SPEAKING POUND’S LANGUAGE:
THE ROLE OF ELEKTRA IN SOPHOCLES’
ELEKTRA. A VERSION BY EZRA POUND

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Master of Fine Arts in the
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By
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The Ohio State University
2002

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This MFA thesis documents the entire process of my research, preparation, rehearsal and performance of the role of Elektra in Sophocles' Elektra, a version by Ezra Pound and Rudd Fleming. My central investigation for this thesis was focused on how to portray a classical Greek character using the systems of language that Pound has impressively created. Research for this thesis role began with a study of the lives and major works of Ezra Pound and Sophocles. The many similarities between Pound's life and the character of Elektra became useful in my character development and analysis. Studying other translations of the play and other Greek myths related to Elektra's story also provided pertinent information. The rehearsal and performance log focuses on actor challenges that I faced during the process. In this thesis I have provided a documentation and analysis of my role by describing each phase of the process.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I thank Maureen Ryan in helping me to find a vocal warm-up that I will now carry with me forever.

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I am grateful to Regina Rockensies who performed her thesis role in the same production. It was a blessing to be able to bounce our sorrows and joys off one another.

I also wish to thank my mother, father and Christopher for their patience, encouragement and love during “this ever flowing monotony of ugly print marks, black upon white parchment.”(Ezra Pound)
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(dir. Sue Ott Rowlands)

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Young Welty/
Stella Rondo
OSU
(dir. Gloria Baxter)

1999
Marriage
Agafya
OSU
(dir. Anatoly Morosov)

1998
An Empty Plate at the
Café Du Grande Boueff
Restaurant Patron
The Berkshire Theatre
Festival, Mainstage
(dir. John Rando)

Childe Rowland/
Cap O’Rushes
Burd Ellen/
Evil Sister
BTF, Unicorn
(dir. Cassandra Johnson)

Different Dreams
Gladys
Classic Stage Co., NYC
(dir. Maria Vail Guevera)

The Hot L’
Baltimore
Millie
Ramapo College of New
Jersey (dir. Shona Tucker)

1997
Blood Wedding
Mother
RCNJ
(dir. Steven Perry)

Molière’s Les
Precieuses Ridicules
Magdelon
RCNJ
(dir. Rafael Bianciotto)

1996
The Lights
Rose
RCNJ
(dir. Maria Vail Guevera)

The Good Times are
Killing Me
Aunt
RCNJ
(dir. Steven Perry)

Margaret

Romeo and Juliet
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INTRODUCTION

On April 25, 2001, I was offered the role of Elektra in Sophocles’ Elektra, a version by Ezra Pound, to be performed in the Mount Hall black box space at The Ohio State University, from October 31 through November 18, 2001. I accepted with nervous anticipation, knowing that such a role would be quite a challenge. Since the age of four, when I used to perform the entire Annie record in front of my family, I have known I loved to act. Through grammar school, high school, and college I continued to entertain this growing passion. If a graduate thesis role was to be the sum total of all that got me to where I was, I stood with open arms ready to embrace the commitment whole heartedly.

After carefully reading through Elektra, and the introduction by Carey Perloff, it became clear to me how unique Pound’s approach was to this Greek text. Pound’s version was different from traditional translations of the play. It immediately felt simpler, devoid of emotion, and surprisingly, even contained elements of comedy. In choosing many systems of language with which to write the play, Pound utilized a mixture of dialects (such as Irish and Cockney), played constantly with rhythm and sound, and invented his own Greek text for moments when the characters could no longer find a way to express themselves in English. I was anxious to delve into the world of the character and to explore how this new way of translating would affect what choices I made on stage.
My investigation for this thesis focused on how to portray a classical Greek character using the systems of language that Pound had adapted. With my knowledge of how to work with complex texts, I translated the sounds, words, and rhythms into actions that could be played out on a stage. Inside the cacophony of poetry in Pound's version were beautiful images, historical and mythological references that must be fully realized before they could be shared with an audience. With the different uses of language, especially the Greek, it was important to be aware of what I was saying at all times while remembering to keep the language active andactable.

Throughout my schooling at The Ohio State University, my acting education was based mostly on the work of Constantin Stanislavski and Sanford Meisner. I will discuss these teachers and their acting styles in greater detail in Chapter 3 on Methodology. Using these methods of actor training, combined with the study of heightened language and complex texts, I approached the character of Elektra with delicacy. Research on Ezra Pound's life and his other works, also aided in the character development of Elektra. Familiarizing myself with Sophocles and with the Greek myths related to Elektra's story were also crucial aspects of my research.

This thesis is divided into five chapters, which revolve around the central issue of investigation: to effectively portray the character of Elektra by utilizing the language of Ezra Pound. Chapter 1 contains a summation of my research, including playwright and production history, historical research and character analysis. In Chapter 2, I include the circumstances of production and the casting process. A scored script, published by New Directions in 1990, and a brief description of my acting methodology is compiled in Chapter 3. All textual references used come from that edition. Chapter 4 consists of a
log that documents my creative process from pre-production through performance. I evaluate my work during the entire thesis project in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH

Sophocles

To better understand Sophocles’ play Elektra it was important for me not only to become familiar with Sophocles as a man and a playwright, but also with the period of time in which he was writing. The following research contains aspects of ancient Greek life, Greek theatre, and biographical facts about Sophocles, including his major influences and writing style. This information provided me with an introduction into the world and language of the Greeks, and became a stepping-stone for the remainder of my research.

The Theatre of Dionysus was established during the Great Dionysia, an Athenian festival held every spring to honor Dionysus, the god of fertility and wine. During 700 BC, his worship flourished with festivals full of drunkenness and sexuality. To celebrate the seasonal changes of planting and harvesting, the people sang, prayed for good crops, gave thanks, and made sacrifices for plentiful harvests. The festivals also provided a time for sacred ritual and sacrifice (Snodgrass 81).

The area at the foot of the hill in Athens called the Acropolis was transformed from a place of worship to a place of performance (Reilly 14). The festivals featured a
competition among three dramatists, each with his group of players. Each troupe performed four plays, which included three dramas based on Greek myth and a satyr play. The dramas did not have to be connected in story, although the playwrights sometimes chose to produce a trilogy (Snodgrass 83).

Classical Greek drama probably began as lyric poems that were sung or chanted by a chorus. The stories revolved around love, war, government and social behavior. The role of the chorus was to

... create a psychological and emotional background to the action through its odes; it introduced and questioned new characters, chastised and admonished wayward characters, sympathized with victims, elucidated events as they occurred, established facts and affirmed the outlook of society, covered the passage of time between events, and separated episodes. (Snodgrass 89)

The dramas, however, featured male actors who would play all of the characters. The standard in the play was to feature one actor that interacted with the chorus. The actors used masks to represent different characters, but could only play one role at a time. The dramatists are best described as dramatic poets rather than playwrights, and the chorus dominated the Greek dramas up until the fifth century. As the actors’ roles took on greater importance, the role of the chorus eventually diminished (Snodgrass 88).

The characters were heroic and larger than life. The actors were expressively masked and wore formal costumes. The word ‘tragedy’ literally translates into ‘goat song’, indicative of the goatskins worn by the early chorus members. Long flowing sleeves, high belts, and colors used to indicate different moods all helped to improve the spectacle for the audience.

The stories used for the tragedies relied heavily on mythic source material. The presentational acting style remained until Euripides’ move towards naturalism by the end
of the century. Five major sections made up the structure of classical tragedies, a
framework that was not interrupted by intermissions or breaks. A prologue opened the
play and revealed background information. The parados introduced the chorus who
entered chanting a lyric in relation to the play’s theme. The plot developed in scenes
between actors during the episode where the chorus played a lesser role. A choral ode
called the stasimon came at the end of each episode. The plays ended with the exodos,
the final action following the last stasimon. The play concluded with a ceremonial exit of
all the players.

Most of the violence in a Greek play happened off stage and was told to the
audience by the chorus. Very little physical action took place on stage. The audience’s
attention was held by the way in which a playwright like Sophocles would interpret a
well-known myth. As the audience members watched, they learned about Athenian
culture, making the introduction of theatre one of the great intellectual achievements of
the time (Snodgrass 91).

An anonymous biography discovered in Paris in the thirteenth century, revealed
some key information about Sophocles and his work. Sophocles was born in 496 BC at
Colonus, a mile northwest of Athens. His father, Sophillus, owned a weapon factory.
Sophillus was a wealthy man with many military contracts, which he retained by keeping
his political opinions to himself.

Sophocles was praised as a youth for his abilities in school work, the study of
music and athletics, and went on to become a great tragedian and citizen during the
golden years of Athens (Webster 1). He was brought up with the Athenian ideas of
grace, beauty, intelligence, and social status. His musical studies were with Lamprus, the
best teacher of the day, who preferred classical styles and frowned upon the more
contemporary notions of music. Sophocles reportedly received instruction in tragedy
from Aeschylus, his elder, and was ten to fifteen years older than Euripides.

At the age of sixteen, Sophocles was chosen to lead a chorus of male singers in
the traditional victory hymn during the Battle of Salamis, fought against the Persians.
During this time, Sophocles also excelled in wrestling, dancing, and playing the lyre. He
even developed a public following for his stage appearances, which continued until his
voice grew weak and he left the stage. His departure from the stage broke the tradition of
playwrights acting in their own works (Snodgrass 123).

Sophocles belonged to an aristocratic and cultured circle, an environment that
suited his own thoughts on writing. He began writing poems and hymns at an early age,
incorporating the intellectual ideas of his day into his work. Sophocles won his first
writing competition with the story of Triptolemus in 468 BC, beating out Aeschylus, the
reigning champion of tragedians. Sophocles went on to lead a very successful life as a
dramatist. He won approximately eighteen victories at the Dionysian festivals, never
placing less than second place in competition.

Sophocles added a third character to Greek drama and in doing so, changed the
nature of playwriting, as we know it. Plays now lent themselves to greater dramatic
conflict and smoother expositions of plot. Sophocles was also the first to use painted
scenery, enlarge the chorus from twelve to fifteen, and separate trilogies, which
traditionally featured a single theme (Snodgrass 125). Antigone, Oedipus the King, and
Oedipus at Colonus, all centered on the Oedipus myth, are Sophocles’ three most famous
tragedies, but were not written to be performed as a set like Aeschylus’ Oresteia.
Sophocles kept returning to the central myth and wrote those plays over a course of about forty years. Forty-one tragedies, or one hundred and twenty-three plays, are credited to Sophocles, who also wrote a number of hymns, poems, and prose works which were lost in antiquity. Based on references made by Aristophanes in his own work, Sophocles’ *Elektra* must have been produced between 418 and 408 BC (Webster 5). Only seven of the tragedies have survived and all draw on mythology for their inspiration.

To fulfill his interest in dramatic theory, Sophocles formed a society called the ‘Company of the Educated’ or the ‘Company of Muses’ that met to discuss the problems in literature and drama. This was the first philosophical organization of its kind, and may also have been a religious institution, since each meeting began by sacrificing to the Muses (Webster 7). Sophocles was said to be very religious, and was later given the hero name Dexion and the priest name of Halon for goods deeds done during the great plague at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war (Webster 14).

Sophocles was a devoted and worthy citizen. In 443 BC he was named Hellenotamis, or president of the imperial treasury. Elected *strategos* in 440 BC, Sophocles served as general with Pericles in the Samian War at age fifty-four. Although disputed, it is said that Sophocles served as general twice more in 444 BC and 428 BC. Sophocles served the public heavily between 441 and 421 BC. Aristophanes recounted how Sophocles, in his old age, was one of the ten chosen to manage the affairs of Athens. After its failed Sicilian expedition, Athens chose the group of men to be in charge of the city until a more substantial government was arranged (Webster 13).

Sophocles led a content life complicated only by his personal relationships. He greatly valued physical beauty, and since religion and morality were kept separate in
Greek philosophy, Sophocles' relations with younger men neither conflicted with his relationship with his family, nor harmed his reputation. Late in his life, Sophocles took a female lover named Theoris of Sicyon and had an illegitimate son named Ariston.

Ariston's son, Sophocles' grandson, also became a poet and tragedian, winning seven victories at the Dionysian festivals. Iophon, Sophocles' legitimate son, had difficulty accepting his father's favoritism towards the illegitimate child. Iophon's discomforts led to a court battle where Sophocles was accused of senility. To prove his sanity, Sophocles read a portion of his latest play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, aloud to the jury (Snodgrass 124).

Although Iophon challenged his father in this instance, evidence suggests that he and Sophocles later worked happily together while competing for prizes in tragic poetry.

Sophocles "had such charm of character that he was beloved by all" (Webster 16). Like Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles' love for and duty to Athens was so strong that temptation from foreign courts to hold positions in other cities was never entertained (Webster 17.) He remained in Athens his whole life, living and working for and among his people. Sophocles was nicknamed "the Attic Bee" and lived up to his name as he quietly poured over his verses (Snodgrass 125). A content and peaceful man, Sophocles died at the age of ninety. He was buried at a family plot in Dulcelea, a mile or so outside the city walls. Sophocles' epitaph read, "Blessed Sophocles who lived long and died happy and wise when he had written many beautiful tragedies. He ended well, having suffered no ill" (Webster 15). Many legends have been uncovered, most giving unique descriptions of Sophocles' death in an attempt to immortalize the man loved by so many.

Many individuals helped Sophocles formulate his own opinions as a man, a playwright, and an Athenian. The poet Homer, author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,
greatly influenced Sophocles and acted as an artistic influence for Sophocles’ character
drawings, prologues, and language techniques. Sophocles was called, in fact, “the most
Homer of poets” (Webster 49). The lyric poet Pindar helped Sophocles in terms of
thought. They shared the same views regarding the relationship between god and man,
the aristocratic ideal, modesty, good counsel, and law. Pindar shared his belief in physis
(nature or personality) with Sophocles. From these ideas, Sophocles’ plots began to
focus more on his chief characters, and their high standards of conduct. Characters such
as Ajax, Elektra, and Oedipus embodied those high ideals (Webster 164).

As mentioned earlier, Sophocles learned the art of writing tragedy primarily
through the teachings of Aeschylus. Greek audiences were accustomed to conventions of
tragic performance that limited stage movement and concealed facial expressions with
masks. They were accustomed, as well, to imagining events described through flowery
language. Sophocles was the first playwright to experiment with new methods of
portraying emotions through the use of language (Long 164).

Sophocles became interested eventually in the arguments and attitudes reflected in
the writings of Herodotus, Euripides, and Thucydides. These sophists, or critical
reasoners, correlated the development of human culture to the intelligence of man.
Weary of using intellect as a weapon, Sophocles concentrated on valuing the creativeness
of the human spirit as a tool for cultural progress. Sophocles’ writing was not only
poetic, but also complex and highly controlled. He found ways to incorporate his own
worldview into his works.

Sophocles’ interest in religion influenced his writing. Using oracles, dreams, and
omens as framework in his plots, Sophocles helped perpetuate the traditional beliefs in
the existence and power of the gods (Webster 22). He believed in the acceptance of the
 gods’ will (as Aeschylus did), but not in the jealousy of the gods or their continuing
 punishment of mortals from generation to generation (Webster 52).

The concepts of Fortune and Time and the belief in life after death, also played a
role in the works of Sophocles. Each ruled men’s affairs and complicated their lives.
Sophocles’ writing sheds a light more optimistic than pessimistic, yet realizes the
powerlessness of man before the gods. The gods of Sophocles were present but
unattainable. His characters battled with religious determination and free will without
neglecting human responsibility (Webster 34). Even Plato’s theory concerning the strong
ruling the weak was a part of Sophocles’ view on the nature of man (Webster 45). Myth
and prophecy were communicated through a blend of speech and silence, revealing and
concealing, and relaying information while pointing to details that were easily missed.
Myth and prophecy influenced the action of the plays with depth and presence
(Budelmann 132). Traditional religion mixed with philosophy, goods deeds, personality,
and upbringing, were the essential elements of Sophocles’ work.

The aftermath of the Persian War and the difficulties in managing affairs of state
caus ed the optimism of the Aeschylean view to grow more and more remote. While his
contemporaries wrote about the forces of love and justice, Sophocles concentrated on the
individual. He wrote about men and women whose personal standards conflicted with
society, and how their personal values helped them to survive in such a hostile
environment. His interest in the individual provided subtler moral and emotional
characters than those which Aeschylus devised (Scott 150).
Sophoclean characters were engaging because of their intentions and feelings. Although they never revealed themselves fully in any one speech, they contained an inwardness and depth that was new to Greek tragedy. Sophoclean language communicated by leaving much unsaid and unclarified (Budelmann 271). Defined as a dramatic poet rather than a philosopher because the individualistic views of his characters often were different from his own opinions, Sophocles prompted original thinking by using his plays to convey new ideas to the public. (Webster 18). When reflecting on the characters of Sophocles, Aristotle stated, “If a poet is criticized for representing something that is not true, perhaps what he represents is as it ought to be; just as Sophocles himself said that he created people as they ought to be while Euripides created them as they are” (Budelmann 88).

In terms of style, Sophocles recognized his writing as coming from three different stages. The first he described as his rigid, pompous Aeschylean stage. There followed an unpleasant and artificial second stage of writing. In his final stage, characterized by spontaneous, natural, and abstract writing, Sophocles reportedly said he had found the most well adapted form of speech (Webster 143). Through examinations of vocabulary and style scholars have determined that Trichinia was one of his early plays, Tyrannus and Antigone were in the middle, and Philoctetes and Elektra came later (Webster 144). The main differences between his early and late plays can be seen in the freer verse and explicit thought of his later works and the picturesque argument of the earlier works (Webster156). Sophocles was said to be more complex and original than Euripides, but less obtrusive than Aeschylus in that he stayed out of his own way. His unusual words harmonized so well together they were often compared to musical phrases (Long 4).
Sophocles' vocabulary was vast. An artist of language, Sophocles chose his words and manners of expression very carefully. Formal requirements such as meter were important for emphasis of ideas or emotions (Long 2). In his lyrics and dialogue he utilized the words of Homer and Aeschylus, as well as contemporary prose and everyday speech. The later plays reflect less Homeric and Aeschylean adaptations and more of Sophocles' shorter and simpler variations (Webster 148).

J.W. Mackail, when asked about Sophocles' abstract qualities spoke of his work as "fine to the verge of thinness, precise to the verge of hardness... this language gives an air of severity, without detracting from the effect of naturalness and pathos" (Long 7). Like Ezra Pound, Sophocles' writing was abstract and less colorful than his contemporaries. The broken-hearted short sentences in Elektra's lament reflect an emotionalism and realism Sophocles was not capable of in his earlier works. He strove to adapt language to the speaker. Evoking the use of dramatic irony, movement of thought became more complex. Sophocles was conscious of the relationship between language and thought, an awareness that can be seen particularly in his later works.

Sophocles' realistic style enlightened the characters and their situations, while the more contemporary rhetoric allowed them to express themselves on a more emotional level (Webster 153). When Orestes reveals himself to Elektra, the emotion is accompanied by a realistic style, action, time, and place. Centuries later, when asked about Sophoclean characters, Goethe replied:

That is the very thing in which Sophocles is a master; and in which consists the very life of the dramatic in general. His characters all possess the gift of eloquence and know how to explain the motives for their action so convincingly that the hearer is almost always on the side of the last speaker. (Budelmann 89)
Sophocles relied on simple techniques that helped to create patterns in his writing. His ability to join sentences or to combine sections stemmed from his knowledge of repetition, antithesis, alliteration, and assonance, all of which he used in his writing to a greater extent than Aeschylus. He used different types of repetition, which added emotional emphasis and a fullness of expression. By utilizing these writing devices Sophocles was able to heighten the emotional intensity in his work.

Rather than alienating the audience, Sophocles’ use of abstract language intrigued them and provided them with material for speculation and added to active nature of Sophocles’ plays. For example, in Antigone, Sophocles utilizes the abstract subject, “there will be weeping for them,” instead of “they will weep.” The abstract object of an auxiliary verb in Trachiniae allows Sophocles to say, “maintain a pious silence,” instead of “be reverently silent.” An abstract as an alternative to an adjective is used in Elektra as “full of shamelessness,” instead of “utterly shameless” (Long 10). Through the use of abstract language, Sophocles keeps the text alive and active for actors and audiences.

Sophocles’ use of abstract language was suited to certain idiomatic ways of expressing the emotions and moods of his characters. It was also a way to present an argument, compare or contrast ideas, and highlight certain aspects of a situation. These techniques fit superbly into the metrical shape of his plays, and allowed Sophocles to embellish with style (Long 167). The sentences pointed to something beyond their words. Characters went out of their way to be clear, and at the same time suggested that there was more to be understood. Sophocles’ writing had a way of involving the
community in a new world that went beyond the sound of the words. He challenged the audience to find what was hinted at but never said (Budelmann 59-60).

Using a strong sense of rhythm, Sophocles produced work that held a particular shape and pattern. In this century Gordon Kirkwood stated, “In Sophocles to a degree greater than in Aeschylus or Euripides the development of a tragic action depends on the interplay of characters” (Budelmann 89). Sense and rhythm helped to compare and contrast minor characters with the main figure, and Sophocles’ craftsmanship with the language supplied beautiful sounds that added to the emotionality of the work. His characters were idealistic, recognizable, and central to the action, capable of winning people over with their sense of presence alone. Sophocles wanted to share these great personalities with the Athenian public, putting them in surroundings that showed their strengths and weaknesses (Webster 171).

Sophocles brought life to his writing by connecting language and thought, uniting perfection of form with significance of feeling. Cohesion was attained through subtlety and discipline of emotion (Long 168). Through his delicate use of language, Sophocles encouraged involvement in the lives of his characters and developed a style that was uniquely his own.

