of recent literature in 2007 that concerns both analog and digital dress-up in order to help both legitimize and analyze the meaning of dress-up play. They concluded that dress-up seems to form a bridge, one that dominates the gaming culture that allows people to cross gender boundaries and social stratifications at their leisure.

While there have been various studies devoted to how clothing choice affects perceptions, both internal and external, virtually none have critically and empirically studied how getting into a specific costume affects an actor's perception of themselves in relation to and independent of their character for a certain show; any studies that may exist have proven obscure and difficult to find (Montemurro, 2013; Fron, 2007; Price, 2006). While this change of perception may seem like an obvious phenomenon, it is imperative to further it in order to foster a deeper understanding of the art of acting. Additionally, such studies can help shed light on the way humans depend upon clothing to simultaneously express themselves, either as their own person or as their character, and conform to their given circumstances, such as in the world of a

stage-play. In order to help develop this understanding, two methods of instrumentation will be utilized.

### **Methodology**

In order to answer these questions fully, I conducted three rounds of interviews with four participants. Of the four participants, two are graduate students, one male and one female, and two are undergraduate students, one male and one female. I selected this mix of students in order to make sure that both genders, according to their biology, are equally represented as well as a sample of the variety of skill levels and experience that can be found within USM's Theatre Department.

All four actors that were asked to participate worked on the same show together, making my sample a purposeful one. With permission, I followed USM's *You Can't Take It With You* directed by Burton Tedesco in the spring semester. This allowed me to conduct each round of interviews at similar times and helped to keep some extraneous variables that could affect the study in check. For example, conducting my interviews for only one show ensured that it is the same type of show for all participants. *You Can't Take It With You* is a comedy and this genre costumes differently than dramas and musicals, the genres of the other two shows in the spring semester, and that slight variation could produce different effects that could not be accounted for in this particular study (GCSE Drama, 2017). Another example of an extraneous variable is the differences of movement styles that can be found across different types of theatre. Subtle changes in movement influenced by genre could affect the actor's relationship to his or her costume. Interviewing actors only participating in one genre of theatre ensures that the participant's attitudes towards a costume's function and range of movement are the same throughout.

The procedure for my study was as follows: participants signed a consent form, and then help create a pre-designated schedule of interview times based on rehearsal times, class times, fitting times, and other commitments. A consent form is my primary step because human participants must be provided all available information about a study so that they can make a rational, informed decision of whether or not they wish to participate. This is according to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (Gravetter, 2016). The interview times will also have to be agreed upon by the director, stage manager, and costume shop supervisor so that an interview does not surprise other affected parties. During my initial planning, I preferred that all initially agreed upon interview times and places remain constant throughout the process to help manage my own work. However, changes were inevitable due to outside circumstances. After the show's closing night performance, I emailed all participants and asked them to respond, also via email, to a follow-up questionnaire. Some of the specific aspects about changed over the course of the study and I discuss those changes in the Results section.

Interview One: I designed this interview in order to gather demographic information as well as set a baseline of the performer's perception of themselves versus their perception of their character. In order to set that baseline, I used blatant questions and verbal distinctions in order to determine the distinct sense of self and the distinct sense of character. Questions in this interview included: "Who is your character?" "Tell me about them." "How are you two different?" and "How are you two similar?" The interview took place immediately after the cast had their first read-through of the play in January and before any of the four actors know what their costume looks like.

Interview Two: I designed this interview in order to begin to reveal the proposed difference between a perceived sense of self and perceived sense of character that is directly

linked to an actor's costume for a show. It took place directly after all four actors' first fitting in the beginning stages of their costume, some while in costume and some while out of costume. Depending on who the character is and the how much work the designer had completed, some actors were closer to their final costume than others, but I still expected the effects to be similar. This interview began to document the cognitive shift phenomenon that I overserved that takes place as an actor dons their costume. It included questions such as: "Tell me about your character." "What's the biggest goal?" "What's the biggest challenge?" "How are you and your character similar?" and "How are you and your character different?"

Interview Three: I wrote this interview as the final step to gauge the observed dissonance between a perceived sense of self and sense of character that seems to be directly linked to and aggravated by an actor's final costume for a show. In this interview the actors were fully immersed in their character's sense of self rather than their own. I expected that in this interview, the actors would all use only first person pronouns to describe their characters. In addition to checking pronoun usage, I asked the actors about the totality of their transformation – how much of their character's costume is different from their everyday dress. The questions included: "Tell me about your character." "What's the biggest goal?" "What's the biggest challenge?" "How are you and your character similar?" "How are you and your character different?" and "What are you wearing now that is different from your everyday dress?" These interviews took place before after the show opened and while the actors were in full costume.

After all three rounds of interviews, I distributed to the participants a final follow-up questionnaire via email. In it, I asked them about how adding the audience into the relationship between their sense of self and their sense of character either did or did not change their experience. Rather than conducting another interview, participants were able to submit their

answer via reply email. These answers, along with their transcribed interviews, are the evidence on which my research questions are answered.

