We assumed the role of Director last class, when we re-worked the opening scene of *Macbeth*. We will maintain this persona while we examine the play. Throughout, we should be thinking:

* What would I do?
* How would I stage the action?

We rely today on special effects. On what did Shakespeare's audience rely? Remember that much of Shakespeare is poetry--blank verse, defined as unrhymed iambic pentameter, and therefore is based on inference, and a knowledge of the traditional figures of speech:

simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, paradox, and irony -- among many others.

**I. Diction: CONNOTATION and DENOTATION** (implied contextually) and literal (dictionary meaning). There are several dictionaries available for Shakespearean research, chief of which of course is the OED, The Oxford English Dictionary. The OED provides entomologies, with prolific historical examples, many of which are from Renaissance

**II. Common figures of speech:**

A. metaphor and simile: links the abstract to the concrete; the macrocosm and microcosm)

B. alliteration--repetition of a consonant sound in succeeding words

C. personification--giving human characteristics to the non-living

D. paradox--an apparent contradiction, but logical in context

E. irony--implying the opposite of what is intended: dramatic--audience knows more than the character verbal--what the character says is different from what is meant; either intentional or unintentional situational--the dramatic context evolves in a way different from what the actions of the characters intend.

**III. Imagery:**

A. creating mental pictures that can dominate a scene or a whole play

B. motifs--images that unify a scene or an entire play--disease in Hamlet, blood, fair is foul in *Macbeth*, for example Common motifs: blood garden macrocosm/microcosm animal disorder symbols unnatural happenings sexual imagery storms-thunder etc. nature

**IV. Patterns within a line of verse:**

A. repetition of key ideas using parallel syntax patterns

B. antithesis--opposite ideas are syntactically balanced...see examples below

**V. Dramatic devices:**

A. soliloquy--character alone on stage reveals his/her inner thoughts to... himself, audience, another character? function: dramatization of consciousness.

B. aside--a mini-soliloquy--other characters on the stage who "suspend disbelief" and pretend not to hear.

C. manipulation of time--foreshadowing, flashback devices may occur by using figures of speech and/or motifs

[NOTE: In Shakespeare, several of the above devices may be used simultaneously.]

**VI. Creating character:**

A. actions? speech? relationship to others? degree of deception? use of irony? Reaction of character to his/her situation? Course of action? What frustrates action?

B. dramatization of consciousness

**VII. Themes and central ideas:** A Shakespeare play generally has what is called a theme passage. Its purpose is to define the meaning of the play in a single group of lines. The imagery, motifs and figures of speech in the passage will be echoed throughout the play. When this happens, we have a motif. The theme passage is usually in the first act and is spoken by a major character. By doing a comparative study of the theme passage it is possible to determine the evolution of Shakespeare's art as developed from period to period, especially regarding the treatment of common thematic material such as ...

love - hate - revenge - passion vs. reason - death - murder - growth - decay - honor -

courage - cowardice - the supernatural - witches/ghosts - devils - order and degree in the

universe - insanity - psychology of leadership - ambition - terror - fear - compassion...

[Note: Other than the BIBLE, it is difficult to imagine any other material besides the

works of Shakespeare that dramatize so fully what it means to be human.]