_Ezra Pound_

To fully embrace my central investigation in this thesis, it was necessary to turn my attention next to Ezra Pound. The following paragraphs contain Pound’s biographical history, and information about Pound as a writer and a translator. Examples of his writing
style are included. Details regarding the major influences on his writing and in his life also aided me in comprehending the complex world of Ezra Pound.

On October 30, 1885 Ezra Pound was born to Homer and Isabel Weston Pound in Hailey, Idaho. The Pound family moved around, and then settled in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. After attending public schools and a military academy, Pound made the first of many trips to Europe in his early teens. Pound went on to obtain a BA from Graduates Hamilton College in New York in 1905 and the MA in Romance Languages from the University of Pennsylvania in the spring of 1906 (Nadel xvii-iii).

At the completion of his schooling, Pound relocated to Europe and published his first book (at his own expense) in Venice in the summer of 1908. For the next six years, Pound traveled back and forth between Europe and America, publishing early works in Boston and London. In 1914, he married Dorothy Shakespear and settled in London where, shortly after, he began work on his most prized collection, The Cantos. Between 1914 and 1920 Ezra Pound surrounded himself with strong influences such as T.S. Eliot, and Major C.H. Douglas, who introduced Pound to the Social Credit System. These influences informed his strong opinions regarding economics, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Pound relocated to Paris in April 1921 and became acquainted with other prominent figures including Ernest Hemmingway and Picasso. Moving again to Italy in 1924, Pound alternated between Rapallo and Sicily, finally settling in Venice in 1929 with Olga Rudge. Their relationship lasted forty-nine years. Throughout the 1920s, three main movements affecting many artists also made an impact on Pound's views. The use of passports, the inadequate copyright laws in the United States, and Article 211
of the US Penal Code, all aided in Pound's turn towards politics and economics (Nadel 255). After the stock market crashed in 1929, the Great Depression set in, and Pound made a definite shift from smaller social concerns to larger economic issues.

In the midst of these changing times, Faber published Pound's *Active Anthology*, the first Imagist anthology, in the early 1930s. The work reflected Pound's innovative thoughts on the art of writing poetry. Ezra Pound had already been nicknamed an Imagist during the Futurist movement of 1912 when artists were desperately trying to break up the conventions of their time. Three principles of good writing were agreed upon between Pound, English poet Richard Aldington, and old friend and poet Hilda Doolittle. Direct treatment of the subject was the first principle. The second was to eliminate any word that was not essential to the presentation. Finally, when dealing with the poem's rhythm, following the musical phrase rather than strict regularity, was the last principle to adhere to (Stock 115). Pound believed that "image" was "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (Wilson 95). These thoughts on writing would later influence how Pound translated, especially in his versions of Greek and Japanese Noh texts.

Pound continued to write, edit, translate, send numerous letters, and have his work published in London and New York during the 1930s. His love for economics grew and he gave lectures in Milan on "volitionist economics." Pound explained that his aim was to "express the fundamentals of economics so simply and clearly that even people of different economic schools and factions would be able to understand each other when they discussed them" (qtd. in Stock 309). He reduced the economic problem to four main points: the product, the want, the means of transport, and the certificates of value. Eager
to share his economic views, he also appeared in many periodicals that surfaced during the 1930s. Pound believed that without the knowledge of economics one could never understand the inner workings of modern history and modern life (Stock 309).

Around this time, Ezra Pound’s interest in fascism also began to peak. Pound began to make comments such as, “I personally think extremely well of Mussolini, with whom it was impossible to compare the last three American presidents or British prime ministers without insulting him” (qtd. in Stock 265). When Pound was in Rome in January of 1933 he secured an interview with Benito Mussolini, the Prime Minister of Italy. This marked an important day for Pound as he presented the head of the Italian government with proposals for monetary and economic reform. Mussolini was less than interested, and remarked that he found the work, “divertente,” meaning entertaining. However, the meeting fueled Pound’s interest in the actions of the United States government (Stock 307). He became consumed with ideas for economic and political reform. In December of 1934, after refusing to write an article that did not concentrate on economics and politics, he stated, “There is too much future, and nobody but me and Muss/ and a half a dozen others to attend to it” (qtd. in Stock 324). It became more and more difficult for his work to get published during those years, and Pound’s politics grew increasingly ambiguous as the war drew closer in 1939.

By 1940, Ezra Pound was isolated in many ways. With World War II in its early stages in the states, Pound continued to defend the Italian and German way of life. Pound was a lonely man constantly thinking of the future, committed to his mission of changing the world economically and culturally. To Pound, the corruption of the world economic
system was one of the main causes of the war. He felt strongly that future wars could be prevented through economic reform.

After heavy correspondence throughout the early 1940s with literary friends such as James Joyce, E.E. Cummings, and T.S. Eliot, Pound got his chance to tell the American people what was happening abroad. From 1941 to 1943, Pound was broadcast on short-wave radio from Rome to America. Pound argued his talks were in support of the US. Constitution, but to most the broadcasts were critical of Roosevelt and the war and were also anti-Semitic (Nadel xxv). Pound disliked the Jews who supported Roosevelt. He asserted that Jews were ruining England and made derogatory comments about the Jewish religion in general. Shortly thereafter, Pound was refused permission to leave Italy on a train carrying other Americans. He continued to broadcast twice a week until he was indicted by the American government on treason charges. The announcement made before each of his broadcasts was as follows:

Rome Radio, acting in accordance with the Fascist policy of intellectual freedom and free expression of opinion by those who are qualified to hold it, has offered Dr. Ezra Pound the use of the microphone twice a week. It is understood that he will not be asked to say anything whatsoever that goes against his conscience, or anything incompatible with his duties as a citizen of the United States of America. (Stock 393)

The American government was not satisfied by the announcement and Ezra Pound was indicted by the Grand Jury in Washington, DC on thirteen counts of treason on July 26, 1943. Pound was surprised to find that his broadcasts were being monitored by the United Stated Federal Communications Commission and had been brought to the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. According to Pound in years to follow, the announcement before each broadcast showed the proof of Fascism's insight, as well
as proof of his innocence against treason. To Pound, the statement was about freedom of expression for those qualified to hold an opinion (Stock 393).

When Italy was taken over by the Germans in September of 1943, Ezra Pound made a 450-mile journey to Tyrol to see his daughter Mary. Years later he added his experiences on the road, as well as the fall of Fascism, to his most famous collection of poetry, The Cantos. In May of 1945, one month after Mussolini was apprehended and killed, Pound was formally arrested. He was brought to the United States Army Disciplinary Training Center north of Pisa where, exposed to the elements, he was confined outdoors in a steel pen for three weeks. Moved to a tent in the medical compound where he was allowed books and writing utensils, Pound’s health weakened from hysteria and fear (Stock 409). On November 16, 1945 Pound arrived in Washington to stand trial on an increased number of treasonable offenses, but the trial was postponed until a psychiatric examination was completed. Ezra Pound was deemed medically unfit to stand trial on December 21, 1945 and was committed to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Washington DC, where he spent the next twelve and a half years.

In 1947, Pound was transferred from the criminal section of St. Elizabeth’s to the more pleasant Chestnut Ward and was visited by guests such as T.S Eliot, Thorton Wilder, and Langston Hughes. Pound kept up correspondence, but it was more condensed than his letters in the 1930s. His work continued to be published during his time at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, including a version of Sophocles’ The Women of Trachis, the only translation he did of Sophocles other than Elektra. His co-translator
was Rudd Fleming, a classicist from the University of Maryland. I will be discussing this translation and Pound's experience in the hospital later in this chapter.

On May 7, 1958, a petition to discharge Pound, based on the assumption that he would remain medically unfit to stand trial, was heard and granted by the US District Court. Pound was seventy-two years old. Before returning to Italy, Pound visited his childhood home in Pennsylvania, and arrived by boat in Naples on July 9, 1958. He posed onboard for the cameras offering a fascist salute, and was quoted as saying that, "all America was an insane asylum" (qtd. in Napel xxix). By the fall of 1960, Ezra Pound had become severely silent and depressed. The silence was caused by old age, self-doubt, and by a constant inner contemplation (Wilhelm 6). He was also operated on in the early 1960s for urinary problems. In 1963, he received the Academy of American Poets Award. In 1966 Pound declared, "I did not enter into silence, silence captured me" (qtd. in Napel, xxx). He was filled with remorse and regret for much of the writing that he had hoped would change the political and economic world. Pound was also suffering from his physical ailments, which included an emergency operation to prevent uraemic poisoning of the blood. When Allan Ginsberg praised Pound for "showing the world the way," and for being the best of his time, Pound replied, "Any good I've done has been spoiled by bad intentions . . . But the worst mistake I made was that stupid suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism" (qtd. in Wilhelm 7).

Before his death, Ezra Pound did make some public appearances much to the surprise and delight of his audiences. In 1969, he unexpectedly arrived at a meeting of the Academy of American Poets in New York. Pound also visited Hamilton College where he received an honorary degree along with a standing ovation. Ezra Pound died in
Venice at the age of eighty-seven on November 1, 1972, and was buried in the Protestant section of the city's island cemetery of San Michele.

Ezra Pound was best known in the theatre community for his translations of classical Greek plays including Women of Trachis and Elektra in 1957, and Certain Noble Plays of Japan in 1916. To understand Pound's more personal opinions and values, one can look at his Spirit of Romance in 1910, The Natural Philosophy of Love in 1922, The Treatise of Harmony in 1924, Polite Essays of 1937, and Essays on Ignorance and the Decline of American Civilization published in 1960. Other than these major works which established Pound as a major poet and essayist, those interested in his theories on economics and politics should read his ABC of Economics in 1934 and Jefferson and/or Mussolini published in 1935. The depth and complexity found in his writing spurs continued interest in his work.

Ezra Pound's life is reflected throughout his work with a blazing intensity. His love for literature and the artist shines through in his pre-World War I prose. Pound's countless writings on politics and economics, the power of his translations, and his search for simplicity all point to his use of language to forcing people to, "Wake up and live!" (qtd. in Nadel 17).

Though largely influenced by his economic and political beliefs, Pound was still first and foremost a poet, translator, editor, critic, and lover of literature and music. He created complex works drawing on traditions from the French, Italian, American, English, and Chinese. His epic poem, The Cantos, reflects these traditions as well as elements of his personal life, and took over forty years to create (Nadel 1).

22
Vitality in art was important to Pound, but his interest in Imagism and Vorticism kept him away from more expressionistic and romantic presentations. The three certain rules of Imagism mentioned previously and the idea of Vorticism emerged around the same time. Both systems evolved mainly in response to the birth of modernism and new technologies. Pound described Imagism as a “vortex from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing” (qtd. in Nadel 3). Pound’s use of the Chinese ideogram in *The Cantos* was a perfect example of how he put his new methods into practice. Pound explained that the ideogram “means the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures” (qtd. in Nadel 2). No matter what language he chose, Pound’s new ways of writing allowed his readers to actively respond to his works.

Pound was aware of his place in modernism, throughout his literary circle and the world at large. W.B. Yeats quoted the writing of Pound as being “interrupted, broken, twisted into nothing by its direct opposite, nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion,” and at the same time recognized that Pound “has great influence, more perhaps than any contemporary except Elliot” (qtd. in Nadel 13). During the time spent at St. Elizabeth’s, Pound embraced his modern methods. Some examples of this new form exist in *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius*. Pound’s complete translation of Shih Ching. Each selection presents a variety of lyricism and style. Traditional characteristics such as a skipping rhythm appeared, “Plucking the vine leaves, hear my song: / ‘A day without him is three months long.’ ” However, Pound’s more modern devices favored a choppier rhythm and uneven lines that broke these traditional forms:

Twixt door and screen  
At moon-rise

23
I hear
Her departing sighs. (qtd. in Stock 434)

By going against the traditional norms, Pound opened up a new range of possibilities within the poetic landscape.

Another major influence on Pound was music. Pound and Olga Rudge promoted many concerts in and around Rapallo in the mid-1930s, and shared their love for music with the public. Beginning simply with Mozart sonatas for violin and piano, Pound promoted the concerts in the American papers, and soon they grew in popularity. Pound was said to have described poetry by saying that the "meaning is all tied up with the sound" (qtd. in Nadel 18). Pound even went on to write two operas and various articles on musical criticism.

A young American poet named Mary Barnard once wrote to Pound for encouragement regarding her translation of Sappho. In his response Pound discussed at length the value of sounds within the poetry (Stock 320). Pound’s approach to musicality allowed his writing to flourish in The Cantos. Treating language as a series of musical phrases allowed him to build the poetry line by line, while the work continually moved forward, slowly developing like a phrase of music (Stock 291). The importance of music also can be seen in Pound’s translations of Noh and Greek texts, discussed later in this chapter.

Pound once stated that “a man can learn more about poetry by really knowing and examining a few of the best poems than by meandering about among a great many” (qtd. in Nadel 11). To understand the methods, style and use of language embodied in Ezra Pound’s writing, one can look to The Cantos, published in nine separate volumes beginning in 1925 and ending in 1969. This body of work spanned Pound’s life,
reflecting his interests over the years. Pound viewed the work as instrumental in molding the future. Taking the use of language to a new extreme, Pound utilized his knowledge of Chinese ideograms, musical notations, and hieroglyphics in The Cantos. The poem combines myth, autobiographical information, and the history of literature through different cultures in an exploration of many themes, all directed towards the search for paradise. Pound’s advice to his readers was, “Skip anything you don’t understand and go on till you pick it up again. All tosh about foreign languages making it difficult. The quotes are all either explained at once by repeat or they are definitely of the things indicated” (qtd. in Nadel 9).

In Pound’s early Cantos, mythical and legendary materials are portrayed. Pound depicts Odysseus, the voyager who seeks out the ghosts of the past to gain knowledge. This basic theme is explored throughout the work (Wilhelm 12). Pound had already begun to idealize Confucius in his writing and to question the modern age. During the middle year Cantos, the freer techniques of his earlier Cantos are replaced with a more methodical and rhetorical approach (Wilhelm 16). Pound mentions Jefferson, Mussolini, and other historical figures and bases his writing on letters, thoughts, and poems. He discusses the tranquility of the Chinese landscape and debates Taoism and Buddhism. Pound turns then to the art of government, and writes about John Adam’s role in creating the Constitution and America’s view of Europe (Nadel 7).

In The Pisan Cantos (Cantos LXXII-LXXIII), written when Pound was held in Pisa following his arrest and later at St. Elizabeth’s, Pound’s writing becomes more reflective and troubling. The Europe that Pound once knew was a fading memory and he dreamt of an improved society of mythic visions and Confucian ideals. Pound’s
translation of Sophocles’ Elektra strongly reflects his state of mind. Writing in the way
that he observed the outside world, Pound’s verse reflects his moods: silly, firm,
dignified, intelligent, fragmented, and confused. Pound dealt with ideas that concerned
him with his true gift of lyricism, and was able to express himself through his writing.

The Rock-Drill Cantos (Cantos LXXXV-XCV) serve both as a summation and a
reference back to the American and Chinese Cantos, promoting the Confucian ideas that
moral values can be learned from the past. The Rock-Drill Cantos bring the entire poem
to a conclusion, pausing, and then moving forward to “paradise.” An extremely personal
element is presented in this section of the Cantos as Pound toys with moments of escape
from his own incarceration. Although The Pisan Cantos are also personal, they contain
dream-like quality. In The Rock-Drill Cantos a sense of true anguish exists (John 183).

“Canto 90,” a portion of The Rock-Drill Cantos provides a great deal of
information directly related to the study of Pound’s version of Elektra. To describe the
road to paradise in the poem, Pound returns to the classical gods and the Greek idea of an
underworld. It is the most lyrical of all the later cantos with a Latin incantation at the
beginning that speaks about loving from the soul. Pound was extremely conscious of the
correlations between man and nature, light and shadow, and good versus evil. Although
“Canto 90” is smooth and beautiful on the surface, an underlying sense of violence can be
derived from the poem. It speaks of crying out, and of using love’s force to be heard
from within the shadows. These feelings run parallel to Elektra’s own plight.

“Canto 90” reflects a sense of renewal and continual change. Pound found ways
to subtly include his own combat against the forces that controlled his life and
imprisoned him at the time. From the depths he had fallen, Pound found ways to express
his personal angst without disclosing private details or confessions (John 184). Through torment, the soul moves towards Heaven with clarity and simple fluidity (Wilhelm 84). The Cantos celebrates both downfalls and successes, and rises out of despair with the aid of love, mercy, and the forces of nature. A magic moment happens at the end of “Canto 90” when dark turns to light, Hell becomes Heaven, and the damned are free to make their ascent.

thick smoke, purple, rising
bright flame now on the altar
the crystal funnel of air
out of Erebus, the delivered,
Tyro, Alcmen, free now, ascending
e i cavalieri, [and the chevaliers]
ascending,
no shades more,
lights among them, enkindled,
and the dark shade of courage
Elektra
Bowed still with the wrongs of Aegisthus
Trees die & the dream remains
Not love but that love flows from it
ex animo
& cannot ergo delight in itself
but only in the love flowing from it. (qtd. in Wilhelm 86)

The relentless movement of time, destruction, fortune, and change are apparent in “Canto 90.” Pound brought together his knowledge of the Chinese, Greek, and Roman sensibilities to create a spectacular moment in literature where all the forms he had built were able to take flight. The end of Rock-Drill shows a way forward that may be hazardous, but possible, as the journey winds to a close. Pound was in his seventies, and there was little time left to reach paradise (John 190).

At the conclusion of The Cantos, an overly humble Pound turns inward for fulfillment and seems haunted by the fear that he had failed in his mission to create such
an epic poem. Despite his newly found self-awareness, guilt and regret in his failure to build the perfect world fill the lines:

.Le Paradis n’est pas artificial [Paradise is not artificial]
    But is jagged,
For a flash,
    for an hour.
Then agony,
    Then an hour,
then agony,
Hilary stumbles, but the Divine Mind is abundant
unceasing
    improvisatore [improviser, spontaneous]

Pound expresses political action only in terms of love for the people and their prosperity, an idealistic pursuit clearly presented in the later Cantos. Pound uses this section to continue his faith in the retributive force of nature (Wilhelm 4). These later Cantos look forward to a possible paradiso. The celebration of nature and light come at the close of the piece, and lines like “a wind of darkness hurst against forest” appear. These later fragments were written during the war and were followed by Pound’s own reflections of failure at creating what he thought was an unsuccessful attempt at brilliance (Nadel 8). Pound ends The Cantos with:

I have tried to write Paradise
* * * * * * * * *
Let the Gods forgive what I have made
Let those I love try to forgive what I have made. (qtd. in Nadel 16)

Although Pound may have felt that way, it was not the general consensus. In a tribute to Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway wrote,

Any poet born in this century or in the last ten years of the preceding century who can honestly say that he has not been influenced by or learned greatly from the work of Ezra Pound deserves to be pitied rather
than rebuked. . . . The best of Pound’s writing—and it is in the Cantos—will last as long as there is any literature. (qtd. in Stock 304)

Pound may not have been totally confident in his original works, but he was a tenacious man who also familiarized himself with the knowledge of translation, a skill he later suggested that all young poets become acquainted with to better their own writing. Ezra Pound knew that at the age of fifteen he wanted to be a poet and was determined to know more about poetry when he was thirty than any man alive. He quickly came to understand the dynamic content of the poem and what could not be lost in translation, as well as the effects that were attainable in one language only and not translatable at all (Stock 12).

Throughout his studies of the Romance languages, Pound paid more attention to meaning rather than to the grammar. Approximating the sounds, rhythms, and stress patterns of the original language, Pound was able to invent his version, in meaning and atmosphere, of the original material. Pound said there was “no need to keep verbal literality for phrases which sing and run naturally in the original” (qtd. in Nadel 18). The idea that every language had its own ingenious tone or way of conveying a message was important to Ezra Pound, and he looked for ways to capture the internal rhythms of the original piece. By utilizing his knowledge of many languages, and believing that English alone could not do the job perfectly, Pound explored new ways to translate that were neither literal nor strict in form. His approach focused on tackling the poem through intuition and emotion, rather than on creating a translation through rational thought. In doing, so his translations serve as acts of homage, windows into new worlds, and personal reflections of his life and thoughts (Faber 10). Although critics often debate Pound’s skill as a translator, he has made a lasting impression on the art of translation.
Not unlike his version of *Elektra*, much of Pound’s earlier works in translation utilized the traits of assonance and alliteration. He also used English to imitate accents, speeches pattern, and rhythms found in other languages. By doing so, he was able to develop the thought and feelings of those languages and to express them in English (Faber 11). One cannot simply translate words and still keep the integrity of the writer’s intentions. The importance of a moment, thought, image, or feeling, must be recognized for the vision to stay intact. Pound understood how to remain faithful to the images that were presented and the rhythms that were being produced.

In addition to his groundbreaking translations of Confucious, Pound also was intrigued by the correlation between the practices of Japanese Noh and Greek theatre. Pound believed that the ancient Greek plays should not be neglected and drew up a manifesto calling for the language to be maintained in a healthy condition. The manifesto was signed by at least ten university professors (Stock 432).

Noh plays originated in the fourteenth century in the Japanese courts and consisted of dancing, chanting, the presence of ghosts, and text that is half-spoken and half-sung (Faber 214). Like Pound’s work, Noh reflected nature and the cycle of life through familiar stories with stock characters similar to Greek plays. In Noh plays, the journey of the character is told through symbolic gestures and interpretive dances. In both Greek and Noh plays, the elaborate presentation of a well-known story was built up around a single moral conviction. For the Greeks, trouble was solved by the Gods, while the Japanese called upon numerous ghosts and spirits (Faber 247). In both types of plays, a chorus helped to elaborate on the events that occurred on stage and primitive but intense forms of drama were practiced.
In terms of language, both Noh and Greek plays used speech that was metrical and contained an organic structure with separate lyrical units (Faber 269). Greek dialogue, whether trivial or revolving around a dramatic issue, was still plain conversation delivered in rapid exchanges of words or interjections, all meant to keep the audience in suspense (Spearman xvii). Pound admired the clean lines and spare sentences in Noh plays, and decided that Greek literature had the power to retain its freshness and relevance through the use of this sort of distilled translation.