Varela & Shear's 1999 literature suggests that actors will use more "he/she/they" language when out of costume when they still identify with their own personality and more "I/me" language when they are in costume and identify with their character's personality. While describing an event, if participants use first person, then they can be said to be associating that event as a lived experience about which they have a subjective view. On the other hand, if participants were to use third person to recount an event, then it is likely that they are associating that event as an outside experience (Varela & Shear, 1999). Therefore, the distinction between first person and third person pronouns is a critical distinction the mind makes between a subjective experience and an objective experience. This shift between objectivity, or relating to an external reality, to subjectivity, or relating to an internal reality, is vital to gauge in actors as they put on more of their costume pieces in order to watch how their view of their character changes from an objective one to a subjective one. This perceived sense of self-change is the transformation that my study aims at describing and attributing to an actor's specific costuming.

In order to clearly understand what is being measured and how, I must establish a few operational definitions. First, the "self" refers to one's innate personality traits according to the OCEAN personality measurement (Buchanan, (n.d.)). OCEAN stands for a person's Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism and is commonly used as a way to measure a person's exact personality traits – or one's sense of self (Ocean Personality Assessment, 2016). Next, "costume" refers to the set of clothing, makeup, and hair designs that represent a fictitious character on the stage. Finally, "character" does not refer to a participant's characteristics or values, but the fictitious persona they are tasked to bring to life when working

in a staged show. A “character” is an entirely different person that the actor has attempted to bring to life on the stage.

There is currently still a considerable lack of scientific literature concerning the theatre as a whole as well as a notable lack of research about how clothing affects self-perception. With this study and its reformed methodology, I hope to begin to reduce this gap by producing relevant literature on the subject of theatre as well as the subjects of dress and self-perception. After utilizing an in-depth interview process that follows four actors over the course of a single staged, theatrical production, I expect that the results will indicate a discernable change in self-perception from identifying themselves to identifying as their character when an actor enrobes themselves in their character's clothing or their theatrical costume.

## **Results**

### **Summary**

According to my judgement, this study has been a stepping stone to further research rather than a direct answer to a larger question. These results, while impactful, are not fully representative of the entire population of theatre artists. Nevertheless, these interviews suggest that a relationship exists between a theatrical costume and a noticeable change in an actor's sense of self. My work does not determine where that exact change happens, the exact mechanics of the change, and the overall degree of the change in each participant. The answers to these details will require further study in order to fully understand. The summarized results of my phenomenology study in correlation with each Research Question I posed earlier are as follows:



- RQ1: Actors connect to their character during the transformation process in a variety of ways, including understanding time period of the show, socioeconomic status of the character, and specific personality traits unique to one of the fictional characters.
- RQ2: 3 out of 4 participants considered costumes and makeup as a luxury rather than a necessity. However, despite this attitude, all participants reported a direct relationship between the way they shaped their characters' style of movement and their characters' costume.
- RQ3: Actors use "pink" pronouns (first-person pronouns related to the fictional character's experiences rather than the participant's) to describe their character both while in full costume and while talking about their character's look.
- RQ4: Actors' sense of self changes primarily in their relationship to their character's costume during their overall transformation into their fictitious character. When asked to answer, "who are you?" half answered as their personal identity and half as their characters' identity. When asked "what are you wearing?" all participants answered as their characters' identity.

Due to the self-reported nature of the data I retrieved, there is the likelihood of social desirability bias affecting both the data and the results. Social desirability bias happens primarily in response to self-reported data, especially questionnaires. For my study, in particular, it is possible that the participants desired to look better educated or more professional and adjusted their answers accordingly. Another factor affecting the participants' responses is whether or not they were able to understand the full intent and exact nature of all of the questions I asked them. It is likely, and in fact common with some participants in the earlier interviews, that some participants did not fully understand the intent of my questions and therefore did not fully answer

them. Therefore, the conclusions I have drawn from this data should not be considered as absolute and indisputable facts. Instead, they should be regarded as a confirmation of the relationship between a theatrical costume and self-perception and a stepping stone towards further research and better understanding.

### **Ending Procedure**

The overall nature of this study has changed many times in order to accommodate a variety of factors such as time limit, resources available, and scheduling conflicts. Nevertheless, the final procedure was an effective system that helped to produce the results that follow below. Thanks to the emergent quality, or flexibility in changing environments, of quantitative work, I added additional interviews to include the makeup fitting since it falls under the umbrella of the overall costume of the character and should therefore be included in the phenomenon of a change of self-perception. The final interview was conducted during the middle of the run of the show rather than during dress rehearsals as had been planned. This was due primarily to complex scheduling and an overall misunderstanding of needs and expectations by involved parties who were not participants, i.e. the director Burton Tedesco and the costume shop manager Kelly James-Penot. With the gracious permission of the costume shop manager, I was able to conduct the final interviews in the makeup room with the participants in full costume. However, they were not in full makeup and hair.

