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STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research interests are in a sense far-reaching, because as a designer I can easily fall into a “rabbit hole” of deeply researching nearly any historical subject, but they are also narrow in that I always focus on the social, art, and fashion context of my chosen area of research. I believe history is told through the way humans choose to adorn themselves and the world around them, and I am fascinated by the methods by which they do so. I am particularly drawn to researching subjects concerning women, disenfranchised peoples, and other untold pockets of history and society.

For my Master’s thesis I researched 1850s French and American fashion, art history, and culture, as could be applied to costume designing Mark Twain’s farce, *Is He Dead?* For this task I approached the script from several angles: I read literature published in the United States and France in the time period for social cues and clothing descriptions, I studied Mark Twain’s life for parallels and inspiration for the play, and I researched the fashion and social histories of 19th century France and the United States; the setting for the play and the context through which the play was written, respectively. I used this volume of research to design the costumes and visual character arc for each character in the play.

Most recently I have been researching the life and societal context of Elizabeth “Lizzie” Keckley, a woman born into slavery who ultimately became Mary Todd Lincoln’s personal mantua maker, with the intention of writing a screenplay about her life. I find Ms. Keckley’s life both fascinating and inspiring, and I find particular personal connection with her as a dressmaker. I have read a wide variety of slave narratives alongside Ms. Keckley’s own autobiography, and researched the fashion of enslaved peoples to supplement the knowledge of American Antebellum and Post-Civil War fashion I have already amassed. Later this year I plan to visit some of the places where Ms. Keckley lived and worked, and glean as much information from visiting those places as possible.

I hope to ultimately become a professor of theatre or theatre design, and to teach while keeping relevant in my field through research and writing as well as through working as a designer, writer, and producer. I am an ambitious, hard-working person with a clear point of view, a strong set of skills, and an ability to work with people from all walks of life. I love teaching and witnessing students go through a transformation over the course of our time together. I believe I could be the ideal addition to a teaching staff, because I will strive to uplift both my students through teaching



and support, and the department through research, publication, and keeping relevant outside the academic environment.