Pound also put his love for music to good use when translating these two forms of theatre. Both styles rely on music, dance, and rhythm to tell the story with success. Ancient Greek contains sounds called pampsuxos, meaning “all breathing,” that don’t appear in other languages. Pound believed that a good translation took all of those specificities into account to allow the dramatic sense of the work to seep through (Perloff xii). The simplicity of those styles allowed Pound to translate poetry in what he believed was the most effective way. In a 1912 poetry review Pound stated,

The poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppycock, it will be harder and saner, it will be... nearer the bone. It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth... It will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din and luxurious rot. It will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither. (qtd. in Nadel 2)

Pound explained that although the stories in these plays come from the past, the present meanings still apply.

Whether translating from Chinese, Greek, or Latin, the voice used was always Pound’s voice. His discipline in translation, and the use of literature as the first step towards moral action, was found in the tone of his work. Pound wanted the public to
understand that the “arts work on life as history works on the development of civilization and literature. The artist seeks out the luminous detail and presents it” (qtd. in Nadel 20).

The simple and refined style of Sophocles helped support Pound’s idea that not all classic texts translated to English must be done so in the old speech of the Elizabethan era. As was to be expected, Pound’s approach to translating Sophocles was consistent with views reflected in his earlier translations. When translating from Greek to English, Pound wanted the thoughts and beliefs from that previous age to be transformed into words that were spoken by the present generation (Spearman xiii). Pound commented that the language was “. . . straight talk- straight as the Greek” (qtd. in Perloff xii).

After abstracting the truth from within a great classic, Pound searched for contemporary speech that would allow an audience to respond to the ancient text. He took great pains in finding precise meanings in lines or sections of dialogue, but did not force himself to adhere to the Greek syntax. He lengthened or shortened lines as he saw fit, and produced a translation that was more artistic than academic in terms of method. Pound did not feel compelled to stick to any rules or regulations on the proper ways a Greek text should be translated.

Pound’s translation of Sophocles’ Women of Trachis, published in London around 1956, contained experiments that explored the way words sounded and how words blended with each other. These two characteristics followed his formula of preserving the accuracy of the original while allowing the translator to take part in the creation of something new and alive:

Daysair is left alone,
So sorry a bird,
For whom, afore, so many suitors tried.
And shall I ask what thing is heart’s desire,
Or how love fall to sleep with tearless eye,
So worn by fear away, of dangerous road,
A manless bride to mourn in vacant room,
Expecting ever the worse,
of dooms to come? (qtd. in Stock 436)

Women of Trachis stirred many debates concerning Pound’s accuracy and the appropriateness of his language. Some Greek scholars and conservative reviewers did not favor Pound’s style. Although Pound stuck to what he called the “key phrase of the play,” his commitment to simplicity and directness of speech was deemed improper for translating tragedy. Pound worked hard to draw a clear picture between the old and the new. His language, vivid and devoid of monotony, made it seem as if the characters were really talking to each other, more so than most other translations. A brief comparison between Pound and two other translations illustrates this point. In an earlier translation of Trachiniae, Lewis Campbell wrote, “Go then, my son; though late to learn and do / what wisdom bids, hath certainty of gain” (qtd. in Spearman xvi). Gilbert Murray translated the same passage into, “Go then my son. To have done the right, though late / the knowledge came, must needs be fortunate” (qtd. in Spearman xvi). Getting a kick out of the loving and considerate chitchat of a mother, Pound boils down the passage into, “Well, get going. A bit late, but a good job’s worth a bonus” (qtd. in Spearman xvi). The simplicity in Pound’s shortcuts removed the lecturing or philosophizing aspects and allowed the characters to warmly speak from the heart (Spearman xvi).

The only other translation Ezra Pound did of Sophocles’ work was the version of Elektra, written in 1951 during his confinement at St. Elizabeth’s. The translation was thought to be unfinished since Pound had never sought to have it published. It all began when Rudd Fleming, a classicist from the University of Maryland, brought Pound his
own rendering of the Tutor’s central speech in Elektra. Fleming encouraged Pound to translate the same speech that weaves the false tale of Orestes’ death in a chariot race to the mourning Elektra and pleased Klytemnestra. Translation of that speech eventually led to translation of the entire play. Fleming helped to fill in whatever Pound left unfinished until the play was translated in its entirety. It was not realized until much later that the translation was, in fact, a finished product. The following paragraphs contain some of the features of this version of Elektra that embody the true spirit and nature of Ezra Pound.

When Pound accepted Fleming’s first proposal to translate the Tutor’s speech, he appropriately endowed Sophocles’ sly messenger with the quick talking style of an Irish bookie, hustler, or conman:

and the wheels a-rollin’, and the horses a-snortin’
and their sweat spattered over the cars,
and their breath steamin’ on the drovers in front of ‘em
and Orestes come round at the turn . . . (Pound 30)

Pound builds up the suspense by using a contemporary rhythm that adheres to the Greek rhythms inherent in the text. His command of dialects assisted him in exploring verbal deception in Elektra. Orestes, Elektra’s brother, written with the swagger and style of an American cowboy, comes back to avenge his father and reclaim his inheritance. In Pound’s version, Orestes says:

This is what we’re a-goin’ to do,
listen sharp and check up if
I miss any bullseyes . . . 
you nip into this building, find out everything that’s
being done here, and keep us wise to the lot of it. Snap. (Pound 4)

Later on, Pound gives Orestes a cockney accent as a disguise:

Eh, can any of you ladies
tell me: did we hear right and  
are we getting’ to where we wanted to come to? (Pound 48)

Pound’s version also vividly portrays what a vulgar and scheming woman  
Sophocles created in Klytemnestra. Her harsh reality cannot be compared with other  
translations. In the Leob Classic translation we find the following:  

So once again I find thee here at large,  
For he who kept thee close and so restrained  
thy scandalous tongue, Aegisthus, is away. (qtd. in Perloff xiii)

In Pound’s version the same speech is rendered quite differently:  

Out here again making trouble, might have known it  
now Aegisthus’ not here.  
he keeps you from making dirt on the family doorstep.  
He’s away and you pay no attention to me. (Pound 23)

Even the language of Pound’s chorus uses can be compared to black American speech,  
new slang, film talk, song lyrics, and possibly the mad ramblings of his fellow patients at  
St. Elizabeth’s. By leaving some sections of the chorus completely in Greek, Pound  
emphasizes the close relationship between the chorus and Elektra, who also speaks Greek  
periodically throughout the play. When the chorus urges Elektra to stop mourning for  
Orestes, they begin in English and then switch to Greek. The passage concludes with the  
stage directions “emphatic and explicit with meaning to ram it in” (Pound 8).  

But you won’t get him out of black hell  
By praying and groaning  
you destroy yourself with too much of it,  
no harm to let up for a little.  
ALL OUTOI TON GEX AIDA  
PANGKOINOU LIMNAS PATER ANSTASEIS  
OUTE GOOIS OUTE EUXAIΣ  
Nothing to be DONE about it. (Pound 8)

Pound utilizes the strong stresses and sounds in the Greek language to hammer home the  
intent of Sophocles’ scolding chorus. By integrating some of the original Greek into his
translation, Pound also allowed the Chorus and Elektra to share their own personal language, and the two worlds between public and private language were integrated (Perloff xix).

It was not surprising that Pound chose this play to translate, as the correlations between his own life and Elektra's story can clearly be deciphered. *Elektra* explores the madness of incessant remembering. The story resembles Pound's experience in St. Elizabeth's where it was hard to forget or to erase the past. Pound's *Elektra* declares:

> Split his head with an axe as
> a woodcutter splits a billet of oak,
> and that killed him
> and nobody else in the house seems to mind.
> Well I'm not going to forget it
> and all the stars can shine on it, all of them
> destiny
>    tears of hate
>    all flaming rips
>    of the stars
>    tide
> and the day can look on it.
> I won't stand it and just keep quiet. (Pound 6)

The debate concerning Elektra's sanity parallels Pound's sanity hearing when he stood trial for treason. Elektra feels damned for refusing to forget the past and spends her life like a caged animal, seeing the sunlight only when Aegisthus is away. Her plight resembles Pound's experience at the training center in Pisa and in the hospital where he was let outside only a few times a week (Perloff xv).

The play is full of images of light and shadow and immersed with the idea of memory. These elements fuse together to create a highly emotional and expressive tale of defiance. Pound achieves the richness through his sparse style, expressing the inexpressible in as few words as possible. When Elektra finally realizes the stranger is
her brother, in Pound’s version she exclaims, “Heart, heart, heart, thou art come” (Pound 57). The literal translation of the same passage reads, “Oh child, child of my best-loved body, now you have seen exactly; you have come to be possessed of what you most yearned for.” The simple and touching urgency of Pound’s translation exists as an example of how he translated not what someone said, but what they “meant to say” (Perloff x).

Ezra Pound’s modern interpretations of Sophocles in which the characters speak in everyday language, helped to establish him as a master of the English language and an important translator of our age. Practical and perceptive like the Greeks, Pound translated the ancient language with an eye towards unlocking its wisdom and humanity. In doing so, he brings Sophocles back from the dead to enlighten us and delight us once again.

The Play

After my research on Sophocles and Ezra Pound, I turned to the play itself for more insight into the character of Elektra. I familiarized myself with all aspects relating to the role of Elektra and the play in general. In this section, I will begin with some basics of Greek mythology and a short synopsis explaining the events within the House of Atreus. I have also compiled a character analysis on the role of Elektra and a production history of this version of the play.

The word myth comes from the Greek word mythos, which has a variety of meanings, such as saying, speech, tale, story, and fiction. Great poems, such as the Iliad, exist as early specimens of Greek literature. The preservation of myths allows
contemporary society to get an idea of what Greece was like during such an important time. The Greeks were the first to make a god in their own image and to recognize the power and beauty of mankind (Hamilton 7).

Myths had many functions in Greek society and culture. They provided explanations for natural phenomena, such as the changing of seasons, and gave answers to larger questions such as how the world was created. Religion also served a purpose in myths as the action of the gods intertwined with the human race. Myths provided society with a sense of order, outlining the rules of interaction between mortals and gods. Those who broke these laws offended the gods and the Furies tormented those who committed crimes against family members. Myths helped to discourage crime thereby protecting the social order. They helped to create a rational world where things made sense and the search for beauty in all things was fulfilled. Artists, sculptors, poets, and storytellers took great pride in the splendor of man and no longer feared what was unknown (Hamilton 9).

Although they often told the tale of a hero who embodied traits admired by society, unlike a fable, myths rarely had any moral attached to them. Myths were entertaining stories that helped to explain the relationships and conflicts between man and the natural world, man and man, and man and his society. This early social science deepened the realization of what humans needed, wanted, and expected from their gods. As an essential element in their culture, Greeks looked to myths for truth and understanding (Hamilton 13).

The myth relating to the story of Elektra involves the House of Atreus. The House of Atreus was a famous mythological family first mentioned by Homer in The
Iliad and then written about later by Aeschylus. Atreus and his descendants were the basis for Aeschylus’ Oresteia, the only remaining trilogy from ancient times. Agamemnon, The Choregore (The Libation Bearers), and the Eumenides, made up the trilogy based on a house that was cursed from its beginning (Snodgrass, 99).

Through his wicked deeds, Tantalus, the King of Lydia, put a curse into motion that brought suffering and death to his descendants. Tantalus was the son of Zeus and was honored by the gods more so than any other mortal child. As a test of the gods’ favor, Tantalus had his only son, Pelops, killed and served to the gods for dinner. Foolishly, he thought he would be able to demonstrate how easy it was to deceive the gods. However, they knew immediately, and set him in a pool in Hades where he stood for eternity, hungry and thirsty but unable to reach the abundance around him. Pelops was brought back to life by the gods, and the misfortune of the house began.

Pelops fell in love with Princess Hippodamia, and had to beat her father in a chariot race to win her hand. The Princess bribed Myrtillus, her father’s charioteer, to pull the bolts out of the King’s chariot, assuring Pelops of the victory. Pelops later killed Myrtillus and the curse of the ill-fated house continued.

Tantalus’ daughter, Niobe, also tried to defy the gods and was made to suffer a cruel punishment. Niobe was happily married with seven brave sons and seven beautiful daughters. She was a strong woman and proud of her accomplishments. She wanted the people of Thebes to stop worshiping Leto, who only had two children, and pay homage to her instead. This angered the gods immensely and Artemis, the huntress, struck down all of her children while Niobe was made to watch. Niobe flowed with tears even after she turned to stone by the gods.
Pelops went on to have two sons, Atreus and Thyestes. Thyestes committed adultery with Atreus’ wife. This enraged Atreus so much that he killed his brother’s two little children, cut them up, and served them to their father. Atreus became King, but the curse continued and his house suffered from his actions for many years following the incident (Hamilton 347-350).

The Oresteia recounts the rest of the stories that involve the House of Atreus, and its curse. The first story in the trilogy, Agamemnon, deals with the commander-in-chief’s return from the city of Troy after a ten-year battle. While away, he sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia for the sake of the war. Klytemnestra, his wife, sets out to revenge her daughter and murder Agamemnon and Cassandra, a slave he had brought home. Klytemnestra and her new lover Aegisthus, Agamemnon’s cousin, take the throne, while her daughter Elektra awaits her brother Orestes to return from exile and avenge their father’s death.

The Choephore, or The Libation Bearers, occurs a decade later when Orestes returns to his father’s grave with a lock of hair. Elektra continues to pray for revenge and the Queen dreams of giving birth to a serpent, foreshadowing Orestes’ return. Orestes eventually murders Aegisthus and his mother. Knowing he is not safe from the curse of the House of Atreus, Orestes vows to remain and wifeless and childless.

The final part in the trilogy, The Eumenides, tells of the torment Orestes suffers from the Furies, sent to him by the ghost of his mother. Apollo understands the reasons behind Orestes’ crimes and allows Athena to assemble twelve citizens to hear his case against the Furies. Orestes wins one of the first court cases and Athena converts the Furies to the Eumenides, or the “kind ones,” and blesses all of Athens.
Knowledge of Elektra’s past provided me with a starting place to build my character within the world of the play. Upon a more in-depth look at the role, an extreme Sophoclean character was revealed. Sophocles said, “The world is full of wonders but nothing is more wonderful than man.” His desire was to “paint men as they ought to be” (Snodgrass 125). This belief led him to concentrate on the individual in his writing, epitomizing their humanity in sorrow, joy and regret. Sophocles allowed the character of Elektra to dominate the play, giving her the second largest role in Greek drama (Scott 150).

With *The Oresteia* as its main influence, Sophocles’ *Elektra* focuses on the eight years Elektra has mourned her father Agamemnon, awaiting the arrival of her brother Orestes. She is plagued by her mother’s crime and justifies her vengeance as being in accordance with the law of the gods (Webster 69). *Elektra* ends when Orestes commits matricide. Elektra is left uncertain as to how she will spend the remainder of her life, free from her mourning and thoughts of vengeance.

A major theme in the play highlights the contrast between word and deed. Many people talked about the deeds of Klytemnestra and Aegisthus, but they could not bring themselves to commit the murders. The play focuses on the definition of justice, concentrating on Elektra’s insight and her deep moral concerns. She keeps the memory of her father alive while waiting for her brother to avenge the death, but she cannot act alone. In a sea of active language, Elektra cannot take action. Her only weapons are her words through which she preserves the memory of her father.

Although Elektra displays strength and firmness, traits that the Greeks usually associated with a man, she has the natural desires of a woman. She feels she is wasting
her life as a slave in her own house, unmarried and without children (Webster 57). Elektra would rather die than continue to be unable to avenge her father’s murder (Webster 60). Even when praying for vengeance, Elektra shows she is religious and believes in the gods. She is conscious of her disobedience, but her impatience causes her to flare up in anger towards any opposition (Webster 65). Similar to Pound, Elektra mourns the loss of a world that once made sense, and has her sanity questioned for doing so. Sophocles paints Elektra with bitterness, loyalty, determination, and a hunger for vengeance (Scott 152). In his own translation, Pound supports that characterization and retains the changing rhythms and musical designs that Sophocles built.

The virtuous characterization of Elektra justifies her lack of judgment. Her energy, spirit, and idealistic attitude live up to the moral standards Sophocles was trying to create. Her shortcomings combined with her virtues are what make Elektra a sympathetic character: versatile, relentless, and still relevant today.

Worried that the publication of this translation would disrupt his insanity plea, Ezra Pound never published Elektra (Perloff xiv). Omar Shakespear Pound, Pound’s son from his first wife Dorothy, owned the original manuscript of his father’s version of Elektra before it was sold to the Princeton University Library. The manuscript continues to reside in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections (Perloff ix).

Carey Perloff, the Artistic Director of the Classic Stage Company in New York, fell in love with Pound’s translation and produced it in November of 1987. Three years later, New Directions published the script as performed by the Classic Stage Company with an introduction by Perloff in 1990. This is the version of the script that we used in our production at The Ohio State University.
In February 1992, our director Sue Ott Rowlands had the opportunity to play one of the chorus women in a production of this version of *Elektra* at the Round House Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland. The production, directed by Tom Prewitt, was not well-received by *The Washington Times* critic, Hap Erstein, who disliked the comic elements inherent in the script, which he thought disrupted the dramatic mood of the play. By transforming the play’s language into contemporary American vernacular, Erstein accused Pound of “undercutting the drama with self-conscious comic idioms” (c2). Erstein did mention that Elektra, played by Sarah Marshall, “displayed a degree of concentration and commitment to the enraged, crazed daughter of Klytemnestra” (c2). Costume designer, Rosemary Pardee, was also mentioned for her clarity in revealing the contrast between the struggling and the powerful. Although he appreciated that the production was only eighty minutes with no intermission, Erstein rated the show with one star at the conclusion of his review.

Two winters later in February 1994, producers Gary Grossman and Scott Disharoon did a production of Pound’s *Elektra* in the newly restored Ivy Substation on the edge of Culver City in California. Not unlike our own production, director James Burke played with the contemporary feel of the play. Elektra, played by Jenette Goldstein, resembled a homeless woman and lay underneath an orange-cord utility light. Christopher Meeks, a critic for the *Daily Variety*, complimented the lighting by Charlie Otte and set design by Ed Haynes, recognizing the difficulties they must have endured in such a large space that was not designed as a theatre.

In this chapter I have provided information that pertains not only to my thesis question directly, but to my research on the play, the playwright and translators, and the
character in general. To support my study of the language of the play, I have included information on Ezra Pound and Sophocles, using examples of their writing styles in other works. I also touched on the personal lives of both men in order to better understand the worlds in which they were writing. I found those details fascinating and pertinent for character development. Very little has been written about Pound’s version of Elektra, so to broaden my range of research was beneficial. A more personal and in-depth look at the character of Elektra and her relationship to others exists in my rehearsal and performance log. In the next chapter I will document the circumstances of our production.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRODUCTION CIRCUMSTANCES

*The Theatre*

Sophocles’ *Elektra*, a version by Ezra Pound, took place in the Mount Hall Studio Theatre from October 31 to November 18, 2001 on West Campus at The Ohio State University. The black-box space is approximately thirty-nine feet long, thirty-four feet wide, and sixteen feet high. The studio theatre can accommodate approximately eighty seats; the audience was configured in the round for our production.

As intimate as the theatre is, we were still able to find depth through vertical space. Platforms were erected on either side of the space to add more levels and playing areas. These platforms were built behind the seats on two sides of the house and created an interesting dynamic between the actors and the audience. The backstage area was considerably small, and the actors and technicians had to adjust to the close quarters for the duration of the run.

*The Director*

Sue Ott Rowlands, Associate Professor of Theatre and Chair of the Acting and Directing Area in the Department of Theatre, brings over twenty years of professional experience to her position at The Ohio State University. Alternating roles as a director,
producer, actress, teacher of acting, and arts administrator, Ms. Ott Rowlands has worked in professional and educational theatre throughout the country. She continues to direct and produce professionally and serves as the Artistic Director for the Cleveland Woman’s Theatre Project, an organization she co-founded in 1995.

Ms. Ott Rowlands is the former Associate Artistic Director of Round House Theatre in Washington, DC and was the Managing Director of The Actor’s Space in New York City. She has been on the acting faculties of numerous university and professional training programs throughout the country including Circle-in-the-Square, New York University, The Actor’s Space, The American Musical and Dramatic Academy, Western Maryland College, and Webster University in St. Louis. She received her MFA from the University of Oklahoma and her BS from Oklahoma Christian College.

She has directed productions for The Cleveland Play House, CATCO (Columbus), Round House Theatre, The Asian-American Theatre Project (Washington, DC), the Cleveland Woman’s Theatre Project, The Cleveland Theatre Company, Porthouse Theatre, Dobama Theatre, the Halle Theatre, and the Beck Center in Cleveland. She has appeared in productions at the Human Race Theatre (Dayton), Karamu House (Cleveland), Dobama Theatre, The Actor’s Space (New York), and Round House Theatre, among others. In addition to her work as a freelance director, Ms. Ott Rowlands has taught acting and directing at The Cleveland Play House and served as Director of Education and Outreach Programs for Young Audiences of Greater Cleveland. She is a member of Actor’s Equity Association and an associate member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.
*The 2001-2002 Season*

_Elektra_ took place during the Autumn Quarter along with _Uncommon Clay_ by Jeanine Thompson. _Division Street_ by Steve Tesich, _The Shoemaker's Holiday_ by Thomas Dekker and MFA New Works, _The Bridge of Bodies_ and _she._ took place during the Winter Quarter. _Porcelain_ by Chay Yew, _The Memory of Water_ by Shelagh Stephenson, and _St. Joan of the Stockyards_ by Bertolt Brecht wrapped up the season in the Spring Quarter.