### **Images – Renderings & Live Photographs**

I have included the original costume designs by Mackenzie Dunn and their corresponding photographs of the actor-participants' fittings as well as the original makeup designs by Rachel Roan and their corresponding photographs of the actor-participants' fittings in order to showcase

the costuming process from inception to completion. The photographs are in sequential order according to each participant's number, the category of either costume or makeup design, and their place in the progression from concept image to staged product. The actor-participants' real names were used on all original design copies and those names have been blacked out in order to preserve their identities.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

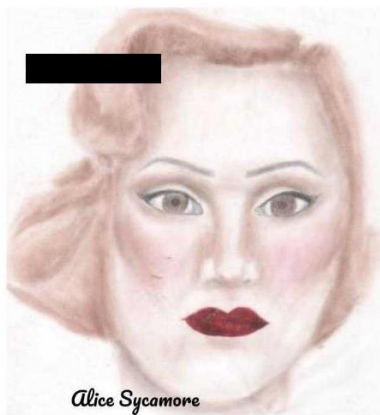


Alice Sycamore | [REDACTED]  
Look #1

*Image 1. Costume Design – Alice*



*Image 2. Costume Fitting Photo – Megan as Alice*



Alice Sycamore

*Image 3. Makeup Design – Alice*



*Image 4. Makeup Fitting Photo – Megan as Alice*

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

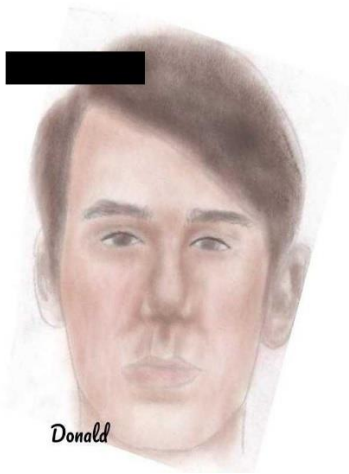


Donald | [REDACTED]  
Look #1

*Image 5. Costume Design – Donald*



*Image 6. Costume Fitting Photo – Clint as Donald*



Donald

*Image 7. Makeup Design – Donald*



*Image 8. Makeup Fitting - Clint as Donald*

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU



Essie Carmichael | [REDACTED]  
Look #1a



Image 10. Costume Fitting Photo – Isabella as Essie



Image 11. Makeup Design – Essie



Image 12. Makeup Fitting Photo - Isabella as Essie

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU



Mr. de Pinna | [REDACTED]  
Look #1

Image 13. Costume Design – DePinna



Image 14. Costume Fitting Photo – Taylor as DePinna



Mr. De Pinna

Image 15. Makeup Design – DePinna



Image 16. Makeup Fitting Photo - Taylor as DePinna



*Image 17. Production Shot - Megan Performing as Alice*



*Image 18. Production Shot - Clint Performing as Donald*





*Image 19. Production Shot - Isabella Performing as Essie*



*Image 20. Production Shot - Taylor Performing as DePinna*

**Pronoun Count Chart – Table. 1**

	<u>Participant #1</u> <i>Megan</i> <b>(G.F.)</b>	<u>Participant #2</u> <i>Clint</i> <b>(G.M.)</b>	<u>Participant #3</u> <i>Isabella</i> <b>(U.F.)</b>	<u>Participant #4</u> <i>Taylor</i> <b>(U.M.)</b>
Number of 1 <sup>st</sup> person pronouns directed at the participant's self	17   9   11   17   190 <b>244</b>	35   20   21   98   141 <b>315</b>	20   9   9   63   72 <b>173</b>	22   21   21   53   175 <b>292</b>
Number of 3 <sup>rd</sup> person pronouns directed at the fictional character	25   23   2   71   44 <b>165</b>	23   17   22   25   43 <b>130</b>	22   25   12   32   26 <b>117</b>	8   14   22   38   70 <b>152</b>
Number of 1 <sup>st</sup> person pronouns directed at the fictional character	0   0   14   8   21 <b>43</b>	0   0   0   9   26 <b>35</b>	17   0   0   1   31 <b>49</b>	0   0   6   7   15 <b>28</b>
Number of shared 1 <sup>st</sup> person pronouns between the participant and the fictional character (we, us)	5   6   0   3   0 <b>14</b>	2   5   0   0   0 <b>7</b>	0   4   0   2   0 <b>6</b>	0   3   0   2   0 <b>5</b>

Each row in this chart is defined by which pronoun is being counted and each column is defined by which participant's pronouns are being counted. At each cross-section are the individual counts of each interview separated by a tall line and the total of each type of pronoun underneath in its corresponding color. Each pronoun type is given a distinct highlighter color in order to aid understanding and future references of this chart. Participants were given a pseudonym in order to retain confidentiality despite their images being used as evidence. In parenthesis under each participant's pseudonym are initials that correspond to their class status and gender: Graduate/Undergraduate and Female/Male.