*Pre-Production*

Auditions for _Elektra_ were held on Thursday, September 20, 2001 from 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm in the Roy Bowen Theatre of Drake Performance and Events Center. Although six MFA actors on the ensemble track were assigned roles late in the Spring Quarter of 2001, our participation in the autumn auditions was still required by the department.

From that mass audition seventeen women were invited to callbacks on Sunday September 23, 2001 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in Room 107 of Drake. The men, castable only in non-speaking roles, would be cast directly from the mass audition. Regina Rockensies, an MFA actor cast in her thesis role as the Lead Chorus Woman, and I were required to attend the callbacks where we had the opportunity to read with the woman auditioning. As early as callbacks, Sue Ott Rowlands began to experiment with her idea of the Mute Chorus Woman, an addition she wanted to make to the cast. Tarashai Lee, an MFA student in her second year, was originally cast as Chrysothemis. As a result of
the dynamics represented in the callbacks, Lee instead was moved to the role of Klytemnestra.

The official cast list was posted on Monday, September 24, 2001:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Damian Bowerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orestes</td>
<td>Donald Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pylades</td>
<td>Luke Mess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elektra</td>
<td>Carie De Vito*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>Regina Rockensies*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dana Scurlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leah Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysothemis</td>
<td>Amanda Buffington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klytemnestra</td>
<td>Tarashai Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td>Tiffany Wickham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aegisthus</td>
<td>Jonathan Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodyguard</td>
<td>Andrew Wood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In partial fulfillment of MFA degree in Acting*

The production staff was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>Mark Shanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Sue Ott Rowlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Designer</td>
<td>Brad Steinmetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Designer</td>
<td>Colin Sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Designer</td>
<td>Jim Hutchinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Designer</td>
<td>Ben Schurr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage Manager ................. Kristen J. Kidd
Assistant Director .............. Shelley Little
Dramaturg ....................... Peach Pittenger
Technical Director .............. Chad Mahan
Production Coordinator ......... Jim Knapp
Assistants to the Stage Manager. Jennifer A. Doegler, Eric Mayer
Greek Coaches ................... Stratos Constantinidis

Eleni Papaleondados

Jazz Saxophone .................. Meilana Gillard, Hamilton Harden
Box Office Manager .............. Joe Scharrer
Poster and Program Design ....... Laura Sipe

Rehearsals for Elektra ran from September 25 through October 23, 2001. Technical and dress rehearsals ran from October 24 through October 30, 2001. The three-week performance run opened on October 31 and ran from November 1 through 3, November 5 through 9, November 13 to the 16, and closed on November 18, 2001. There was a teacher's seminar before the matinee on November 3, and a post-show discussion following the performance on November 8, 2001. The post-production discussion held by the Acting/Directing area of the Theatre Department was held on November 20, 2001.

I have provided the circumstances of production in the information above. A more detailed and dated account of the entire rehearsal and performance process will be discussed in Chapter 4. The following chapter, however, contains a brief description of my acting methodology and the scored script in its entirety.
CHAPTER 3

THE SCRIPT

Acting Methodology

In trying to find ways to articulate my approach to the craft of acting, it was important to reassess my roles as a teacher and a student, not just an actor. My actor training at The Ohio State University has helped strengthen my abilities on stage, and having the opportunity to teach has helped to solidify what has been bestowed upon me. When I hear myself say something to my students that I know is something I have also been told, it only helps me to better understand what qualities of acting resonate within me, and what techniques (such as breathing, listening, and responding in the moment) I believe are important to an actor. During the process of discovering and defining a methodology for how I approach the work, I became aware of some core principles (such as a keen observation and playing the objective) that enable me to experience things as truthfully as possible on stage. In the following paragraphs I have compiled ideas from some of the major influences on my work in graduate school.

Upon arrival into a graduate program, and throughout my studies at The Ohio State University, my actor training has been rooted in the concepts of Constantin Stanislavski and later protégés such as Sanford Meisner. Stanislavski, the founder of the
Moscow Art Theatre, was one of the first to write down his ideas about acting, helping to stimulate the actor's individual creativeness and imagination. Some of the basic elements of what was later called, “The Stanislavski System,” provided actors with a working vocabulary that is still used today.

Stanislavski believed that an actor playing a role should be aware of his action, his obstacle and his objective. The essential nature of action lies in the actual reality of doing. In his first book, An Actor Prepares, Stanislavski said that, “everything must be real in the imaginary life of the actor” (157). I find that pretending to do something on stage is never as truthful as really committing to a moment physically, mentally, and emotionally. For example, people in life do not try to cry, they are usually trying not to cry. So if an actor is imitating life, his best bet is to never try to cry. It is a lie and the audience can see that. They expect a lot of variations from actors, but mostly they want to see something that is based in a sense of truth.

Knowing your objective as an actor is to understand what your character wants at any given moment. A play consists of several moments, or beats, which can contain several actions, obstacles, and objectives. To be able to be present in each of these moments without jumping ahead or dwelling in what has already happened is the most empowering and most difficult job of the actor. The overall aim of the character throughout the duration of his/her life can be defined as the super-objective, a concept that plays an integral part in the development of a character. Awareness of the super-objective during the course of the play helps to define the character’s journey through the story.
The *obstacle* is the person or thing that stands in your character’s way of achieving the *objective* at hand. Sometimes actors get caught up in playing the *obstacle* instead of focusing on the goal, or *objective*. However, it has only come to my attention recently that it is necessary to first acknowledge the *obstacle* before your character can overcome it. For an actor to “become absorbed in some interesting, creative problem on stage,” like Stanislavski suggests, awareness of the *obstacle* is a prerequisite (218).

Understanding the three basic rules of *action, obstacles, and objectives*, has helped me to arrive at a sense of truthfulness on stage, the main goal of the Stanislavski system. As Stanislavski said, “Truth on stage is whatever we can believe in with sincerity, whether in ourselves or in our colleagues” (129).

I also feel very strongly about Stanislavski’s thoughts on being able to find solitude in public. Stanislavski said, “In order to get away from the audience you must be interested in something on the stage” (75). By focusing your attention on what is happening in the moment at hand, the pressure that is present when being watched is dissipated. The idea of finding that sense of security and privacy in public, which has always been especially important to me, became more evident during our production of *Elektra*. The intimacy of the space in which we were performing helped to facilitate our director’s ideas of public versus private that she had talked of in her director’s concept. Certain characters such as Klytemnestra and Orestes, when disguised, put on a different persona in public and concealed their true selves. Although Elektra was less censored than the others in the play, the dichotomy of the two worlds (public and private) was an interesting contrast to explore as an actor.
I have found that allowing my own opinions and experiences to have an active role in the world of my character has been useful in my acting work. I find it hard to ignore what I have to offer, or to disregard whatever happened to me that day before the rehearsal or show. Bringing myself to the role is a Stanislavski concept that resonates with me as an actor. Stanislavski said, “Always and forever, when you are on the stage, you must play yourself. But it will be in an infinite variety of combinations of objectives, and given circumstances which you have prepared for your part...” (177). Although not agreed upon by all methods of actor training, I find that allowing my own experiences to meld with my character’s makes for a rich and well-rounded character in the long run. I tell my students to “bring their day in with them” and to use their real-life experiences to enhance the life of the scenes. Their work is undoubtedly more interesting to watch when they allow this to happen. Stanislavski stated, “Never lose yourself on the stage. Always act in your own person, as an artist. You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting” (177).

Stanislavski’s system promotes the idea of living truthfully from moment to moment in an imaginary set of given circumstances. This very concept also lies at the core of the actor training method taught by Sanford Meisner. Meisner, along with his contemporaries such as Harold Clurman, Lee Strasburg, and Stella Adler, emerged from the Group Theatre in the 1930s as a prominent teacher of acting. He taught many talented and well-known actors at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City until his death in 1997.
I have only recently become familiar with the Meisner techniques in graduate school, but find the work rewarding. Bruce Hermann, a former student of Sanford Meisner and a teacher of his work, introduced me to the training and it quickly became a welcome next step in the process of formulating my own methodology. In *Sanford Meisner on Acting*, Meisner reiterates Stanislavski’s ideas and says, “The foundation of acting is the reality of doing” (2). The golden rule in Meisner work is not to do anything until something happens to make you do it. If the rule is followed, then what you do doesn’t depend on you; it depends on what the other person does to you. Sometimes I can’t believe how long it has taken me to trust myself enough to really look to my fellow actors for input on stage. Meisner technique allowed me to get my attention off myself and to put it on the other person. Through this, the simple act of talking and listening, which is sometimes the most difficult to achieve, has increasingly become more and more important to me. I also find that the Meisner work has allowed me to trust my own instincts and to bring myself more fully to the world of the character.

In an attempt to express myself with a sense of vocal and physical unity, my understanding of Tadashi Suzuki’s Method of Actor Training has also been useful. Actors are told that their bodies are their instruments so I am conscious of my appearance and what my body may be conveying. Suzuki work, a form of training that emphasizes the strength, focus, and discipline an actor needs on stage, has helped me to locate a center within myself from which all of the work I do originates. The vigorous training consists of specific and stylized ways to move and speak that help to strengthen the center and find power with ease. Vocally and physically it has grounded me and helped to remove some of the awkwardness of sharing myself with others. I am finding it easier
to let some of my physical habits go and take on the character's body more fully. In *The Way of Acting*, Suzuki says, "The creation of a desired appearance can serve as one definition of the art of acting. When a performance is truly effective, even a small actor can make an imposing figure - he can look even grander than the stage itself" (6).

The physical and vocal discipline needed to endure the Suzuki method has also helped to focus my attention on the importance of breath and economy of expression. Breath, I am finding, is what connects me the most to the emotional life of the role. When I let each inhalation and exhalation settle low into my center, especially during a state of heightened emotional intensity, the emotional weight that is carried on breath has a chance to resonate within. Allowing breath to "drop in" helps with listening, letting thoughts echo, and enables reaction time. Throughout this process, the actual reaction is what becomes pertinent to the forward momentum of the play. However, to react and to show a reaction is two different things. I have been able to find that economy of expression is much more beneficial for me on the stage. A reaction that is found through breath, simplicity, and ease lives a more valid existence then one that is forced and manipulated.

Although I know there is always more to learn, it is refreshing to have arrived at a place where I am aware of what compels me to act. The techniques that form the basis of my own methodology are solid ones that will surely alter and grow over time. Only through constant study and training, defining and redefining, will I fully understand who I am as an actor. As Suzuki said, "A committed actor will try to master as broad of a range as possible. The task is truly a difficult one, since audiences naturally expect to witness a variety of skills on the stage. Then too, as the style of stage language changes,
the actor's movements and his physiological consciousness must alter. For a
performance to convey its full flavor to the audience, the proper relationship between the
words spoken and the movements of the actor must remain firmly established" (16).

As I began work on the role of Elektra, the core principles mentioned above aided
me in creating a viable character that could be played in front of an audience. After I
read the script numerous times and gathered the research necessary to understand the
given circumstances, I was able to move into the rehearsal process knowledgeable of
Elektra's life and what she was after. Once in rehearsal, applying these key elements of
working on the role happened naturally. The scored script in the following section of this
chapter provides a detailed account of how the research, the work in rehearsals, and my
acting methodology all played a part in the creation of the character of Elektra.

*Key to Scoring Terms and Abbreviations*

Script analysis terms appear in the left hand column of the scored script. They
include:

(RS) **Rehearsal Scene:** In keeping with the titles used in rehearsal,
the scenes are labeled RS1, RS2, etc., and the titles appear in
boldface.

(B) **Beat:** A group of moments comprising a single unit of action.
Within each objective beat titles will be in quotation marks and
will be labeled B1, B2, etc.
(OBJ) **Objective:** What a character wants in any given moment, the
caracters overall aim. Objectives will appear in italics and will be
expressed in verb form.

(A) **Action:** The physical pursuit of a specific goal, or objective, also
expressed in verb form.

The center column of the scored script will contain the following:

1. **The Text:** The script in its entirety with all original stage
directions.

2. **Definitions:** Superscript numbers follow all Greek mythological
references and any pertinent vocabulary requiring explanation. A
glossary exists at the end of the script.

Documentation of production elements appear in the right hand column of the
scored script, including:

(T) **Translation:** The English version of the Greek present in the text.

(PA) **Physical Action:** Blocking, or stage directions, documenting
my movements as Elektra throughout the production. The play
was performed in the round, so I have included in the appendix a
labeled diagram of blocking notation terms to assist the reader in
imagining the physical action of the production. The following
abbreviations are used to describe the various locations on stage:

(SL) Stage Left                (SR) Stage Right
(USL) Upstage Left            (USR) Upstage Right
(DSL) Downstage Left  (DSR) Downstage Right

(CS) Center Stage

(DCS) Downstage Center

(UCS) Upstage Center

*The Scored Script*

The scored script in its entirety can be found in the following pages. It contains the entire text marked with the scoring abbreviations explained above.
RS1: **Home Sweet Home**

Scene: at Mycenae, in front of Agamemnon’s palace

B1: “New Arrivals”

TUTOR:

Well, here’s where your father landed when he got back from the Trojan war,¹ this is where you wanted to come to;
Old Argos² over there
where the gad-fly³ chased Miss Inachus,⁴ and that’s the Lukeum,⁵ named after the wolf-god,⁶ the wolf-killer, market place now;
and Hera’s⁷ church on the left
everybody’s heard about that.
Down below there: Mycenae,⁸ center of the gold trade,
and Pelops⁹ palace, the throne room,
where the dirty murder was done.
That’s where I picked you off your dad’s bloody body,
that is to say your kind sister
did, and give you to me to take off and raise like a proper avenger.

And now, Orestes, it’s up to you
and your dear friend Mr. Pilades, stranger in these parts.
Get goin’ quickly.
Sun’s risin’, birds are singin’,
stars going down, darkness broken.
Get going before people start moving about
and be clear in your own minds what you’re up to.

PA: Places called twenty minutes before curtain. I stayed under plane wing with the doll hidden from the audience until my first lines.
ORESTES:
All right, Old Handy,
you sure have stuck with us
like a good ole horse rarin' for battle,
urgin' on and keepin' right forward
up in front every time.
This is what we're agoin' to do,
listen sharp and check up if
I miss any bullseyes.

When I went off to the Pythoness\textsuperscript{10}
to ask about doin' right by my father
Phoebus\textsuperscript{11} answered:
Don't start a war,
take a chance, do it yourself:
Kinky course, clean in the kill.

Now as that's the oracle we heard
the first chance you get
you nip into this building, find out everything that's
being done there, and keep us wise to the lot of it.
Snap.
Nobody'll recognize your old block
after all these years, under all this herbage.
Make your cock-crow.
You've come here from their best pal Phanoteus\textsuperscript{12}
first time you've ever been out of Phocia.\textsuperscript{13}
Swear that Orestes was killed in a chariot race
at the Pythians.\textsuperscript{14} Put in the details.
We'll go to Dad's tomb as ordered
with libations an' all my pretty curls
we'll bring back that nice brass urn
we hid in the underbrush
to back up the yarn that I'm dead
and buried and this dust all that is left of me.
They'll like that.
I don't mind being dead that way
if I can live on in honor.
I don't suppose the lie will ruin our luck,
not the first time a wise guy
has said he was dead
in order to get a warm welcome.

Earth of the fatherland
bless the roads we have come by
for the old home and this clean up,
the gods are in me to do this,
clean the old home
that I be not sent back into exile dishonored
give me back the heritage
that I bring back the old rule of abundance
and make it solid.

Nuff talk. Get in there, old buck, and
keep steady
and we'll go now
and watch for the moment
time, time
best leader men have.
B2: “Here We Go Again”

ELEKTRA:
Oh, oh, I'm so unhappy.

OBJ: To seek comfort

IOO MOI MOI DUSTAENOS

TUTOR:
Some slavey howling inside there.

ORESTES:
Poor Elektra, might be,
wanna stay and listen?

TUTOR:
Certainly not. Get our bearings first
as Loxias\textsuperscript{15} ordered. Holy water to wash up
the tomb-stone.
That's the way to win out.
(TUTOR and ORESTES exit)

PA: Crawl out from under wing and cross
USL to palace steps and sit, leave doll on the
steps

RH2: The Daily
Lamentation

ELEKTRA:
OO PHAOS AGNON
Holy light
Earth, air about us,

B1: “The Dream”

THRENOON OODAS
POLLAS D'ANTEREIS

A: To recall the nightmare
tearing my heart out
when black night is over
all night already horrible
been with me

T: Oh, holy night!

T: How many keening songs have you
known? How many straight dealt blows?
my father weeping
there in that wretched house
weeping his doom.
Not killed abroad in the war
but by mother and her bed-boy Aegisthus. ¹⁶
Split his head with an axe as
a woodcutter splits a billet of oak,
and that killed him
and nobody else in this house seems to mind.
Well I'm not going to forget it
and all the stars can shine on it, all of them,
destiny

B2: “I'm Going to Let the
World Know!”

OBJ: To protest
   tears of hate
   all flaming rips
   of the stars
   tide
   and the day can look on it.
   I won't stand it and just keep quiet.
   ALL' OU MEN DE
   LAEXOO THRENOON
   You can't stop the nightingale¹⁷ crying, for her
   young.
   or me
   on the porch,
   let everyone hear it,
   Hell and Persephone¹⁸
   OO DOOM AIDOU
   OO KHTHONI HERMAE, OO Queen
   of Avenging.

PA: Run up to top of wing, facing palace

PA: Begin metaphoric gesture phrase that
represents avenging my mother, mourning my
father, appealing to my sister, and waiting for
my brother

T: But I swear I will not stop lamenting!

PA: End gesture and turn to face DCS

T: Oh House of Hades, oh Hermes of the
underworld!
A: To accept the defeat of exhaustion

O Vengeance,
Hear me,
ye that watch over shed blood,
over murder, over the usurping of beds.
CURSE, and hear me
god seed, ye Erinys, of doom
aid and defend us, avenging our father's death
HAI TOUS ADIKOOS

THNAESKNONTAS
HORATH
HAI TOUS EUNAS
HUPOKLEPTOMENOUS
ELTHET ARAEXATE
(sinks onto step)
and
send me my brother
I can do no more on my own
This
grief is too heavy.

CHORUS:
Poor Elektra
OO PAI PAI DUSTANOTATAS
you had a curse for a mother
ELEKTRA MATROS TIN AEI
and are withered with weeping

TAKEIS HOOD' AKORESTON OIMOOGAN
Agamemnon was tricked and murdered

T: You [Furies] who see those dying unjustly,
you who see those whose beds are stolen,
come, help us!

PA: Throw myself down onto wing, slide
down into a collapsed ball at bottom

B3: "There, There."

A: To dismiss their reassurance and stay focused on the goal

PA: Sit on DSR bottom of wing repeat metaphoric gesture

T: Oh child, child of a most wretched mother,
Elektra. Why are you always pining such a ceaseless lamentation for Agamemnon who
long ago was godlessly trapped by the deceits of your treacherous mother and was betrayed
by an evil hand? May he who has contrived
TON PALAI EK DOLERAS ATHEOOTATA
    that was a long time ago
    MATROS HALONT' APATAIS
AGAMEMNONA
    but a dirty hand did it, maternal,
    KAKA TE KHEIRI PRODOTON
HOOS HO TADE
    POROON
    and to breed their destruction
    OLOIT' EI MOI THEMIS TAD'
AUDAN
    if my deem is heard in dooming
    EI MOI THEMIS TAD' AUDAN

ELEKTRA:
    Yes, you are come nobly to help me,
    I can feel that,
    but I must go on.
    DEAD, he is dead, I must go on.
    It's my job,
    I have never asked to neglect it,
A: To push the chorus away
    let me go on alone.

CHORUS:
    But you won't get him back out of black hell
    by praying and groaning.
    you destroy yourself with too much of it,
    no harm to let up for a little.
    (emphatic and explicit with meaning to ram it in)

these things perish, if I may lawfully say it.

PA: Cross to DSL ladder and climb up to SL platform and bang on metal wall with my fists and feet
ALL OUTOI TON GEX AIDA
PANGKOINI OU LIMNAS PATER ANSTASEIS
OUTS GOOIS OUTS EUXAI
Nothing to be DONE about it.
(CHORUS trying to get idea into what they consider hysterical female)
Why do you make it all the harder?

ELEKTRA:
It would be childish to forget him,
I'd be a ninny. Carried off that way
a ITUN aien Itun.
I think my mind groans as the sound of Itys\textsuperscript{22}
 lamenting, terrified,
bringing the news from Zeus.\textsuperscript{23}
Niobe\textsuperscript{24} weeping in a stone tomb
has a better portion from heaven,
weeping forever.
HAT EN TAPHOO PETRAIOO
AIAI DAKRUEIS.

A: To assert

PA: Cross to USL palace steps and sit

T: for Itys, Itys evermore (alone).

T: You who weep forever in a rocky grave.

CHORUS:
OUTOI SOI MOUNA TEKNON
AXOS Ephane BROTOON
Not only you, dear,
everyman alive's got his load.

T: You are not the only mortal child to whom this grief had come.

T: Your grief exceeds the grief of those living in your house, of those of your kin and blood.
See how Chrysothemis and Iphianassa
A: To repel the advice of the chorus

PA: Resist their advances by covering my ears, shaking my head, and murmuring “no”

T: (and Orestes) hidden from sorrows, happy in his youth, someday the famous Mycenae will welcome back noble Orestes, coming to this land with god sent favorable step

KSUNAIMOS
HOIA XRUSOTHEMIS DZOOEI KAI

IPHIANASSA
Poor Chrysothemis, Iphianassa
and your boy brother
in exile
god send 'em back to Mycenae

KRUPTA T'AXEOON EN HAEBEA
OLBIOS HON HA KLEINA
GA POTE MUKAENAIOON
DEKSEAI EUPATRIDAN DIOS EUPHRONI
BAEMATI MOLOANTA TANDE GAN

ORESTAN
Till Orestes come to the throne.

PA: Cross to UCS top of wing

ORESTAN
Till Orestes come to the throne.

ELEKTRA:
Whom I keep on expecting,
childless, wretched,
unwed, in a dither of fear,
muddly with tears,
one thing after another, unending, and always worse;
and he's forgotten all

that's ever happened to him or been told him
every message I get is a cheat
always he wants to come
but never shows up.
A: To clarify my thoughts with ill will

CHORUS:

THARSEI MOI, THARSEI TEKNON
(chorus moving / pause / move)

B4: “Enough!”

ELEKTRA:

Gone, gone so much
hopeless and there’s no help
wasted already, gone by in despair
no going back on that
fatherless, loverless, without stand-bye
housed neath my father’s bed
kenneled and fed on trash
in a shapeless sack.

OBJ: To force the chorus to see my argument

T: Courage, child.

PA: Cross to DSR steps and onto SR platform

A: To relive the horrible past

CHORUS:

She’d a gloomy voice when he came;
and a gloomy sound when the brass axe hit him,
on the couch there in his dining room.
A twisty idea
and a letch that killed him,
one vehemence led to another
procreating the form
whether god or man did it.

A: To recall the horrible events

ELEKTRA:

That day was the vilest of all days
and that night at dinner was worse
beyond speakable language
horrible.
I saw my father killed by the pair of ’em
watched himself being killed and

PA: March up SR platform to boot and stop

PA: Come down SR platform
insulted.
Bitched my life, that did, that betrayal.
Zeus avenger, don't let 'em enjoy it unpunished.
Make it hurt. Them in their luxury! Agh!

A: Calling on the gods for vengeance.

CHORUS:
Hush! Stop sounding off or talk sense.
Quit piling troubles one on top of the other
always making a row with that grouch of yours.
Don't take the discussable to the powerful

PSUXA POLEMOS; TA DE TOIS DUNATOIS
OUK ERISTA PLATHEIN.
only gives 'em a handle.

ELEKTRA (Starts as if muttering):
DEIN EN DEINOIS ENANGASTHEN
It's too horrible, I can't keep it in.

T: (Always breeding) wars in your soul; one
cannot fight with the powerful.

A: To deflect and to sulk
I know you mean well, it's no use.
Go way and leave me alone,
let me have my cry out.

CHORUS:
But, dearie, you make it all worse,
I'm talkin' to you like a mother, you can trust me.

A: To challenge

ELEKTRA:
Is there any limit to the nature of misery?
Is there anything pretty about neglecting the dead?
Has that idea cropped up anywhere among men?
If so I don't want their respect
and if I come near to getting any good from it
may I not live tranquil among 'em
by smothering my keening for the shame of this house.

A: To preach to mute chorus member

For if the dead lie down-earth and then nowt, wretched
and there be no death for a death,

shame would go wrack,
all duty would end and be nothing.

CHORUS:
I rushed out here for your sake as well as mine,
if you don't like what I say, have it your own way,
we'll stick by you.

B5: “Let Me Tell You About It…”

OBJ: To enlist the chorus with the gruesome details

ELEKTRA:
I'm sorry, I oughtn't to let 'em get me down,
but I am driven to it,
they've got the power, all I can do is yammer
and make too much noise. Excuse it.
I'm ashamed of this clatter.

A: To startle the chorus with the gruesome details

PA: Move down wing and cross USR and
around to palace steps

Could any decently brought up girl
see that done to her father, and act any different?
I see it day and night getting thicker, not dying down
and my own mother the most loathsome of all
and I have to live in the same house with
the people who murdered my father
and have 'em pushing me round
WHACK, take it, WHACK, leave it,
which ever way they've hexed it.

PA: Cross down to alter then onto wing

A: To sketch out what hurts
me the most

How do you think I pass my time anyhow?
When I see Aegisthus sitting there
in my father's chairs
even wearing his clothes
pouring libations
right by where he killed him
then havin' mother right there in the same bed
just to show off, a whore, a mother? Call it
a concubine
she's got so used to the dirty slob,
no longer scared of the curse,
celebrates with a dance one a month
with a whole sheep for "his dinner"
joke that is,

but it gets me down all the same.
And I go moulder in an attic
and blubber over "Agamemnon's bean-o."27
the accursed feast named in his honor
yes, they call it by old pop's name.

PA: Jump off wing and cross USR to dance
with doll

A: To respond to the hurt

Can't even have my cry out in peace
with that old big-talk bawling me out:

PA: Cross to USL palace steps and imitate
mother with doll

A: To imitate my mother
with ill will

"You the only slut ever lost a father,
obody else had any troubles,
go rot and keep on yowling in hell."
That's how she goes on, bubbles over
EXCEPT when someone says Orestes is comin'
then she gets scared and blows her top proper,
goes shoutin' frantic:

"You got him away, it's all your fault
you cheated me out of Orestes, you sneak,
mark my word,
you'll get your come-uppence."

that's her bark, and her ponce²⁸ sicks her on
marvelous
of all the dastardly yellow pests
fightin' from under her skirts
and me rotting away, waiting here for Orestes
to put a stop to it all.
And he's worn out all hope, by waiting,
dither and dally,
yes, my dears, a nice place for moderation and
decency
and with all this rot I've gone rotten.

CHORUS:
HE, is Aegithus here, while you're talkin'?

ELEKTRA:
Naturally NOT. Think I could get out, with him in?

CHORUS:
Well then I can say what I think.
A: To defy

ELEKTRA:
He's out, you can say what you like.

CHORUS:
Well about your brother, is he coming or not?

A: To lament

ELEKTRA:
Sez he will an' he don't.

CHORUS:
A man's likely to go slow, take his time, on a big job.

A: To challenge

ELEKTRA:
If I'd gone slow, he wouldn't be there to take it.

CHORUS:
Hang on, he was born honest,
he won't let you down, cares too much.

A: To patronize

ELEKTRA:
If I didn't think that, I'd be dead.

CHORUS:
Sshh, here comes your sister.
I see she's carrying... oh... offerings,
like for DOWN THERE, all very proper.

CHRYSOTHEMIS (tone of thorough weariness, and discouragement):

PA: Cross DSL and run up plane wing facing palace, repeat metaphoric gesture phrase more violently than the first time

PA: Stop doing metaphoric gesture phrase
RS3: **Mother's Little Helper**

Oh Dear, are you out here again, sounding off, never learn, makes it worse, let out every fool feeling you got in your gizzard.

PA: Move to DSR bottom of plane wing

B1: “Out Here Again…”

I don't like it any better than you do.

If I could get hold of the power, the levers
I'd show 'em what I think,
but for the present I'm going to keep in my sail
and not think I'm harming 'em when I'm not,
and I advise you to do the same.

Just the same I know you're right and what I say isn't so, and what you think is, but I've got to obey in order to keep my freedom of action.

PA: Cross USR to top of wing

ELEKTRA:

**OBJ: To unmask her**

It's just awful the way you take her part and forget him.

PA: Cross back DSR and around to USL and stand on step behind her

**A: To expose her weakness**

YOU didn't think of any of that, it's just what she's told you.

You can do one of two things: be honest and speak out
or play dumb and forget your friends.

PA: Move to DSR bottom of plane wing

You just said if you had the power
you'd show 'em how you hate 'em
but when I'm out to do right by my father will you come in on it? No, no you try to put me off it.

Need we add cowardice to all the rest of the filth?
(pause)
Tell me, or lemme tell you what good it could do me
to stop objecting out loud.
I'm not dead yet, it's a dirty life
but my own.

A: To startle
It annoys 'em. That honors the dead
if the dead get any joy out of THAT.

A: To level with her
You say you hate 'em, but
you play ball with our father's assassins.

A: To mock her
Well I wouldn't knuckle under, not for one minute
nor for all this stuff they have given you

(She takes hold of CHRYSTHEMIS' bangles or bracelet or whatever ornament or fine dress)
that you swank about in.
Have your big dinners, comforts
and everything easy,
your lie-down, flow-about life.
If I don't eat, I don't make myself spew with disgust.

A: To grill her with the cold hard facts
Keep my self-respect anyhow.
I wouldn't want to have a sense of honor like yours
nor would you if you understood it.
You're even called by your mother's name
when you could use father's
and he was some good,
best of the lot of 'em.
It don't look nice.

PA: Chase her DSR, grab sunglasses and lay on wing with them on

PA: Give back glasses and cross USL to palace steps
A: To contain my anger

Most people would say you are going back
on your dead father, and the people you care for.

CHORUS:
For the gods sake, keep your tempers,
there's something to be said on both sides
if either of you could learn from the other.

B2: “The Truth Comes Out”

OBJ: To blind myself from the harsh reality

CHRYSO THEMIS:
Oh, I'm used to the way she goes on.
I wouldn't have come here now, but she's in worse
danger
in fact should stop her howls once and for all.

ELEKTRA:
Well what could be worse? If you tell me
anything worse, I'll shut up.

A: To unmask them

CHRYSO THEMIS:
All I know is that if you don't quit bawling
they'll shut you up where you'll never see daylight

in some black jail outside the country,
do stop to think, and don't blame me
when it's too late.

A: To accept the danger and tempt it

ELEKTRA:
So that's what they're up to.
CHRYSOthemis: As soon as Aegisthus gets back.

A: To dismiss weakness towards her

ELEktra: The sooner the better.

CHRYSOthemis: So he can?? You're off your poor head. What for?

A: To mock and patronize

ELEktra: To get away from the lot of you as far as possible.

CHRYSOthemis: But at least you're alive here?

A: To order

ELEktra: A beautiful life, something for me to admire!

CHRYSOthemis: Might have been if you'd learned to adjust yourself.

A: To keep my dignity

ELEktra: Don't educate me up to double crossing friends.

CHRYSOthemis: I'm only telling you to bend and not break when you come up against power.

PA: Cross DSL

PA: Cross to SR platform

PA: Move off of SR platform and onto wing
A: To confess

ELEKTRA:
Slobber over 'em. Not my way.

CHRYSOThEMIS:
It's perfectly respectable not to fail
out of sheer stupidity.

ELEKTRA:
All right I'll fail, for my father's honor
if it's so ordered.

CHRYSOThEMIS:
I am sure he'd excuse one.

ELEKTRA:
You commend everything nasty.

CHRYSOThEMIS:
Well I suppose you won't listen to anything I say
let alone agree with it.

ELEKTRA:
Probably NOT . . . Not yet such a cipher.29

B3: "But What's That?"

CHRYSOThEMIS:
Well, I'll be moving along.

OBJ: To find out the
significance of the tray

ELEKTRA (noticing the offerings for the first time,
having been up to now absorbed in her own fury):
Goin' far?
Uh'uh. What you carrying THAT for,

PA: Turn and repeat metaphoric gesture
facing palace from top of wing

PA: Jump off wing and cross USR
all roasted?

CHRYSOTHEMIS:  
Mother told me to go water the grave.

ELEKTRA:
What!! and nobody she hates worse?

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
You mean the one she murdered.

A: To needle her
Where did she get THAT fancy? Whose idea was it?

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
Had a nightmare, I think, and it scared her.

A: To demonstrate delight
Gods help us. Whatever next!

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
That's cheered you up, now she's scared.  
PA: Sit on sand bags SL of steps

ELEKTRA:
You tell me about that dream, then I'll talk.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
I don't really know that much about it.
A: To coerce
Spill it. A little word often counts for a lot,
up or down.

CHRYSO THEMIS:
What they say is that it was like as if dad
stood there right by her, and a second time
in plain daylight. And took hold of his sceptre,
the one Aegisthus uses now, and planted it by the
altar
and a branch grew right out of it
and spread all over Mycenae.

That's what one of the girls says, who was there
while she was telling it before Helios.\(^{30}\)
That's all I know except that she was so scared
she sent me out. Now listen
you pray to the gods. Don't be a fool,
listen to me, before it's too late.

B4: “Libations 101”

ELEKTRA:
Don't put a bit of it on the tomb.

OBJ: *To worship my father properly*
It's not clean before men or gods that you
plant gifts or carry lustrations\(^{31}\)
from that hating woman, to dirty his grave.
Throw 'em away, bury 'em, hide 'em deep,
so long as none of 'em gets near his grave.
Let 'em stay and wait for HER till she dies,
let her find 'em in hell, when she dies,

PA: Rise and cross behind her
A: To remind her of the horrible truth

a little deposit.

The crust she's got, throwing her flowers and dirty water

onto him after bumping him off.

PA: Come back to sit on the SL sand bags

You think the dead from his grave is goin' to reach up a lovin' right hand for these ornaments?
Killed like any damn foreigner
and wiped 'er bloody 'ands on his 'air,
cut off his hands and feet to keep the ghost from walkin' and grabbin' her.

A: To frighten her with the gory details

But don't YOU think of carrying that stuff to purge her of murder.

Chuck it away.
Cut off the tip of one of your curls,
that makes a pretty gift,
and for me, god knows, I haven't anything,
I give my whole disheveled mop.
Here, take it,
(jerks out a lock of her own (wig) violently)

PA: Rip out false hair, remove belt, put both on tray and cross DSL to altar and kneel

A: To teach her

and my belt, it's not much,
just a plain belt without ornaments.
But kneel and beg him to come up out of the earth to protect us
and that young Orestes get the upper hand of his
A: To remind her

enemies
and stay alive till he's got 'em under his feet,
so that we can crown him with something better
than we give now.

I think mebbe he's troubling her dreams.
Anyhow, you do this for me, and for him
even if he is dead, we still love him.

CHORUS:
She's on the right track now, dear,
you do what she says.

A: To demonstrate delight

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
I certainly will, it's what ought to be done
and no point disputing it.
But keep quiet about it for gods' sake,
don't let mother get wind of it,
if she does the old usurer
make me pay extra for the risk.

(exits)

RS4: The Dance of Delight

B1: “Conjuring the Gods.”

OBJ: To revel in the news
and celebrate

You can say that I never guess right,
a born fool without second sight,
that my head was never screwed tight,
but if justice don't win just this once
I'm a dunce

PA: Run to USL corner, raise eyes, turn
clockwise to DSL corner, look up and freeze

PA: Break from freeze, grab spray paint under
wing, run up USL sand bags to metal wall and
spray paint, “Orestes Lives”
and before a great time has gone by.
My heart's risin' now
and my dreams are breathin' deep
with a free and airy sound:
the greek king won't forget you,
he'll be comin' yet
and the double headed axe
be payin' back the smack

A: To demonstrate delight
by painting

and the bloody blood be flowin' once again.

And Vengeance will come out
from her hiding bush no doubt
with the rush of brazen shoes,
wid the sound of brazen shoes,
she will come with brazen tread
to their adulterous bed
to wipe out all the stain
as they wrestle there unwed;

ever with lock and sigh
ill doer and ill do's mate
shall never dodge out of fate,
ill done hath ill do won,
blood ends that with black began,
fate shall out run any man,
fate is stronger than man, blacker than man.
Nothing foretells tomorrow to man
neither horrors in dream nor in oracles
if that night-sight don't damn well smash 'em.
OO PELOPOS HA PROSTHEN
POLUPONOS HIPPEIA
HOS EMOLES AIANAES
TADE GA. TADE GA.

T: Ancient horsemanship of Pelops, loaded with pain, how wearisome you have proved to this land.

(CHORUS LEADER speaks)

For Myrtil's curse
when he was drowned after that crooked horse-race,
chucked out of his gilded ear into the sea

and the curse has continued
on the house of Pelops
rotting the earth.

KLYTEMNESTRA (entering):
Out here again making trouble, might have known it
now Aegisthus' not here,
he keeps you from making dirt on the family doorstep.

A: To demonstrate disgust
He's away and you pay no attention to me.
You've shot off a lot of brash talk
to a lot of people,
a lot more than was so
about how forward I am, how unjust insulting you and your gang.
A: To demonstrate anger

Nobody ever insulted me? Eh?
Bad? Eh?
Well I've heard 'em from you often enough
just as bad.
Your father, eh? that's your excuse
always that, never different.
I killed him, I did, yes me, have I ever denied it?
And a good job it was, don't I know it
with Justice on my side

PA: Climb down DSL ladder and cross to
DSL altar with foot on wing

A: To patronize her

as you'll have to admit if you think straight.
This "father" you're always crying about
was the only one of the Greeks who would stand
for
sacrificing your own sister to the gods,
he didn't have as much trouble in makin' her as I

had
he put her in, I got her out.
Well who did he sacrifice her FOR,
you tell me, for whom and for what?
The Greeks. You say for the Greeks?
which of the two Greeks was it?
It wasn't up to them to kill my girl
and if he killed her for his brother Menelaus
weren't there any rites due to me?

A: To find humor in her
clouded judgment

Hadn't Menelaus two children of his own?

Wasn't it up to them to die, if it was their father and
mother who were cause of the sailing?
A: To prepare for a rebuttal

Did Hell have more appetite for my children than hers?
   Or had the rotter\textsuperscript{36} less paternal affection
   than Menelaus?
   Signs of a gutless and dirty father I say
   they are, even if we split on it.
   And it's not what your dead sister would say if she
   could manage a voice.
   I'm not peeved about what I've done
   and if you want to sling abuse
   try slinging it at somebody else in the family,
   get on the right track. Put the blame where it
   belongs.

B2: “The Trial”

OBJ: To cross examine
Klytemnestra

ELEKTRA (calm):
   Well this time you can't say I started it.
   But if you let me,
   I'll give you the rights of it about my father and
   sister.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
   Of course I'll let you. If you
   had always had that tone of voice
   no one would have objected to listening.

A: To present the main issue
   at hand

ELEKTRA:
   All right, you admit you killed him.
   Can anyone say anything worse?
   Legally or illegally, well justice didn't come into it.

PA: Cross DSR
A: To suggest

It was your lech for that bounder you're lying with.
Go ask Artemis and her dogs why she
shut up the winds in Aulis all of them, for what
vengeance?

A: To sketch out the events

as they unfolded

And as she won't tell you, I will.
He was hunting away thru her forest

and not only started a spotted buck with 8 points
but made smutty jokes about it, it was
a kill
not according to the hunting rites.
And Artemis didn't like it,
she held up the Achaeans

PA: Cross USL

A: To clarify

to make my father pay
for the buck with his own daughter.
That's why and how she was killed,
she went to the altar smokes
a sacrifice,
the troops couldn't get either home or to Ilion

PA: Lean on top off wing UCS

A: To decipher

no other way out.
He did it against his own nature

A: To lecture her

not in favor of Menelaus.

But even if he had done it for Menelaus,
to take it your way,

A: To mock

ought you to have killed him?
What law was that?
You'd better be careful setting up that sort of law

PA: Cross DSR
A: To verify
for the rest of the world, you'll get into trouble
and wish you hadn't.
For if blood for blood makes justice,
you'll be the first to go.
But look, is all your talk sophistry, 42
fake, fake, a mere sophistry?
Say what you like, you get into bed with the

A: To unmask
murderer
and breed to put out the true heirs,
expect me to like that?
Call that avenging a daughter? Is that your excuse?
A dirty job to marry an enemy
for the sake of a daughter?

A: To blame
And nobody allowed to warn you
without your putting up a squawk about a
slandering mama.
Slave-driver more than a mother I'd call you,
and a rotten life I have with you and your fellow-
feeder,
you're always putting all the low jobs onto me.

PA: Run on to top of wing facing palace

A: To expose
And poor Orestes who got away by the skin of his
teeth
wearing away in misery
you always accuse me of saving him
to come back and cleanup the dirt you've done here
and you know damn well I would have too, if I
could.

A: To hold my ground
So if I'm a dirty scold, abusive,
completely impudent,
looks like it runs in the family,
not likely to disgrace your temperament.
I got it all from you.

PA: Step down onto altar and cross USL to palace steps

A: To set her up for the knockout

CHORUS:
Gheez, she's a-goin at it fierce,
right or not she don't care a hang.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
Why should I bother what she thinks
spittin out at her mother that way, at her age?
By god there's nothing she'd stop at, no sign of shame.

PA: Cross DSR to SR platform steps

ELEKTRA (Suddenly perfectly calm):
Well now I think I have got a sense of shame.
I distinguish between suitable conduct
and what I'm driven to by your hate and your devilments.

A: To "third degree" her

Dirty workers teach dirty work.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
You beastly whelp, it's what I've said
and NOT done, that makes you talk a great deal too much.

ELEKTRA:

A: To delight in her stupidity

Now you're talkin',
you did the job, not me,
and things done get names.
KLYTEMNESTRA:
By the Virgin you'll pay for this
when Aegisthus gets home.

A: To appease

ELEKTRA:
Nice nature, comin' out, ain't it?
Temperamental, tells me to say what I like
and hasn't got brains enough to hear it.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
You'd even spoil the sacrifice, shouting,
now I've let you get it all out.

ELEKTRA (coldly):
Go along, yes, DO sacrifice, please
and don't say my noise is jinxing you,
I won't say anything more.

KLYTEMNESTRA (to maid):

B3: “The Prayer”
Here, you pick up all this fruit and incense
so I can pray and get rid of these worries.