**RQ1: How do actors connect to their character during the costume transformation process?**

Acting is an inherently personal artistic endeavor and each show, character and actor will require a unique process in order to create effective art. As such, each actor-participant had a personal process during the rehearsal and performance of *You Can't Take it With You*. Their processes varied radically but had the common theme of finding an aspect of their fictional character through putting on their costumes, either in singular pieces or as a whole. In these aspects the participants connected to their character during the overall transformation process: time, status, and personality traits.

Megan (Alice) connected to her character's time period during the transformation process. The show is set during the 1930s and she expressed in multiple interviews how her costume helped her to understand that time period and make character decisions based on it. Here is an example from the 4<sup>th</sup> interview with Megan while she was in full costume (*Image 17*):

*EE: So then what's special about these costumes?*

*P1: They're just – they're period. I've never done – I mean I've done a period piece before – but not like this, you know? Crucible was a period piece but it was like a modernized period piece kinda. And, like you know I had that one costume whereas this one I've got four costumes. So like the costumes have played a huge part. Even in like transitioning who Alice is as a character throughout the show. (Pg. 9, Lines 277 – 282)*

For Clint (Donald), his fictional character's socioeconomic status became clear one he put on his costume. He played a low-class steward/friend of the Sycamore family that wore an

industrial, well-worn costume. Clint discussed how both the type of cloth of their character's costume, a heavy denim, and a certain makeup detail, artificial dirt, helped him connect to his character's circumstances. Here is an example from the 4<sup>th</sup> interview with Clint while he was in full costume (*Image. 18*):

*P2: Actually, with the makeup, I will say even though we cut it, the dirt was actually kind of helpful.*

*EE: Yeah?*

*P2: Just it helped me get into that poverty mindset. And, you know, when I – I thought immediately, “This looks like I’ve been working.” So I justified it in my head as, “Oh, he’s been in the mud trying to catch flies for Reba.” So that’s how I justified it. But, you know, we cut it. Yeah, the dirt, when I was using it, it did help and, you know, it still helps. I have like what I got from it. If it makes sense –*

*EE: Yeah.*

*P2: Even though I’m not using it anymore. (Pg. 6, Lines 166 – 174)*

Both Isabella (Essie) and Taylor (DePinna) connected to certain aspects of their fictional character's personalities during the transformation process. Isabella understood her character's flamboyance after putting on her character's tutu; Taylor inferred his character's diligent work ethic after donning his character's shoes. These specific personality traits are not explicitly written in the script and therefore it is up to the actor to determine whether or not they exist in the character and if so, how. Here is an example from the 4<sup>th</sup> interview with Isabella while she was in full costume (*Image. 19*):

P3: *I definitely feel more connected. Especially when I'm wearing this tutu. I feel like I have to always be like, "this," \*strikes a pseudo-ballet pose\* you know? Which is very like...*

EE: *Almost princess-y?*

P3: *Right, right. She's almost kind of like... not regal but like... I don't really know what the word would be. But, yeah, princess-y is a good way to put it.*

EE: *\*Laughs\**

P3: *So I feel like I have to feel like you know my posture has to be better because if I were in like my regular stuff, I would probably just be like doing this \*lounges in the chair\*. Or like, this kind of thing \*sits all the way forward with her hands on her knees\*, which is weird with the tutu. (Pg. 3, Lines 81 – 89)*

Finally, here is an example from the 4<sup>th</sup> interview with Taylor while he was in full costume (*Image. 20*):

P4: *Before I put on the costume – it was – I didn't really know what shoes I was wearing at the time so I was just kind of wearing dress shoes. And when I put on these big, clunky boots it gave me a different sense of the way he walks, the way he carries himself, the weight of the character, and you know different things like that. So, I think mainly more than anything the boots and the overalls.*

EE: *Yeah?*

P4: *Are the two things. Because they're both kind of heavy and kind of slouchy and kind of just dingy and worky. (Pg. 3 – 4, Lines 60 – 67)*

**RQ2: How is performance tied to costuming?**

In order to gauge how overall performance is tied to costuming, participants were asked to reflect upon their performance's effectiveness, how their costume may have influenced their performance, as well as their general attitude towards the importance of costumes after the run of their show had completed. According to those reflections, each participant confirmed a relationship between their purported effectiveness and their usage of a theatrical costume. When asked what that relationship was, not every participant gave the same answer, but every answer given was centered on the same theme: movement style. According to the participants' reflections, and confirmed by their responses in previous interviews, the cut and shape of the clothing, the fabric type of each piece, the tightness or looseness of fit, and even color had an effect on their movement style. Here are selections from each participant's reflections that in which they give specific examples of how their costume affected their style of movement:

Megan:

*"The costume 100 percent helps with my movement. You aren't really that character until you have put their own shoes on. Clothes help determine so much." (Pg. 1, Lines 17 – 18)*

Clint:

*"The one thing the costume added after the first fitting when the movement life was still in development (can't remember if I mentioned this) was a sense of instability. Don't know what it was about the costume that made me think unstable, but there you go." (Pg. 1, Lines 23 – 25)*

Isabella:

*“The final costume basically permits me to move the way I think [the fictional character] would move.” (Pg. 1, Lines 12 – 13)*

Taylor:

*“So I think the costume helped me in the movement aspect of this character the most simply by allowing me to feel the weight of the character as well as his weight shifts throughout the show.” (Pg. 1, Lines 23 – 25)*

Overall, 3 out of 4 participants claimed that costume and makeup were non-essential to theatre as a whole. Half of those participants stipulated that the necessity of costumes depends on the style of theatrical show and the type of audience that would pay to see that show. All participants agreed that this show, in particular, *You Can't Take It With You*, required costuming in order to help tell the story effectively. In the 4<sup>th</sup> interview, participants were asked if there was any other aspect of design to which they connected with and saw as integral to their characterization process. Answers included the lighting design and the set design. For this particular show, 3 out of 4 participants said that if they could only choose one of the two design elements they thought best helped them get into character, they would choose costumes for this show.

These responses reveal that costuming is tied to performance specifically through the movement aspect of performance. Costumes relate to the way actors carry themselves in order to portray their characters. This could include weight shifts, extended or shortened gestures, the speed of movements, ease or difficulty of gestures, and energetic or relaxed posture among other things. This is not to say that a lack of costuming leads to a lack of defined movement; but, a noticeable relationship has been established between the two. More research is needed in order to

determine if various degrees of costuming – from a full transformation to performing in one's own clothing – produce various degrees of relationships between costuming and movement style.

**RQ3: How does costuming influence self-referencing of character when in and out of costume?**

One of the fundamental aspects of my phenomenology study was to take a close look at pronoun usage at varying state of costuming for each participant. Usage of either first person or third person pronouns indicates either the internalizing or externalizing of events, experiences and articles of clothing. Because of this, and to aid in clarity, each pronoun participants used during their interviews was given a colored marker to indicate the context of its use: green, blue, pink, or yellow. The exact count of each pronoun is documented in the pronoun chart above according to interview number and context with the total of each count beneath in the corresponding color (*Table. 1 – Pronoun Chart*).

Green is used to represent first-person pronouns that are in reference to the participant's actions, emotional states, observations, and attitudes. Examples of these include standard responses to asking about basic demographic information and attitudes towards costumes as a whole. Unsurprisingly, this type of pronoun was the most commonly used as the interviews were focused on the participant's complete experience in integrating their costumes to their theatrical performance. Blue is used to represent third-person pronouns that are in reference to actions, clothing items, or emotional states of the fictional character. Whenever participants referred to their character as "he," "she," or "they," it was marked as a "blue" pronoun. As I predicted, these were the second most common type of pronoun used by participants over the course of the interview process.



Pink is used to represent first-person pronouns that are in reference to the fictional character's actions, clothing items, emotional states that the participant uses instead of first-person pronouns in reference to themselves. For example, if a participant used "I" while talking about their fictional character's relationship to one of the other characters in the show that counted as a "pink" pronoun. These indicate that the participant is internalizing their fictional character's experiences at that moment and claiming them as their own experiences rather than acknowledging that they belong to a fictional character by using a third person pronoun. These "pink" pronouns were primarily used while an actor was in full costume (*Images. 17 – 20*); and, specifically, while they were talking about their fictional character's costume. The two outliers found with Megan and Isabella are more than likely due to individual methods of artistic development. Megan's exception happened during the second half of the second interview as she was changing out of the first fitting of her costume, and Isabella's exception happened immediately following the first reading of the play with the entire cast.

Lastly, yellow is used to represent instances of shared pronouns between the participant and the fictional character such as, "us," or, "we." I believe that these instances of the shared first-person pronoun are indications of the shift between externalizing the fictional character's experiences and internalizing those experiences. Looking at the progression of pronoun usage, instances of the shared first-person pronoun ceased both immediately after the participant's first fitting (*Images. 2, 6, 10, & 14*) and while the participants were in full costume (*Images. 17 – 20*). This indicates a solidified shift between externalizing and internalizing their fictional character's experiences based on their amount of costuming.

Over the course of the interview process, the majority of pronouns used were "green" first-person pronouns or ones that referred to the participants' experiences. This is primarily due

to a large number of questions in the interviews that asked directly about the participant or the participant's process. The second largest group of pronouns used were "blue" third person pronouns that were used to discuss the fictional character's experiences. "Pink" first-person pronouns were uncommon until the final interview when their usage increased dramatically. Instances of the shared "yellow" pronoun were seldom yet not random. "Yellow" pronouns only occurred in the interviews while participants were not in full costume which implies their usage as a sort of transition between using "blue" and "green" pronouns to using "pink" ones to describe the characters (*Table. 1 – Pronoun Chart*).

The first few questions of every interview asked directly about the fictional character as a prompt to see with which pronoun type the participant would respond. Participants typically answered these first few questions with "green" and "blue" pronouns. That is, until the final interview while they were in full costume. During their last interview participants answered portions of most of those questions using the "pink" pronoun and some even answered entire questions using the "pink" pronoun (*Table 1. – Pronoun Chart*). This shift in pronoun context is exhibitivive of a definitive shift in sense of self within the actor-participant.