OBJ: To dispose of Klytemnestra

Hear me Apollo, Patron, keep down this scandal

(I am not speaking among friends,
she is ready to yatter

A: To demonstrate disgust

and spread silly nonsense all thru the town,
envious little bitch).
But do hear me, let me explain
this ghost in the shifty vision of a dream.
O Apollo Lykeios, if it's lucky let the luck come
to me
and if it's evil, let it fall to my enemies,
if anybody's trying to cheat me out of my money
don't let 'em.
Let me run the house of Atreides as long as I live
and keep hold of the sceptre. Preserve me
to live comfortably with these friends,
and with children who like me
and who aren't gone bitter with spite and gloom.

O Phoibos Lykeios hear me, with favor,
give to us all that we ask,
and you know all the rest I don't say
for the sons of God see all that there is.

RHS6: Have I got News for You
(enter the TUTOR)

TUTOR:
I'm a stranger in these parts, can
any of you kind ladies tell me
if that's Milord Aegisthus's palace?

OBJ: To wait for Orestes

CHORUS:
Yes, stranger, you've hit it, bullseye.

TUTOR:
Would I be right in sayin' that woman there is the
A: To ignore her queen?  
    She looks it.

A: To fantasize about the day Orestes returns

CHORUS:  
    She's it.

TUTOR:  
    Gruss Gott, your highness, I've got good news for you and Aegisthus, come from a friend of his.

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
    That's nice. (dropping voice)  
    Wonder who the deuce that can be.

B2: “The Big News”

TUTOR:  
    Phanoteus, of Phocia. It's a serious matter.

OBJ: To deny the horrible news of his death

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
    Well, what is it? Go on, stranger must be good if it comes from him.

TUTOR:  
    Orestes is dead. That's the short of it.

ELEKTRA:

A: To demonstrate disbelief  
    Oooh, that's the end. I'm finished.

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
    What, what, don't bother with her.
TUTOR:
He's dead, Orestes, finished! na poo. ⁵⁰

ELEKTRA:
Ruin, ruin, I can't go on.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
(to ELEKTRA) Mind your own business.
Now, stranger, tell me about it,
how did it happen?

TUTOR:
That's what I'm here for.
He went up for the big Delphic prize. ⁵¹
That's the biggest Greek games
and when he heard the herald yellin' out the first
race,
the foot race, he come out shining
admired of all beholders
an' he got the proize uv the first race.
I never see a man like him, from start to finish,
the crown he had for the victory,
I'm only tellin' part of it.
He took all the foive proizes, you could hear the
umpires
tellin' it: Agamemnon's son, young Orestes.
Win for Argos. Old general's son licked the lot of
'em.

PA: Jump up and begin crossing DSR to
bottom of SR wing, repeating metaphoric
gesture phrase

A: To remember the love of
a brother

A: To relive the story as it is
being told

(change tone, and shaking head)
There's no lickin' the god's bad temper.
An' the next day toward sundown
he entered, there were all the charioteers,
Sparta, Achaia, and two boys from Libya:
drivers, and one team of Thessalian mares;
an Aetolian, young chestnut fillies, and another from Megara.
A white Aeneian, and the Athenian, number nine,
the city the gods put up, and last and tenth the Beotian.
And the umpires ranged 'em up as the lot fell
and they sounded off with the brazen horn
shakin' the reins and a-lickin' the horses
and a-yellin' till you couldn't hear over the plain
and the track wuz narrow, the lot of 'em drivin' togedder
and a-lammin' the horses, each one tryin' to git out of
the bunches
and the wheels a-rollin', and the horses a-snortin'
and their sweat spattered over the cars,
and their breath steamin' on the drovers in front of 'em
and Orestes come round at the turn, at the turns
all of 'em, shavin' the pillars
loosin' the off horse and pullin' in on the nigh.
And the Aeneian's bolted between the sixth and seventh round
and fouled the Barcaen's, and they all piled up then the lot of 'em

PA: Sit on wing facing USR
except the Athenian
  who slowed up
and then Orestes
  pulled in on his team
nothin' left but the two of 'em,
all RIGHT, till the very last turn, when his
axle-tip hit the pillar
  and busted
and he got t'rown over the rail
and caught in the reins of his horses
  wid the crowd yellin' for pity
now seein' him bumped on the ground and now
lifted
  wid his feet in the air
till the other charioteers
A: To lay still, drained and
in agony
  got hold of his horses
and found him
broke beyond recognition,
his best friend wouldn't have known him. (pause)
And the Phoceans burnt him then and there on the
pyre
  and the envoys⁶¹ are comin', bringin' what's left in
an urn
to lay his dust in his fatherland.
It's a sad story, madam, I
saw it wid my own eyes.
Never a worse one.

CHORUS:
    PHEU, PHEU, MISERA.
Ah, ah, that's the end of the dynasty!  
T: The whole of the ancient family of our lords, indeed, the dynasty, has perished, it seems, root and branch.

PALAI  
They are blotted out root and branch.  
PRRISDON HOOS EOIKEN

EPHTHARTAI  
GENOS.

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
Oh god, what, which, I dunno if it's lucky.  
Terrible, it's terrible, it's, it's useful anyhow.  
It's a miserable state of things when nothing but my own sorrows save my life.

PA: Sit up on DSR wing

OBJ: To destroy  
Klytemenesta.

A: To listen with contempt  
TUTOR:  
What, lady, am I gettin' you down with this news?

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
That's the worst of being a mother, can't hate a child no matter how badly they treat you.

A: To demonstrate disgust  
TUTOR:  
Seems I came on a useless errand.

KLYTEMNESTRA:  
No, not useless, if you've got proof of his death born of my life, forgetful of the breasts that suckled him  
banished himself to get away from me  
ever seen me since he left the country
accused me of killing his father
he was threatening terrible
what awful things he would do
till I couldn't get a night's sleep or a cat nap
thinking I was going to die every minute
and, now, eh, now I needn't be scared of him any
more
nor of that worse little bloodsucker living here with
me,
the pest,
now we'll get a day's peace somewhere
in spite of her threats.

ELEKTRA:
Ooooh, he's dead and it fits her book
miserly, motherly excitement
very pretty.

PA: Shake doll and throw it down at her feet

A: To lash out

KLYTEMNESTRA:
Not for you. I dare say he's better off.

A: To plead with the gods

ELEKTRA:
Holy vengeance, god hear her,
and him not cold in the grave.

PA: Run to top of wing facing US

KLYTEMNESTRA:
Fate HAS heard, and managed it very nicely.

A: To blame her

ELEKTRA:
Go on, keep it up. You're top dog, you've

PA: Sit at top of wing facing her DS
hit the jackpot.

**KLYTEMNESTRA:**
You and Orestes can't spoil it now.

**ELEKTRA:**
Spoil it! No, this is OUR finish.

**KLYTEMNESTRA (to TUTOR):**
You'd deserve more than a good fat tip if you'd make her hush and finish her yatter.

**TUTOR:**
Well ma'am, I'll be goin', if everything is in good shape.

**KLYTEMNESTRA:**
NO, no, can't treat a friend's messenger that way. Come in, do, and let her yowl out here about her friends' troubles, and hers.

(KLYTEMNESTRA and TUTOR *exit*)

**ELEKTRA:**
Looks like she's grief-stricken, weepin' an' wailin' about her poor son being wiped out that way? Went out bursting with laughter.

**A:** To collapse in misery

**OO TALAIN EGO**

**ORESTA PHILTATH HOOS M'APOOLESAS THANOOON**

**T:** Oh wretched me, Orestes, dearest, your death has destroyed me.
not ever
I'll lie down
at the gate here
and die here,
got no friends.
And if anybody kills me, because he don't like it,
any of them inside, be a favor, that killing,
got no wish to live anyhow.

CHORUS:
God, where the hell are you? Zeus,
Apollo, no light and no lightning. 62
Is there no one to show these things up?

ELEKTRA:
A: To lament
AI AI
T: Ah, me!

CHORUS:
No use crying.

ELEKTRA:
A: To lament
AIH
T: Alas!

CHORUS:
SHHH.

ELEKTRA:
A: To spit out
You are killing me.
CHORUS:
What?

A: To accept defeat

ELEKTRA:
Don't tell me about life after death,
that's only another kick when I'm down.
They're dead and gone forever.

CHORUS (sings softly? trying to comfort her):
OIDA GAR ANAKT' AMPHIAREOOON
KHRUSODETOIS
HERKESI
KRUPHTHENT A GUNAIKOOK
KAI NUUN HUPO GAIAS
Nay but King Amphiarion
that died for a golden chain
caught in a false wife's net under the earth reigns
yet.

ELEKTRA (disgusted and bored with song):

A: To repel the reassurance

Ajhh

CHORUS (singing):
He reigns and lords his mind.
PAMPSUKOS ANASSEI

ELEKTRA (beginning to cheer up, still dubious, but
singing now and echoing
the tone of the Chorus):

A: To mourn

AHI

T: King Amphiaraus, as I know, was caught
in woman's golden snares and now beneath
the earth

PA: Turn and lay on back

T: He reigns over all the souls.

T: Alas!
CHORUS:  
    And bodes no good at all  
    for her who slew him.

ELEKTRA:  
    Slain.

CHORUS:  
    Ay, slain.

ELEKTRA:  
    Known, o'er known  
    mid grief, an avenger.  
    I have none.  
    He was, and is not,  
    vanished away, torn from me.

CHORUS:  
    Sorrow attains thee, sorrow.

ELEKTRA:  
    Known, don't know, over known,  
    day after day, moon over moon,  
    overfull, pain over pain,  
    horrors of hate abate not  
    ever.

CHORUS:  
    Our eyes be witness.
A: To seek solace

ELEKTRA:
Then do not deceive me
neither lead me astray.

PA: Move off of wing and cross to USL sand bags and sit under sign

CHORUS:
Thou sayest?

B2: “I’m Doomed!”

ELEKTRA:
Not into emptiness
where there is no one at all.

OBJ: To come to terms with
his death

CHORUS (the two “alls” simultaneously):
All men must die.

ELEKTRA:
But to die so, so clawed in whirling doom
torn in the track, if so that death must come

CHORUS:
mid tortures so
whose death was unforeseen.

ELEKTRA:
How not? and him so far
no hand to lay

A: To rebel

CHORUS:

AHI

ELEKTRA:

T: Alas!

A: To paint the picture
His mangled limbs
in decent grave
unwept to meet strange clay?

CHORUS:
AHI! PAPA!

A: To nurse

RS8: Best of Times, Worst of Times

CHRYSO THEMIS (trotting in puffing):
Oh dearest . . . . . . . . so happy . . . . . . . . such news . . . . .
I'm all out of breath from running . . . . . . .
your troubles are over.

B1: "You've Got to be Kidding!"

ELEKTRA (voice of complete skeptical weariness):
What? You with a cure-all?

OBJ: To break the news to Chrysothenis

(after a pause, looking her up and down)
Where did you find what ain't?

CHRYSO THEMIS:
He's here. Orestes is here.
I'm telling you, just as sure as you see me.

A: To warn

ELEKTRA:
You're CRAZY, poor dear, plumb crazy,
don't joke about horrors.

CHRYSO THEMIS:
i'm not, I swear by the hearth-stone64 he's come for the two of us.
A: To verify

ELEKTRA (sighs):
Oh dear, poor dear, has anyone LIVING
put that nonsense into your head?

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
No, but me, ME, from what I've seen,
me, with my own eyes, seen.          PA: Move to palace steps

A: To search out

ELEKTRA:
WHAT proof? you poor fool
you're blotto\textsuperscript{65} delirious.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
For gods' sake wait till I finish telling you
and then decide whether I'm batty.

A: To appease

ELEKTRA:
All right, go on, if you like to talk.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
It was like this:
I was goin' to father's old grave
and there was milk newly splashed over it
running down from the top of the mound
and all sorts of wreaths all around it
out there for father
like as if
and I was wondering, and looking to see who,
who on earth could,
as if someone might be coming

A: To demonstrate horror and disbelief

PA: Move off steps and cross to USR corner,
turn and move to SR top of wing
(ELEKTRA masked, at first not even looking at
CHRYSOTHEMIS but boredly into distance,
gradually grows attentive. Slowness in turning of
head, as per Noh)

and when I saw everything quiet
I sneaked up nearer the mound
and there was a new lock of hair on it

A: To search for the right words to tell her Orestes is
dead

right on the edge
and, oh dear, it come over me while I was looking
at it
that ORESTES had put it there,
almost as if I had seen him
and I picked it up and burst out crying, I was so
happy,
it can't be an ill omen,
and I'm perfectly sure nobody else could have put
it there,
who'd have cared except us?
I didn't and you didn't
cause you couldn't get out of the house,
SHE wouldn't have, she's not taken that way
and she couldn't have, without being seen.
No, no, no, my dear, Orestes put that stuff in the
grave,
you can buck up now.
The same devils can't always run things,
ours have been pretty bad,
but the luck's changing,
happen a really good day might come in.

PA: Cross DSR
A: To dismiss

ELEKTRA:
Poor thing, you were always soft in the head.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
But aren't you glad?

ELEKTRA:
You don't know whether you're on earth, or raving.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
Don't know what I've seen with my own eyes,
SEEN.

ELEKTRA:
He's dead, and the dead won't help you, and he can't,

A: To break the news

god help you, poor you.

PA: Cross DSL

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
Oh, o, o, but who told you.

A: To explain

ELEKTRA:
A man who was there and saw it. Killed.

CHRYSOTHEMIS (in tone of complete puzzlement):
Where is he, the man? It's very peculiar.

ELEKTRA:
In THERE, and mother's so glad to see him.

A: To clarify
CHRYSOHEMAIS:
    Oh dear . . . But whoever can have put all those
wreaths on the tomb?

ELEKTRA:
    Somebody must have put 'em there for Orestes.

A: To lay before her

CHRYSOHEMAIS:
    O, O, and me running to make you happy
    and not knowing we'd only come into more trouble
    besides what we had.

ELEKTRA:
    Well that's how it is. And now you turn to and help
    me
    at least this much with the load.

CHRYSOHEMAIS:
    You want me to raise the dead?

ELEKTRA:
    That's not what I said. At least I wasn't born crazy.

A: To find humor in times
    of agony

CHRYSOHEMAIS:
    Well what do you want me to do,
    that I can do?

A: To direct

ELEKTRA:
    Don't break down,
    and do what I tell you.
CHRYSOthemis:
I'll do anything that can be the least use.

A: To challenge

ELEktra:
You can't do a good job without work

PA: Cross DCS to wing.

CHRYSOthemis:
I know that. I'll do anything I can.

B2: "The Plan"

ELEktra:
Well then listen.

OBJ: To enlist Chrysothemis
(it is now or never!)

I'm going to finish it up.
We got no more friends to stand by us.
Hell's grabbed the lot

PA: Chase her USR and bring her back to
DCS bottom of wing

A: To level with her

and left us
you can see that, nobody left but us.
As long as HE was alive I went on
hoping he'd come and put things right about father,
wipe out the murder.
Now he's gone, not there any more,

A: To cue in

I rely on you,
I hope you won't hold back,
we've got to kill Aegisthus ourselves,
you're not scared?
It's our father was murdered,
we've only got our own hands,

A: To command

might as well look at it straight,
here you are crying and grousing about being
cheated out
of father's fortune, well here it is:
and we're not getting any younger
without a man and unmarried,
and without a room of your own,
home of your own,
unbedded, unchambered.
Don't think they'll ever let you get married.
Aegisthus won't let us have children,
he's too cagey for that,
not to put him out of the running.
But you do what I tell you.
FIRST you'd be showin' respect for your dead
father down
under
AND for your brother as well.
SECONDLY you could live like a free woman,
free born,
as you were,
for the rest of your life,
and you'd get a man fit to marry.
People recognize quality, everybody does.
You listen to me, and we'd both get respected,
anybody from here or abroad would say:
"There they are, those girls saved the dynasty,
risked their lives doing it,
throwed out the crooks, settled the murderers' hash.
You just got to like 'em,
everybody's got to respect 'em."

(dreamy half-tranced voice)
We'd have our proper place of honor
in processions and in assemblies

PA: Open out to DSL corner
on account of our courage.
We'd have a reputation everywhere
and it would last even when we are dead.

A: To plead

Trust me, my dear, and stand by your father,
work with me for your brother,
get me out of my misery,
get yourself out of yours,
and remember this, the free born ought not to
sink into slavery.

A: To anticipate a positive response

CHORUS:

Well I guess
lookin' forward is about the best ally one could
have, if you're talking or listening
to things like this.

A: To demonstrate anger
and disbelief

CHRYSSOTHEMIS:

No, girls, if she weren't on the wrong track
she'd have had a little caution before she sounded
off
and she just hasn't got any.
(to ELEKTRA)
Where do you look to get the nerve to fight
or get me into the ranks?

A: To demonstrate disdain

PA: Stand on top of wing facing palace USL

Can't you see you were born a woman not a man?
You haven't got the physical strength
of these people you're up against.
Their gods, their luck is comin' up every day
and ours going out, not comin' in at all.
(CHRYSOTHEMIS *repetitive and very patient*)
You try to break a man like that?
Who could get away with it unharmed,
and not make a complete mess of it.
Don't make it worse,
if anybody heard you talkin' this way
you'd get into more trouble,
we won't get OUT of anything that way,
and fine talk's no use if we're dirty dead.

Death's not the worst that can happen
but not to be able to die when you want to.
I put it to you, before we're completely wiped out
us two and all of the family
keep your temper, hold in.
I'll keep my mouth shut about what you've said
cause I think it's, all of it, useless.

But do hang onto your wits, from now on.
Don't go up against people in power.

CHORUS *(to ELEKTRA):*
You better listen, there's nothing more useful
to a human being than forethought and a prudent
mind.

A: To cherish her for one last moment

B3: *"The Harsh Reality"*
ELEKTRA:
Just as I thought . . .
All right, I'll do it alone,
it's got to be done,

PA: Push her hand away, rise and cross USL to palace steps
OBJ: *To avenge my father's death*

have a try at it anyhow.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:

Oooh Lord
I wish you'd taken the chance
the day he died!
Anything was possible then.

ELEKTRA:

A: To clarify
Not that I didn't want to; I hadn't the sense.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:

I wish you still had as much.

ELEKTRA:

A: To accuse
That means you won't help me at all.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:

It CAN'T be lucky.

ELEKTRA:

A: To bruise
Nice mind, no guts!

CHRYSOTHEMIS:

I can bear up even under that compliment.

PA: Cross DSL

ELEKTRA:

A: To appease
You won't have to stand any more.
CHRYSOthemis (blandly):
That remains to be seen.

Elektra:
A: To explode
   Oh get out, you're no use at all.

CHRYSOthemis:
   I am so, but you can't see it.

Elektra:
A: To mock
   Go tell it all to Mama.

CHRYSOthemis (explanatory):
   But I don't hate you that way.

Elektra:
A: To suggest
   No, but think how you'd lead me to shame.

CHRYSOthemis:
   No I would NOT.
   I'm only asking you think forward.

Elektra:
A: To challenge
   And accept YOUR values?

CHRYSOthemis:
   When you get untangled, I'll take to yours, you can think for us both, then.
A: To compare

ELEKTRA:
That's talking, too bad you mean it the wrong way on.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
That's just the trouble with you.

A: To challenge

ELEKTRA:
What? You mean what I say isn't perfectly true?

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
EVEN JUSTICE CAN BE A PEST.

PA: Move up SR platform and grab boot

ELEKTRA:
Anyhow, I don't want to go by your standards of conduct.

A: To confess

I'd rather die.

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
But if you did, you'd probably find I'm right.

PA: Move back down platform and grab belt off statue, cross to DSL ladder and onto SL platform

ELEKTRA:
I'm going on anyhow, you can't scare me.

A: To disregard her

CHRYSOTHEMIS (very soberly):
You're serious? You won't think it over?

PA: Grab helmet and cross USL platform to steps

ELEKTRA:
Nothing stinks worse than bad advice.

A: To rebel
CHRYSOTHEMIS:
You just don't understand what I'm saying.

ELEKTRA:
A: To spit out
This isn't something that's just come into my head.

CHRYSOTHEMIS (resignedly):
Well, I'll go now.
You can't stand my talk, and I don't think
you're going the right way about it.

ELEKTRA:
A: To repel
Yes, go along, but I'll never trail after you
for the urging.
It's useless to chase after shadows,
(mezzo voce, as if reflecting)
such a lot of them,
all of them void.

A: To pierce

CHRYSOTHEMIS:
If you ever aim to teach yourself to think straight,
think about it now. For my words will come back
too late . . . late.

RS9: Chorus' Prayer
CHORUS:
TI TOUS ANOOTHEN

B1: "A Call to Arms"
PHRONIMOOTOATOUS
OIOONOUS
ESOROMENOI TROPHAS
KAEDOMENOUS APH

T: Why, when we see the most prudent birds
in high caring for the nurture of those from
whom they are sprung and from whom they
derive benefit, do we not do the same? But, by
the lightening-bolt of Zeus and Themis,* who
rules high in the sky, they are not long
untroubled. Ah rumor that holds on earth
OBJ: To prepare for war

A: To regain composure

A: To focus my attention on the task at hand with the strength and help of the gods

shall not justice be done
by Zeus among men?
shall a sound be borne under earth
to the sons of Atreus?

T: (Rumor,* tell them) that now their house is sick, their two children are in an irreconcilable conflict.

amongst mortals, cry out for my sake the pitiable tidings to the Atreidai beneath the earth, bearing them shames that bear no celebration.

OON

TE BLASTOOSIN APH OON

TONASIN

HEUROOSI

TAD OUK EP' ISAS TELOUHEN.
ALL' OU TAN DIOS ASTRAPAN
KAI TAN OURANIAN THEMIN

DARON OUK APONAETOI
OO KHTHONIA BROTOISI

PHAMA,

KATA MOI BOASON OIKTRAN
OBA TOIS ENERTH' ATREIDAI,
AXOREUTA PHEROUS' ONEIDAE

DOMOON

HOI SPHIN AEDAE TA MEN EK

A: To accept my role as a Fury in avenging the dead

NOSEI

DAE TA DE PROS TEKNOON

DIPLAE

PHULOPIS OUKET EKSI SOUTAI

From above wise birds of omen
to be observed, tossed and alone
Elektra mourns,
constant aid hath she none.
As Philomel⁶⁹ in grief
her sire's shade⁷⁰
so shamed of all the world
nor cares to live or die

A: To accept the gods
blessing that is bestowed
were he avenged.

STROPHE B
A child, indeed, of what race!
What breed! Nor would she live in shame.

OUDEIS TOON AGATHOON
OO PAI PAI

T: Nobody knows those who are good. Oh
child child.

So fame's all-hovering wing
shall bear her praise
for beauty of heart and mind
for constant faith.

Nay, ere she die
ANTISTROPHE B
may power come
to lift her high,
may yet her house be strong
as Zeus gave law.

PA: Run hands under dripping blood, wipe
war paint onto face, come down from altar and
face SR. Begin a slow ten circle that
culminates and ends on top of wing with
scream towards palace

RS10: From Keening to
Joy

(Enter ORESTES and PYLADES)

B1: "The Stranger"

ORESTES:

OBJ: To prepare for war
Eh, can any of you ladies tell me:

PA: Cross down wing and USL to underneath
top of wing, put on belt and gloves
A: To mentally and physically prepare to kill Klytemnestra and Aegisthus

A: To ignore strangers

CHORUS (more or less automatically, mechanically answering):
Where do you want to come to?
AND WHY?
What are you here for?

ORESTES:
Aegisthus. Where does he live?
(with morgue and double entente)
I've been looking for him for SOME time.

CHORUS (gruffly):
Well yuh can't blame the fellow that told you.
(thumb over shoulder, pointing)
You got here.
This is it.

ORESTES:
Well, eh, will any of you go in and, eh, say politely that we have respectfully got here eh... on foot.

CHORUS:
This unfortunate girl should.
She's of the family.
ORESTES (dubiously, accent and tone a bit grim and deliberate):
Yes, lady? Would you go say that some Phocians have come for Aegisthus?

A: To demonstrate surprise when he knocks on the wing

A: To realize the reason for his presence

ELEKTRA (half-sob):
Oh God, I spose you've got the proof with you.

ORESTES:
Proof of what? Old Stroffy told us to bring the news of Orestes.

ELEKTRA (Sort of gasp):
Eeh, I was afraid so (in sort of glaze noticing her own hands)
I'm all of a tremble.

Orestes:

A: To demonstrate bewilderment

Orestes:

PA: Cross to palace steps and sit

Orestes:

O. O It's all all I can bear.

ORESTES:
If it's Orestes you're crying for, if it's for his troubles he's all there in the urn.
A: To plead

**ELEKTRA:**
Oh give it to me, for god's sake, give it to ME.
(hardly pause, but spoken staccato during the clauses)
It's the end of the line.
Were all there together:
ashes.
(ELEKTRA clutching at the urn which Pylades is carrying):

A: To entrance

PA: Rise for urn

B2: “Elektra’s Keening”

**ORESTES:**
Give it to her, let her have it, whoever she is a gift
she's not asking from spite,
she must be a friend or one of the household.

**ELEKTRA'S KEENING:**
All that is left me
my hope was Orestes
dust is returned me
in my hands nothing, dust that is all of him,
flower that went forth.

A: To recollect

A: To paint the picture

Would I had died then
ere stealing thee from the slaughter
died both together
lain with our father.

Far from they homeland
died far in exile
A: To reveal
no hand was near thee
to soothe thy passing
corpse unanointed
fire consumed thee

PA: Cross to altar and climb onto top of wing
facing DS

A: To clarify
all now is nothing
strangers have brought thee
small in this urn
here sorrow upon me
fruitless my caring.

A: To nurse
I as mother and sister both
thy nurse also ere thou hadst thy growth
this was my past
and swept away with thee
ever to me

A: To welcome him home

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A: To face reality
thy summons came.

PA: Cradle urn

A: To declare
All in a day
and is no more.

Dead Agamemnon, dead now my brother,
I am dead also, the great wind in passing
bears us together.
Mirth for our foemen.

A: To blame
(anger now stronger than grief, for a moment:
spoken)
A: To lament
And that bitch of a mother is laughing
and they haven't sent back even the shape of him,
but a ghost that can't do its job.

A: To worship
Ajinn, ajinn.
Thou the avenger, no more avenging
born to misfortune, ashes avail not

A: To lament
shadows avail not.
Ahi, ahi,
bodiless
brother that art not.

T: Ah, me!

PA: Raise urn

A: To speak to him in irony
(spoken)
The spirits love me no longer.
You kept sending messages
secretly, you would take vengeance.

A: To summon his spirit
(sings)
Thy death, my dying dread road thou goest brother,
my slayer

PA: Whisper to urn

A: To mourn
(singing to the urn)
Omoi! Omoi!

A: To plead
Take me in with you
I now am nothing, make place beside thee
naught into naught, zero to zero
to enter beside thee
our fortune equal
death endeth pain.

T: Ah, me! Ah, me!
A: To mourn

CHORUS:
Mortal thy father, all men are mortal.
Mortal Orestes,

PA: Violently and repeatedly press urn to heart, turn and cradle urn facing US

B3: “The Chase.”
all men must die.

OBJ: To mourn in private
ORESTES:
I can't stand much more of this.

PA: Turn back DS

A: To deflect

ORESTES:
What's it to you?

A: To present the harsh reality

ORESTES:
Good god. Are you Elektra?

ELEKTRA:
I am, and in misery.

ORESTES:
Heaven help me.

A: To challenge

ELEKTRA:
What do you care about me?

ORESTES (very quick & angry):
What in hell have they done to you?

A: To hunt for

ELEKTRA:
But are you sorry for ME?
ORESTES:  
Unmarried, and such a life.

ELEKTRA:  
What are you lookin' at?  
What you got to be sad about?  
It isn't YOUR funeral.

ORESTES:  
I didn't know the half of it.

A: To dare  
To Clarify

ELEKTRA:  
What has that got to do with ANYTHING?

ORESTES:  
Seeing you in this condition . . .

A: To dismiss  
To reveal

ELEKTRA:  
You haven't seen anything yet.  
PA: Sit on steps

ORESTES:  
Amm'nt I seeing enough, can there be anything more,  
more, worse?

A: To reveal

ELEKTRA:  
Yes, living here with these assassins.

ORESTES:  
Whose assassins?
A: To protest

ELEKTRA (patiently and being explicit):
My father's, and me a slave.

ORESTES:
Who compels you?

ELEKTRA:
They say she's my mother.

A: To offer

ORESTES:
How? Beats you? Starves you?

ELEKTRA:
Yes, and everything else.

A: To suggest in irony

ORESTES:
And there's no one to help you, or stop her?

ELEKTRA:
Nobody. Nothing but the dust you've got there.

A: To confide

ORESTES:
Poor dear, I've been sorry for you, a long time.

ELEKTRA:
Well you're the first man that ever WAS and the only one.

A: To dismiss

ORESTES:
Cause I've got the same trouble.

PA: Snatch urn back and cross up sand bags to SL platform
A: To patronize
   ELEKTRA:
   You mean you're a relative?
   ORESTES:
   Can you trust these people?

A: To demean
   ELEKTRA:
   They're all right. You can trust 'em.
   ORESTES:
   Give me back that jug, and I'll tell you.

A: To repel
   ELEKTRA:
   No, don't cheat me that way, for gods' sake.
   ORESTES:
   Come on, you won't miss it.

A: To urge
   ELEKTRA:
   Oh gosh, don't take it, it's all I've got, don't rob me.
   PA: Collapse to ground on DSL platform
   ORESTES:
   I won't. Give it here.

A: To plead
   ELEKTRA:
   Oh poor Orestes, if I can't even bury you.
   ORESTES:
   Watch what you're saying.
You oughtn't to weep.

ELEKTRA:
What when my brother's dead.

ORESTES:
You oughtn't to talk that way about him.

ELEKTRA:
What! Amn't I fit to?

A: To challenge

ORESTES (admiringly):
You're fit for anything, but that isn't your job.

ELEKTRA:
Not when I'm carrying his body here in my hands?

A: To defy

ORESTES:
They're not his. That's a fairy tale.

ELEKTRA:
Well where IS his grave.

A: To mourn

ORESTES:
It ain't. You don't bury people while they're still alive.

ELEKTRA:
What are you talking about?
ORESTES:
Only the truth.

ELEKTRA:
He's alive?

ORESTES:
As I am.

ELEKTRA:
YOU?

ORESTES:
Here's dad's ring.

T: Oh dearest light!

PA: Drop urn and hold Orestes

B4: “It’s Me!”

OBJ: To rejoice Orestes’ return

A: To demonstrate disbelief

ELEKTRA:
OO PHILATON PHOOS

ORESTES:
What a day; I'll say it is.

ELEKTRA:
And I hear you talking.

ORESTES:
Yes. We're agreed on that.

ELEKTRA:
And I can hold onto you.
ORESTES:
Never let go.

ELEKTRA:
Oh my dears, this is Orestes.
He wasn't really dead after all.
He was just pretending, so he could get here.

A: To introduce to chorus

CHORUS:
Yes we can see him. Makes one cry this does.

ELEKTRA:
PA: Stand on top of USL palace steps
Heart, heart, heart thou art come.

A: To bring to life

ORESTES:
Yes, but keep quiet.
for a bit just keep quiet.

ELEKTRA:
What for?

A: To rejoice

ORESTES:
Somebody might hear there inside.

ELEKTRA (sings Greek like Carmagnole. THIS song can be burst into. Like wild Sioux injun war dance with his tommy hawks):

A: To celebrate

ALL OU MA TEN ARTEMID
ADMA ETAON AIEN
ARTEMID HOTOTOTOI

T: But by the ever-virgin Artemis, hooray!
A: To return to the issues at hand

Clear again, not to be ended
not to be forgotten
how our ill started, trouble began.

PA: Cross DSL

ORESTES:
By god when the women get goin' it's Mars. 73

ELEKTRA:
Oh to hell with all the hens
in the old hen house.
I ain't afraid of hens
cause they ain't a bit of use.

PA: Cross USR to palace steps USL

A: To celebrate

ORESTES:
Don't I know it but
to tell it in its time
when the DEED recalls it.

ELEKTRA:
Any time's right, now, I've hardly got my mouth
free.

A: To welcome

ORESTES:
I'll say it is. And you damn well keep it free.

ELEKTRA:
How?

A: To rejoice

ORESTES:
By not talking too much at the wrong time.

PA: Grab pole behind sand bags USL and run
it along the wall
ELEKTRA:
You came when I'd given up hope.
I got to keep quiet now?

A: To verify

ORESTES:
I came as the gods moved me.

ELEKTRA:
That's the best the gods have done yet.

A: To exclaim

ORESTES:
I don't want to stop down your enjoyment
but afraid you're overdoing it.

PA: Run DSL platform, down USL ladder

ELEKTRA:
Oh a long time to the right road
you "deign" (gosh) deign to show up here
but not me seeing me full of toil
DONT...

A: To chide with good will

ORESTES:
Don't what?

PA: Push him USL

ELEKTRA:
Don't defraud me
of the pleasure of seeing you here.

ORESTES:
Damn well let anybody else try it.
A: To entice

ELEKTRA:
You don’t mind?

ORESTES:
Of course not, how could I?

PA: Run up wing and face DS

A: To cajole

ELEKTRA:
You like it?

ORESTES:
Sure I’ll do what you tell me, why not?

ELEKTRA (performing for chorus):

Oh dearest friends
if now’s to ear
a voice I ne’er
had hoped to hear

If joy shall not
burst forth at this
then ever dumb in wretchedness
should one live on in deep distress.

PA: Stand on altar

A: To present

A: To cherish

Now thou art here
in full daylight
I shall not pour
forth my delight,
who ne’er in deepest woe
had forgot thee.
ORESTES (trying to stop her, gently, by covering her mouth):
Yes, yes, but lay off the talk.
You don't have to tell me how that bitch and
Aegisthus
are running all dad's place to ruin
sluicin' it out in extravagance, luxury,
no time for all that,
got to get on with the job.
Tell me the best way to get to it
so I can fit the time,
where to show, and where to hide
to put an end to these bumptious bastids, and
how.

And don't look so damn happy
that when we go in, she'll twig something is up.
Keep your face mum, keep on weepin' and bawlin'
so she won't guess what we're up to,
and laugh when we've finished the business
and have got to some sort of freedom.

ELEKTRA (breathlessly eager):
Ye'ss my dear, I just love it,
it's all yours and not mine,
I won't get in the way, I won't bother.
What you like, I like, and my
pleasure's from you not me, and I wouldn't
pain you the least little bit for anything in
the world cause it would run counter to the
good luck now running.

PA: Down from altar, cross briefly to palace
then cross SR to Orestes, cross DSR and USL
circling back to palace steps and yell in at	house
A: To suggest
You know Aegisthus is out, she's alone in the house.

A: To humor the chorus
Don't worry about my lookin' happy.
I loathe her, and I've been weeping and crying
(for joy, but she needn't know that)

A: To rejoice
for the dead come alive
to do what I never believed
so incredible that if father himself should come here alive I'd believe it,
since you got here this way.

A: To welcome his plot
Tell me what you want done and I'll follow
since even alone I have done one or two things
and I'd have damn well thrown 'em out
or gone bust, been decently dead.

ORESTES (puts hand over her mouth):
But HUSH
sounds as if someone
was coming out.

A: To put on heirs
ELEKTRA:
Yes, gentlemen, this is the way
nobody in this house will object to what you're bringing in.

RS11: Shut the F*** Up!

Bl: “Get on with it!”

TUTOR (furious):
You BLOODY fools shut up.
Ain't you got ANY sense whatever?
OBJ: To put our plans of revenge into motion

No more care for your lives?
You ain't on the brink of trouble,
you are plumb bang in the middle.
Don't you know you're in danger
real danger, damn it.

A: To decipher who this man is

If I hadn't been there keepin' watch in this doorway
they'd already know what you're at before you get
to it, before you get in there yourselves.
I've saved you that, anyhow,
and now if you've got thru with your gabble
your blasted roaring exuberance
go in, but quiet,
no good wasting time, either,
get it over.

A: To demonstrate anticipation

ORESTES:
What does it look like in there?

TUTOR:
All jake, especially since no one knows you.

ORESTES:
You've told 'em I'm dead?

TUTOR:
You're a ghost in hell as far as they go.

ORESTES:
And they're DEElighted.
What do they say about that?
TUTOR:
    We'll go into THAT later. The worse they do, the better . . .

ELEKTRA:
    For god's sake, who's this?

ORESTES:
    Can't you see?

ELEKTRA:
    Haven't the foggiest . . .

A: To inquire

ORESTES:
    Well you handed me over to him.

ELEKTRA:
    What, what?

A: To humor

ORESTES:
    Well he sneaked me out of here and got me to Phocis.

PA: Run up wing, jump down, and kiss his feet, push him USR and hug him

A: To seek

ORESTES: (gasp):
    The only one of the lot who stood by me when father was murdered.

A: To shine a light on Tutor

ORESTES:
    That's him. Now hush.
ELEKTRA (to TUTOR):

A: To rejoice
What a day!
You've done it alone.
You've saved the line.

A: To probe
How did you get here?
You've saved him and me
in all this misery, bless your hand.

(grabs 'em, and presses them to her booZUM or cheeks)
Oh gods bless the feet that brought you.
(bit hysterical still)
How could you go on and not tell me,
and telling us all of those lies
and yet brought him.
You seem more like a father,

A: To soothe
OHHH how I hated you.
What a dear.

TUTOR:

A: To revel in his return and the magic of this day!
Yes, yes, but now hush.
There's enough history to fill nights and days.
We can go into that when the time comes.

(then noticing ORESTES and PYLADES are still standing there)

A: To prepare with anticipation
What the hell are you doing here?
Get with it, she's alone,
if you lose time, she'll have all the slaves up to fight you,
not only the servants but the palace guards,
the whole corps of them,
and no pikers.  

A: To cherish his return

ORESTES (to PYLADES, who hasn’t said a damn
word):
Come on, Pylades, cut the cackle.
May the gods of the door be with us.
(EXIT ORESTES AND PYLADES)

PA: Cross up wing

ELEKTRA (does the praying/ sings, sort of sing-
song):

RS12: **Mom’s Murder**

B1: “With the Help of the
Gods”

OBJ: To petition the gods to
be on my side

A: To plead to the gods in
good will

CHORUS:
Mars breathing blood
hounds that never miss their prey
miss never their spring, under the roof,
seeking the doers of all ill, by stealth, and by guile,
Mars breatheth blood,
avenging dogs that never miss their prey,
ineluctable, enter the palace roof,
not long to wait for the proof of my presage.
Will, heart, and all.

ELEKTRA (emerging from the door, or slowly turning as part of a pivoted door):
Oh my dears, my dears... It's coming...
sh hh hhh

CHORUS:
What! What!
What are they doing?

A: To recount
She's putting the wreath on the urn...
and... and they're waiting.

CHORUS:
Whatchu come out for?

ELEKTRA:
To keep watch for Aegisthus
so he don't catch 'em.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
AIHIII, nobody left,
oohh assassins.

A: To investigate
ELEKTRA:
Hear that? Yes, dears, it's a noise.

PA: Run down wing on thunder clap and USR to palace USL, and peer inside

PA: Run back down steps and cross to DSR platform steps

T: Ah, me!
CHORUS:
   It's awful. Gimmee the creeps.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
   Aaaah, Aegisthus. AE-GIS-THUS.

A: To verify
    Hear it, that's it again.

KLYTEMNESTRA:
    Pity your mother.

ORESTES (grim):
    Did you pity father or me?

CHORUS (now sings cry of misery keening on one
   note or minimum rise and fall but monotonous and
   legato):
   O city, o WRETCHED house
   and the curse's tooth gnaws
   day after day.

A: To command with ill will
    That's done it.

KLYTEMNESTRA:

ELEKTRA:
    Hit her again.

PA: Run up wing facing palace

A: To declare
   Twice twice always twice.
A: To wait for the outcome

CHORUS:
Aah!

Curses work out. They live who lie under ground.
The blood of the dead, long dead
overwhelms their slayers
and the dead hands
drip Mars, and the slain
blood, blood. I can't blame 'em.

RS13: **Next!**

B1: “The Look Out #2”

OBJ: To prepare for the ultimate satisfaction of Aegisthus’ death

ELEKTRA: Orestes! How are you?

ORESTES: All right, the house is clean again, if what Apollo said
is right.

ELEKTRA: The bitch is dead?

ORESTES (sobered tone vs. ELEKTRA’S exultation):
You won't have any more trouble with mother.

CHORUS: Ssshhh. Here comes Aegisthus.

PA: Run down wing and up DSL ladder to SL platform, down to palace
A: To warn

ELEKTRA:
Back, can't you get back!

ORESTES:
Where is the bloke?

A: To prepare for the ultimate revenge

CHORUS:
Comin' up from the lower town, very chesty . . .

CHORUS:
Quick, get into that vestibule. Hop!
Good job so far. Now the next one.

ORESTES:
We'll do it, don't worry.

PA: Run up wing and sit facing SR platform

A: To shoe him away

ELEKTRA:
Hurry, hurry.

ORESTES:
Exit.
(He leaves.)

ELEKTRA:
Now mine.

A: To assert

CHORUS:
Now just a few polite words would come in handy,
so he won't guess he's rushin' plumb bang into ruin
an' he damn well deserves it.
B2: “The Trick”

AEGISTHUS (eniers, flanked by body guards?):
Say you, where can I find these chappies from

OBJ: To deceive Aegisthus.

Phocis?
They say that Orestes got killed in a chariot race
all messed up.
(to ELEKTRA)
Here YOU, always so full of lip,
it's mostly your business,
you ought to know.

ELEKTRA:
A: To suggest
Sure I know. Think I don't care
about the last relative left me?

AEGISTHUS:
Well where are these chaps? Spit it out.

ELEKTRA:
A: To convince
Inside, and she's SO pleased to see 'em.

AEGISTHUS:
They said he was dead? How do they know?

ELEKTRA:
They don't. They've only got the corpse with 'em.

A: To clarify
AEGISTHUS:
Can I get a look at it?
A: To seduce

ELEKTRA:
Yes (*slight pause*), yes (*spoken softly*):
It's an awful mess.

AEGISTHUS:
'Tain't often you say anything to please me.

A: To dare

ELEKTRA:
Go on and enjoy it, if that's the kind of thing you enjoy.

AEGISTHUS:
Shut up.

(to CHORUS)
Get these doors open
so everyone in Mycenae, and Argos
can see.

(*they open the big portone doors, slowly*)
If anybody had hopes of this man
they can now see him dead

(*smacks his thigh*)
and do what I tell 'em
and not wait till they're dead to find out.

A: To contradict

ELEKTRA:
Oh, I've learned that.
No use goin' up against people in power.
(ORESTES enters with the body of KLYTEMNESTRA, covered)

AEGISTHUS:
O Zeus, I see a sight not sent without envy,
looks as if the gods didn't like him!
Here, I take that back, it ain't lucky.

PA: Turn US to look at corpse

A: To anxiously await the outcome

ORESTES:
Lift that napkin off his face, I'm one of the family in mourning.

ORESTES:
Lift it yourself. It's not my place
to show these signs of love and affection.

AEGISTHUS:
That's right.

(to ELEKTRA)
Go call Klytemnestra if she's at home.

A: To ignore

ORESTES (as AEGISTHUS lifts napkin):
She's right there. You needn't look any further.

B3: "GAaaaaa!"

AEGISTHUS:
GAaaaaa!