However, pronoun usage may not be the only indicator of a change of sense of self. During all of the participants' makeup fittings (*Images. 4, 8, 12, & 16*), they would answer questions about their character's makeup and hairstyle by looking into the surrounding mirrors at themselves rather than the drawn image of the character's look and then give the answer using the third person pronoun. This implies that they used looking directly at their reflection in order to look at their fictional character.

Finally, this relationship between pronoun usage and costumes may extend over longer periods of time rather than just during the performance of a theatrical show. When asked, all

participants could remember a previous theatrical show in which they had performed where their characterization was influenced by their costume to some degree. When asked for more details, each participant used the “pink” pronoun at least once to talk about their previous role as a different theatrical character in a different show. Here are examples from each participant:

Megan:

*P1: And the only other time I could think of before that I did was A Chorus Line when I got the, I was Val so I got the two-piece. Like, you know like 70s, like the –*

*EE: Super high waist –*

*P1: Yeah, yeah. That was, you know, like, “Yes! I am here now. I am ready to audition!” So costumes play a big part of it for me. (Pg. 7 – 8, Lines 236 – 240)*

Clint:

*P2: So I was wearing, and you know I had tights and all that, but I was wearing this like – you know I don't know costumes so I don't know what they're called – but, this shirt that had like, it was like a fishnet shirt but it was brown. And then like this vest that was basically like an old sack and like these brown – I think they're called pumpkin pants, they're probably not called pumpkin pants – but –*

*EE: Cause they kind of puff out a little?*

*P2: Yeah! But they were like way too big for me and that was the intention and they were also like old and ragged and brown. And then... can't remember what I was wearing for shoes. And then like this hat. And I had like a pouch. And that is what I was wearing when I was Shylock's servant. Then he gets picked up by Bassanio who – he's not the*

*main character of the play, he's the romantic lead I guess? He gets picked up by Bassanio, Bassanio basically buys him off of Shylock. And when I come back out in the third act, and for the rest of the play, that's when it really becomes clear that I'm meant to be the clown, you know. And I was wearing this... I can't even describe it. This – I think the brown, ragged pumpkin-pants that were too big were replaced with perfect-fitting pumpkin-pants that were silver. (Pg. 7, Lines 202 – 216)*

Isabella:

*P3: It was actually a male character but we gender bent it so I played it as a woman. But there was these pants that I wore that were like high-waist and like fabulous and she was very rich. And posh and like dangerous. She was kind of like a rebel without a cause but –*

*EE: Nice.*

*P3: – Also very like, "I'm better than you." You know? And so I had these like beautiful pants that I just felt like a queen in. But also like really badass because you know women weren't wearing pants at that time. And then I had this beautiful gown that was like silk kind of? I think it was silk. But it was very sleek and orange. (Pg. 4 – 5, Lines 126 – 133)*

Taylor:

*P4: I know! But I remember I had these, like, boots that went all the way up to my knee. I had these breeches on. I had this, like, it was the shirt. It was really a woman's blouse, but it was really, like –*

*EE: Fluffy?*

P4: *Fluffy and it was so much fun. And then I had like this tight maroon jacket on over it that had long coattails.*

EE: *Nice.*

P4: *And I remember putting that costume on and immediately my whole like energy just kind of went up. And I was like, "Oh!" Cause the jacket kind of snatched your waist in a little bit. The boots had you feeling some type of way. It was like strutting across the stage. "I'm Prince Ferdinand. What you going to do about it?" (Pg. 7, Lines 210 – 220)*

While this particular sensitivity to time is not included in this phenomenology study, it could be the basis of further investigation.

#### **RQ4: How does an actor's sense of self change as they transform into the character for a theatrical production?**

As I previously discussed, the context of first-person pronouns shifted as the participant's costumes became more finalized; and, as revealed in the pronoun chart, changed context from referring to their own identity to their character's identity. By using that data, I determined that participants felt most "transformed" into their fictional character while they were in full costume during the 4<sup>th</sup> interview (*Images. 17 – 20*). My evidence for this is in their usage of "pink" pronouns. While used in earlier interviews, including one participant who used a high number during their first interview, the highest concentration of "pink" pronouns was during the final interview. Despite only being in full costume and not in full hair and makeup, participants still experienced a noteworthy change.

The standard format of my interviews began with the question, "Tell me about the role," as a way to stay pronoun neutral and leave the answer up for interpretation by the participant.

However, during the last interview while the participants were in full costume I began with the question “Tell me about you.” I used this to gauge whether or not they initially believed I was asking about their personal identity or their fictitious character's. Half of the participants assumed I was asking about their personal identity and the other assumed that I was asking about their character's identity. There is a gender disparity between which identity the participant assumed I was asking about. All of the male participants assumed I was asking about their personal identity and all of the female participants assumed I was asking about their character's identity. More research is needed to determine if this relationship is sustained in other circumstances, or if this relationship is due to the particular set of participants gathered for this study.

Megan (Alice) interpreted the question as asking about herself playing her character and proceeded to give a detailed description of her character in both the 3<sup>rd</sup> person-pronoun and the “pink” 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun. She even corrected herself once from using the “pink” pronoun to using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. After asking what look she was wearing, she shifted to the “pink” pronoun again. Here is the dialogue as I transcribed from my recording:

*EE: Alright, this is the final interview with [Megan] on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Tell me about you.*

*PI: So I'm playing Essie – no, not Essie, I'm sorry.*

*EE: \*Laughs\**

*PI: I've got Essie in my head. I'm playing Alice – I was literally like, “Hm. Essie Carmichael.” – No, I'm playing Alice Sycamore. She is the youngest daughter of Penny and Paul. I live in the – she lives in the Vanderhoff household with Essie and her*

*husband, and her mother and father, and grandfather. She works on Wall Street. She's the secretary for Mr. Anthony Kirby. And has fallen madly in love with his son who's the vice president of Kirby & Company. (Pg. 1, Lines 11 – 18)*

Clint (Donald) interpreted the question as asking about himself as his own identity and generously gave a long description of his current life events, some of which were cut from the transcript for clarity, relevancy, and his privacy. After I brought the conversation back to his fictional character in *You Can't Take it With You*, he described his character using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. Despite a tendency towards using the “green” 1st person and the “blue” 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, there are two instances in which he used the “pink” pronoun while describing their character. Here is the dialogue as I transcribed from my recording:

*EE: So tell me about the character.*

*P2: Okay, so the character - \*Laughs\**

*EE: \*Laughs\* Transition a little bit here.*

*P2: The character is the exact opposite of everything I just spewed out. The character doesn't have – Donald doesn't have a care in the world. He's, you know, he's just goes through life. And you know he's, he's on relief so he gets free money from the government. And he's just, I've really enjoyed this character because he's just the happiest, carefree. And you know I – yeah. He's just – there's not really anything that bothers him. I mean he doesn't like waiting in line for relief, but that's like the only thing he complains about. And I've been playing with moments of like whenever **I** – you know, cause you know the show as well as I do now.*

*EE: Yeah.*

P2: *So we both know that the character is not incredibly smart. I've been playing with moments of like when he gets things wrong he's aware of them and he has like a brief moment of, "Aw, well." But then like something else happens and it immediately –*

EE: *Well yeah –*

P2: *It just takes his mind off of it.*

EE: *Yeah.*

P2: *Like for example, the Russian Revolution. Like that whole bit where I mistake it with the American Revolution. And he's like, "No, no Donald. The Russian Revolution." I've incorporated a moment of, "Aw, dammit, wrong again." But then grandpa comes in! Like, oh! "Hi, grandpa!" So, yeah. Just very, very carefree like very – yeah, just doesn't really... The existential crisis that is on my mind all the time is just –*

EE: *Is not on Donald's.*

P2: *No. I don't think he even knows what existentialism means. \*Laughs\* (Pg. 1 – 2, Lines 24 – 47)*

Isabella (Essie) interpreted the question as asking about her fictional character only and began describing her fictional character's personality and relationship in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person-pronoun before correcting herself to the "pink" person pronoun and then switching back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person-pronoun. The exact reason for this swift shift is unclear, but I believe it to be the result of her conscious effort to submerge herself within the character's identity in order to either better answer the question or feel more effective in her craft. Here is the dialogue as I transcribed from my recording:



EE: *This is the final interview with [Isabella] on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Yes, that's the date.*

*Okay. Tell me about you.*

P3: *Me? As a person?*

EE: *Which one did you think I meant?*

P3: *Essie [the fictional character].*

EE: *Then tell me about Essie.*

P3: *Okay. Essie is, well, **me, I** am a 29-year-old wannabe ballerina. She's very free-spirited, she's very energetic, expansive. She loves everyone. Very different from me. She's very social, outgoing, yeah.*

EE: *Yeah?*

P3: *She loves life, just like her family. (Pg. 1, Lines 11 – 21)*

Taylor (DePinna) interpreted the question as asking about his own identity but became uncomfortable talking about himself and almost immediately switched to talking about his fictional character in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. He was the only participant not to use the “pink” pronoun at least once while describing his character. More research is necessary to determine why this happened, if it's an isolated event, and if this disuse correlates to his assumption that I asked the question about his personal identity. Here is the dialogue as I transcribed from my recording:

EE: *This is the fourth and final with [Taylor] on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Tell me about you.*

P4: *Me as a person? Or my character?*

EE: *Which one did you think I meant first?*

P4: *I think you meant me, but I don't know.*

EE: *Tell me about both.*

P4: *Okay.*

EE: *Yeah.*

P4: *Well, I don't know about me. No, kidding. I am a recent BFA –*

EE: *Congratulations!*

P4: *Thank you.*

EE: *That's awesome.*

P4: *I know I just found out so that's pretty cool. So, yeah. I just watch Netflix and that's it.*

*But anyway, Mr. DePinna – I know more about –*

EE: *Yes.*

P4: *– Mr. DePinna than I know about myself. He is just a fun guy.*

EE: *Yeah.*

P4: *You know? He enjoys life. He enjoys where he is in life. I think that he enjoys being part of this family. He enjoys just being a part of something. And I think it's just the cherry on top that it's this wonderful family that he gets to be a part of. And so he just really enjoys himself and really relishes in everything that life throws at him even though the things that go on in the house are very wacky and crazy, you know. I think – I think he loves it.*

*EE: Yeah.*

*P4: He loves it. I think it gives his life of purpose, a sense of excitement that he's really drawn to and I think that's why he loves this family so much. (Pg. 1 – 2, Lines 11 – 34)*

Despite the variety of initial responses to that question, when a similar question was asked later on about their costume rather than their character, all participants used the “pink” 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun. The question was “What look are you wearing right now?” At the risk of being a leading question, this was worded in order to see if asking directly about the fictional character’s clothing would trigger the “pink” 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun response. It did; all participants used the “pink” pronoun in order to describe their character’s costume. The opposite response to this would have begun using the character’s name and then using 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns yet none of the participants responded in this way. More research is needed to confirm this relationship: if wording the question in a different way yields the same results, if wearing a less transformative costume yields the same results, and if asking the question during show conditions yields the same results are all valid questions that cannot be answered with my phenomenology study. Here are each participant’s responses to the question, “What look are you wearing right now?”

Megan

*EE: What look are you wearing right now?*

*P1: This is look #1. This is **my** office attire. So it's a little more formal green dress with these dark brown flowers. **I** have pearl earrings, tights, white shoes, a flowered hat – cause **I** assume **I** just walked back from work. So, yeah. (Pg. 1, Lines 19 – 22)*

Clint

EE: *So, which look are you wearing right now?*

P2: *This is **my** main look. This is, you know, the green shirt and the overalls and the boots. **I** don't have my hat on because **I** barely wear it. That's kind of just a coming and –*

EE: *Enter and exit.*

P2: *Yeah, you know. **I'm** not wearing Reba's bathrobe right now. So it's the one **I'm** wearing for pretty much every scene in the show except for the date scene. (Pg. 2 – 3, Lines 63 – 68)*

Isabella

EE: *Yeah. Which look are you wearing?*

P3: *Right now, **I'm** in my final form, I guess you could say. With the big tutu and the leotard and the tights and the dancing shoes. This is whenever **I** come out to have **my** lesson with Kolenkhov. (Pg. 1, Lines 22 – 24)*

Taylor

EE: *Yeah. Which look are you wearing right now?*

P4: *Right now I'm wearing **my** second look. **I** have brown work boots with **my** overalls and **my** dingy gray shirt and **my** little –*

EE: *Little cap.*

P4: *Little hat. And I chose this look because I really think it shows who DePinna is to his core he's a very simple guy. He is just kind of a go-with-the-flow type dude, you know. He just... he's just kind of here enjoying things. Just kind of, you know, feeling it out and I*

*think that this, this outfit in particular really gives me that sense of – a sense that I didn't necessary have before I put on the costume. (Pg. 2, Line 50 – 58)*

### **Conclusion**

It is a common misconception that the arts and the sciences are completely discrete and therefore have no way to mutually develop understandings across disciplines and methods. The analytical system of hard science and the experiential system of theatre have many opportunities to work well together – including my own work and other similar works. In my work, these two systems collaborated by both asking the question, “Is to wear to be?” by analyzing the unique experience of wearing a theatrical costume for performance. The purpose of my study was to observe and detail the effect that theatrical costuming has on an actor's self-perception of both their own artistic process of creation and on their fictional character's personality on stage, and determine whether or not there was a relationship between the two.

My phenomenology study has found that there is a definite though not yet substantially measured relationship between an actor's theatrical costume for a performance and a distinct change of self-identification they experience while in rehearsals and in performances. However, this phenomenon is far from fully detailed and more research is required in order to fully understand and document the effects of donning a theatrical costume for a performance. It a possible stepping stone for potentially a myriad of new understandings to come. In the world of psychology, these details could help inspire studies towards understanding self-perception and one's relationships to clothing as well influence psychiatric aid for those struggling with identity confusion. In the theatre world, this could help make informed decisions about costuming and character building. In both worlds, and in the world of the general population, these results begin

to solve the mystery of how clothing relates to self-perception and to bridge the gap between the theatrical arts and empirical sciences

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**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17110805

PROJECT TITLE: The Art of the Dress: How Getting into Costume Affects an Actor's Self-Perception

PROJECT TYPE: Honor's Thesis Project

RESEARCHER(S): Ella Embry

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Letters

DEPARTMENT: Theatre and Dance

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 11/09/2017 to 11/08/2018

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**

**Institutional Review Board**

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