OBJ: To honor my father

ORESTES:
Whazza matter? Haven't you seen her before?
A: To take delight in the presence of Orestes

AEGINTHUS (in fury):
Who th' HELL. Damn damn
I'm trapped.

ORESTES:
Haven't
you
ever
learned
that the
DEAD
don't
DIE?

AEGINTHUS:
Ah. You're Orestes.

ORESTES:
Ain't you clever. And it took you so LONG to find out.

AEGINTHUS:
Here now, wait a minute, just let me . . .

A: To command

ELEKTRA:
DON'T
Don't let him get a word in,
the brute's caught, what good's a half hour?

A: To order

Kill him. Kill him.
A: To dismiss

And let the sextons cart him out,
get the stuff out of sight,
and let me forget it.

ORESTES (snarling):
    GET ON IN THERE, stow the gab,
you're in for it.

AEGISTHUS (breaking):
    Why have I got to go in
    and die in the dark?
    Why can't you do it here?

ORESTES:
    None of your business. You'll die
    where you killed my father.

AEGISTHUS:
    Fate, fate, under this damned roof of Pelops
    everything happens here.

ORESTES:
    You'll get YOURS here at any rate.
    I can tell you that much.

AEGISTHUS:
    You didn't get that from your father.

ORESTES:
    Make a song about it?
AEGISTHUS:
I follow.

ORESTES *(patient, dragging voice, but sword pointing in small of A's back):*
After you.

AEGISTHUS:
Hah. 'Fraid I'll give you the slip?

ORESTES:  
No, but you aren't dying for pleasure.  
You've got to go through with it ALL.  
It's a pity you can't all of you die like this and as quickly, every one like you.  
It would save a lot of unpleasantness.

CHORUS:
*O SPERM ATREOOS*  
Atreides, Atreides,  
come through the dark.

A: To follow them in pride
B4: "What Now?"

A: To halt in terror of final scream

A: To recover from all that happened in a single day

PA: Follow Orestes USL, stop with scream at top of steps, cross to USL sand bags and sit in corner

T: Oh the race of Atreus,

DELIVERED, DELIVERED
SWIFT END
SOON
TE NUN TELEOOTHEN.

T: was completed today with force.
### Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Trojan War:</td>
<td>In Greek mythology, the war between the Greeks and the people of Troy that began after the Trojan prince Paris abducted Helen, wife of Menelaus of Sparta. When Menelaus demanded her return, the Trojans refused. Menelaus persuaded his brother Agamemnon to lead an army against Troy. Troops gathered at Aulis and Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to Artemis for favorable winds. The fleet set sail for Troy. The city withstood the Greeks' advances for nine years, until a large wooden horse was wheeled inside the city walls with warriors hiding inside. That night, the Greeks destroyed the city of Troy. The Trojan War probably reflected a real war between the invading Greeks and the people of Traos, possibly over control of trade.</td>
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<td>2. Old Argos:</td>
<td>Ancient twin city of Mycanae, the capitol of Argolis in the Peloponnese.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Miss Inachus:</td>
<td>The goddess Io, loved by Zeus and sent out of the country. Zeus went after her but the gods sent the Furies to drive her mad. She was turned into a cow and chased after by a gad-fly so Zeus could not catch her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Lukeum:</td>
<td>Pound's version of Lyceum, derived from <em>lykos</em>, the Greek word for wolf. Tutor points out that the marketplace is named for Apollo, wolf killer.</td>
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</table>
6 Wolf-god: The cult name for Apollo.
7 Hera: The wife and sister of Zeus and Queen of the Olympian gods; protector of marriage.
8 Mycenae: The traditional location of Agamemnon’s palace, located on the northern edge of Argos.
9 Pelops: The son of Tantalus who came to the south of Greece and obtained his bride by winning a chariot race after bribing Myrtilus, her father’s charioteer. As “payment” for his service, Pelops murdered Myrtilus and threw him in the sea. Pelops was the father and grandfather of Atreus and Thyestes, respectively.
10 Pythoness: Another name for Apollo, who slew the female python that was said to have protected the original oracle at Delphi.
11 Phoebus: Another name for Apollo, meaning bright one.
12 Phanoteus: An ally of Klytemnestra and Aegisthus; King of Phocis.
13 Phocia: A district of Greece next to Boeotia on the Gulf of Corinth.
14 Pythians: The Tutor refers to the Pythian games, which were created when the python was slain by Apollo. The games celebrate the oracle.
15 Loxias: Another name for Apollo, meaning the ambiguous or the speaker.
16 Aegisthus: Son of Thyestes; lover of Klytemnestra, with whom he conspired to murder her husband, Agamemnon, upon his return from the Trojan War.
Nightingale: After murdering her child Itys to avenge her sisters’ rape, Philomela was turned into a nightingale; she cries the name of her child “Itys” obsessively.

Persephone: The queen of the dead.

Hades: The lord of the land of the dead and husband of Persephone.

Hermes: A god of the underworld who guides the souls of the dead to Hades. In this story he guides the avengers of the dead.

Erinnys: The Greek word for the Furies. These goddesses are depicted in Aeschylus’ writings, where they make up the chorus of the Eumenides, terrible looking women with snakes in their hair. In this play, there are several hints that, in some sense, Orestes and Elektra represent the Furies of the traditional story.

Itys: The child of Philomeia.

Zeus: The king of the gods.

Niobe: Apollo and Artemis killed all of her children after she boasted of their superiority in front of the gods. She was turned into a rock formation and wept for eternity.

Iphianassa: One of the daughters of Agamemnon, sometimes called Iphigenia.

Nowt: Naught, nothing.

Bean-o: British slang for party, banquet.

Ponce: Pimp.

Cipher: Non-entity, zero.

Helios: The sun god, often confused with Apollo.
Lustrations: Libations.

Userer: One who lends money at excessive interest.

Myrtil: Short for Myrtilus who helped Pelops win a chariot race to gain Hippodamia’s hand in marriage. Myrtilus was later killed by Pelops, cursing him and his family as he died.

Justice: Klytemnestra’s argument in regards to Iphigenia. She believes Menelaus’ children should have been sacrificed, rather than her own.

Menelaus: The brother of Agamemnon; the Trojan War was fought to regain his wife Helen after she had been taken by the Trojan prince, Paris.

Rotter: British slang for bastard, one who is corrupt.

Bounder: A boisterous, vulgar fellow.

Artemis: The goddess associated with animals and the hunt, sister of Apollo. She prevented Agamemnon’s troops from sailing to Troy because he bragged that he was a better hunter. She would not allow the to winds blow until he had sacrificed a maiden.

Aulis: A place on the east coast of mainland Greece and site of a temple of Artemis, where the Greek fleet assembled before sailing to Troy.

Achaeans: A name Homer used to refer to the Greeks.

Ilion: Troy.

Sophistry: Misleading argument.

Whelp: Pup or cub.
44 Virgin: Artemis, goddess of virgins.
45 Patron: Defender.
46 Lykeios: Apollo wolf-killer, see wolf god.
47 Atreides: House of Atreus.
48 Phoibos Lykeios: Another name for Apollo.
49 Gruss got: Good god!
50 Na poo: No more.
51 Delphic prize: The prize awarded at the Pythian games.
52 Sparta: A city located in the Peloponnese.
53 Achaia: The southern coast of Corinth.
54 Libya: The vaguely defined area on the north shore of Africa.
55 Thessalian: A person from the plain in northeastern Greece called Thessaly.
56 Aetolian: A person from the area that lies along the north shore of the Bay of Corinth, to the west of Delphi, called Aetolia.
57 Megara: A city on the northern coast, west of Athens.
58 Aeneian: A white horse from the island south of Athens.
59 Athenian: A person from Athens.
60 Boetian: A large plain north of Athens, east of Delphi.
61 Envoys: The messengers, or chosen men of Phoci, honorable warriors.
62 Light/Lightning: Reference to Zeus’ thunderbolt and Apollo as the sun god.
63 King Amphiarion: One of the seven who fought and were defeated at Thebes, in support of Polynices’ claim on the Theban throne. Polynices bribed Amphiarous’ wife Eriphyle with a necklace to force her
husband to go to war. He left knowing that he would die at Thebes. In the battle, the earth opened up and he vanished into the ground. He had more than one shrine in Greece in historical times.

64 Hearth-stone: A soft whitening stone used to form the house altar and fireplace.

65 Blotto: To be drunk.

66 Buck-up: To cheer up, have courage.

67 Themis: A Titaness, who is associated with, and stands for, justice.

68 Rumor: A message carrier.

69 Philomel: Married Tereus, who raped her sister, Procne. See also the note for 17 Nightingale.

70 Sire's shade: Agamemnon's ghost.

71 Old Stroffy: A slang name Strophius, the ally of Orestes and Elektra and father of Pilades.

72 Compels: To force, oblige, enslave.

73 Mars: The god of war.

74 Bumptious: Arrogant, conceited to an offensive degree.

75 Twig: British slang for comprehend.

76 Pikers: Slackers, duds.

77 Ineluctable: Inevitable, inescapable.

78 Presage: An omen, indication of something to come.

79 Sextons: Gravediggers.
In Chapter 3, I have discussed characteristics important to me when working on a role and have defined my acting methodology. I have also presented the scored script resulting from rehearsal and performance. A key to help explain the scoring abbreviations and a glossary of terms has also been included to aid the reader when analyzing the script. In Chapter 4, I have compiled a complete rehearsal and performance log that documents my thoughts, feelings, and discoveries throughout the process.
CHAPTER 4

THE PROCESS: REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

Pre-production

April 25 2001: I was happy to find out my thesis role would be Elektra today and am already filled with nervous anticipation! I plan to get as much done as possible over the summer and come back ready to work on the play.

Summer 2001: This summer allowed me the opportunity to collect all the research I needed to begin writing my thesis. These three solid months of researching and writing enabled me to return to school in the fall with my first chapter, the research chapter, already completed. It was a great help to enter into the rehearsal process already privy to the information I had learned over the summer. Stratos Constantinidis, a member of my committee, was also a tremendous help during this time. He advised me on where and how to actually begin my research, went over some basic researching skills, and was available to answer my emails for quick questions or concerns.

September 20, 2001: Today was general auditions for autumn quarter to cast the remainder of the roles left in the season. The terrorist attack on our great nation on
September 11, 2001 and my slow recovery from surgery are making coming back to the pressures of graduate school a little more difficult than expected, but I have to push through and get used to the long hours again. Striving to get back to normal is all we can do.

The general auditions ran from approximately 6 pm to 11 pm, but I only watched from about 6:30 to 8:15 so I could also get home and listen to the president speak. However, it was very interesting to be on the other side of the fence for a change. I was impressed by some of the undergraduates and thought that their auditions were better than I had expected in some cases. There was a lot of bravery, and I could feel how the room lit up when someone walked in with easy confidence and a smile. I saw some possibilities that I think will be called back, but don’t really want to speculate. It does seem as if most of the undergrads whose work I was familiar with are now graduated.

The undergraduate theatre department seems to be in a time of transition, looking to incoming majors and minors with curiosity and interest. I also took a few notes for a student of mine if she is interested.

September 23, 2001: Callbacks ran from 6 pm to 9 pm tonight and Regina and I were required to attend and read with the new possibilities. I thought many of the girls read pretty well for the chorus, understanding it the best they could on such short notice. I got so tired of reading the same part again and again, and trying to make different choices to give all of them a fair chance.
I liked some of the more powerful voices for the extra chorus member, like Dana Scurlock. I also liked Leah Reddy for the mute chorus girl. She seemed less obtrusive than the others and more in touch with what Sue meant by using the words empathic and physically connected. It is because Leah and I already have a bit of a relationship. She dressed me for a show and was also an acting student of mine. That relationship between Elektra and the mute, the voiced and the voiceless, cannot help but remind me of my role as Carole Cutrere and her relationship with the Conjure Man from Orpheus Descending.

As for the role of Clytemnстра, my mother, I don’t know what Sue will do. There seems to be a fine line in this play between the tragic and comic elements, and that is hard to explain to someone in a five-minute audition. I liked the girls who brought certain maturity to the work, but I want to be able to feel somewhat intimidated by my mother. Tonight I did all I could to make some of them act out against me and not stay so contained. I threw shoes, played with furniture, anything to make them react. There seemed to be a general mixture of inexperience and unfamiliarity with the text.

Early Rehearsals

September 25, 2001: On a side note, I think Sue’s idea to switch Tarashai, a second year graduate student, into the role of Clytemnстра is great, and I am much relieved. She’ll have no problems bossing me around!

The first read-through is always an interesting time. I never know if we’re listening to each other because everyone is always so nervous about sounding good and getting it right, including myself. We all know that’s not what it’s about, but those feelings are inevitable.
The design presentations are probably my favorite part of this first rehearsal. To finally be let in on the world of the play that has been already decided for us always feels like you’re being let in on the secret. I absolutely adore the idea of creating my own costume. Because Elektra is in clothes that she might have found, it will be interesting to have the chance to put that together. I can also think not only in character terms, but practicality as well. I want to be able to move as easy as possible because of the surgery. I, of course, don’t want to be ridiculously hot, although I know I’ll be in several layers, and if I can find a way to have water, I’ll thank my lucky stars.

The set was explained as a post World War II appearance with remnants of war that I keep as museum pieces scattered throughout the sand bags and traces of Greek life as well. I can’t help but be sensitive about the airplane wing that will serve as my hovel, due to the events of September 11. I am sure meetings were held to dialogue about that choice, but I think that no matter how indicative of World War II that wing is, people will still see an airplane wing. That’s what theatre does though, and people will respond in whatever way they choose to that set piece, as well as the messages of the play. I am intrigued by the close acting space and this doll that I’ll use to antagonize my mother. I only worry about the logistics of having to have this doll to drag around, when it will talk for me, etc. All that will obviously be decided in rehearsal. People thought I would hate that idea and were afraid to tell me. I think it will be another way to use words as my only weapon, and as Sue mentioned, to give voice to the unheard. My first play here was with a doll . . . too weird!

Other than the opening moment, the sound design seems to be the least developed so far. I love the ideas of using live and recorded sound, mixing multi-cultural with
specifically American music, and the traveling songs for Elektra and Orestes. We are the wanderers with nowhere to lay our heads to rest.

In terms of the text itself, Sue touched briefly on Pound’s use of elaborations, condensations, and substitutions within the translation. She mentioned the CAPS in the lamenting sections as elongated vowels (emotions), but asked us not to fall in to the trap of adhering to them in regular speech.

What I found fascinating tonight was the way in which Sue would like to work on this show in terms of acting style that will be different from usual. Sue’s ideas on form, image, and gesture will be discussed more in Chapter 5. The methodology section will help to articulate my usual ways of working, and how I put that into practice during Elektra. I will also include a copy of her director’s concept in the appendix to further explain the details above.

September 26, 2001: We began tonight with some mythological basics, which was a great refresher for me. It was nice to touch on each story in the script more specifically, piecing everything together slowly. I love that we stopped for a word if we needed to, and didn’t continue until we were all on the same page with the sense of it. Our discussion on libations was also helpful in clearing up this misunderstood ritual. I need to read more about Apollo.

September 27, 2001: We finished picking the script apart. After meeting with Eleni for the Greek, we will be ready to BEGIN! These are quotes Sue passed out tonight:
In the *ABC of Reading*, Pound said, “Rhythm is a form cut into TIME, as a design is determined SPACE” (98). “Art is a lie which tells the truth.” Pablo Picasso.

The suddenness of transition and apparent randomness of historical juxtaposition and range are necessary to create the historical perspective of the cantos, that sense that all history is relevant to any moment of history, and the profound belief that the entire past, at any moment and in any place, is capable of illuminating the present and the whole nature of historical experience. (*20th Century American Literature*, 3185)

September 28, 2001: Eleni Papaleonardos, an undergraduate theatre major, started teaching us the Greek pronunciations in the text tonight. I couldn’t think fast enough to utilize my knowledge of the phonetic alphabet and chose to just write the sounds verbatim just to be on the safe side. We got through half way and will finish it another time.

September 30, 2001: This was our final read through of the play as a group. It was good to address the ideas surrounding Pound’s point of view that is filled with irony and protest. We were told to find more metaphors in the play as we read through it. Sue keeps stressing the importance of visually stimulating images. It was hard to think that way because I have to read so much. I’ll do it later.

Sue cleared up a lot of factual information about Pound that helped me to tie my information together in a way I didn’t feel capable of earlier. For example, Pound’s views on economics even relate to his views on imagistic work. That is why he used ideograms in his work. They exist as a body; they are not symbols for something else.
I also told Sue how the emotional response that happens so quickly is a bit overwhelming to me. She explained that things like this just make you more human, and that I don’t have to carry Elektra’s burden around with me.

October 1, 2001: We concluded our early rehearsal process with a night of composition work. A metaphor is imagistic language without the connective tissue. Sue assigned a project indicative of Anne Bogart’s work, where we had to arrive at an eight minute showing of a theatre piece that including many different elements. The project started with a metaphor, but attention was paid more to form of language and gesture, as opposed to naturalistic reactions to the assignment. Our metaphor was “my fist is lightning.” My group worked well together on creating, composing, and elaborating certain behaviors.

When Sue used the word *devise*, I almost fell out of the chair. Everything that I have done here that included that word has personally not gone over very well. I know that we are not going to prescribe any kind of meaning to the play, but I told Sue I hope that doesn’t mean some weird, artsy thing where no one knows what is going on. Sue made it clear that it was up to me to not let it be that way. She also didn’t want me to exhibit any fear in front of the newcomers.

I hope the play is flavored with these new elements, and not overcome by them. Am I old fashioned already? What’s wrong with just doing the play? I can understand that Sue needs to try something new; I just hope she stays involved like I’m used to. I love the way she usually works. She may be sick of it, but I’m not. Knowing me, I’ll wind up loving it. My natural response when I am nervous is to reject an idea. I want to
be able to be agile on stage. I am still recovering and worried about hobbling around the stage with seven layers of clothes and not falling, a doll (and when it talks), a blanket getting caught, and screaming at my mother and lamenting my father for two hours.

*Working Rehearsals*

October 2, 2001: “Potential lies in the space in between.” It took a long time to get rolling tonight. The beginning and end always does. There was a lot of improvisational work going on to try to locate certain gestural behaviors. I am so overcome by the language of this play, that it still seems strange to be layering it with all this other stuff too. Though as the night progressed, more attention was paid in just getting through the scenes. Maybe we’ll be doing a rough outline after all, then go back and find these gestures that are supposed to be familiar and right now stand out way too much.

This was the first time that I really took into account that when the play begins it is morning. I also began to listen more in Klytemnestra’s speech for when she is proving my exact points, which made it more fun. I realized the constancy of Elektra tonight. She is a broken record, with no flippancy, and I can’t get caught up in the sarcasm. How to find variation in a broken record is tough. The more specific I get, the easier it will be.

I can’t play the end; this is any other day. Don’t play what I don’t know. Sometimes all the research makes that impossible.

What is the role of the chorus exactly? I thought they were woman of the town, now they seem more mythological in nature. Kneel on platform, stand, kneel, stand?
I must start supporting my voice NOW!! In terms of my thesis question, the language is already coming alive by mimicking with the doll, the court scene, and obviously through assonance and alliteration, which I need to make a conscious effort to play with.

October 3, 2001: I need to find specificity in my monologues. The trial scene with Kytemnestra got worse as the night progressed. Webster explains her hatred towards her children as a response to our threats and the fact that we see her as an enemy. She does pray to the gods when she fears trouble, and is viewed as a noble character who gone wrong. Ultimately she is a queen, and well aware of her own position, as well as Elektra’s (77). Sophocles’ flare for contrasting characters helped to illuminate their relations to sex, family, city, gods, their unreason, and their ideals. Elektra and Kytemnestra give different meanings to justice, and their opposition to each other is made clear through one word (Webster 90).

I really listened to the valiant story of Orestes death from the Tutor tonight. The devastation of Elektra is made more apparent in this report scene by the joy of Chrysothemis. The emotion of the hero is intensified by the opposite emotion of the other character (Webster 91). I must remember to always be open, available, and to just listen! I don’t have to try to recreate anything that happens emotionally. AGHH! it’s such a fine line.

I loved being able to deal with Chrysothemis on a more intimate level, and watch her respond in horror to the news. Elektra’s monologue that explains to her sister once and for all what has to be done is a fine example of how Sophocles’ methods concentrate
on a character’s reaction to a situation, rather than their reaction to a person (Webster 91). Sue did mention that these are the most personal, and realistic scenes in the play. The gesture work was non-existent because of that I suppose? I tried with Clytemnestra but it was weird.

What if I get thirsty? Does Elektra have water? If I say I’m a slave, what are the low jobs that I am made to do?

October 4, 2001: My understanding of the relationship with Orestes and with the ideas of vendetta as a system of justice became clearer after reading an article based on the ethics of lamentation. The action of Orestes, and the words of Elektra both aid in the avenging of their father. Elektra reminds us she’s done one or two things and therefore, her incessant lamentation functions as one of the ethics of vendetta and even provokes revenge (Foley 151). Elektra’s voiced control of the stage at the beginning is clear. Clytemnestra is afraid to pray after Elektra puts her on trial. Elektra also tries to persuade Chrysothemis and the chorus many times to see things her way. A shift is apparent when Orestes arrives as the calm and efficient son of Agamemnon (Webster 73). The delay in recognition is what ultimately makes the action more compelling, an idea Sophocles was very fond of in terms of plot structure (Foley 158).

I don’t know why the sanity of Elektra is always questioned, since she is completely aware of her irrational behavior. She even asks the chorus to excuse her banter and admits she is ashamed.

Our director’s concept was peppered with the notions of public facade versus private truth. It is interesting that only the women in the play give Elektra recognition.
Orestes is not happy about the war god, Mars, that can be found in woman (Foley 163). Although, right now this line does not carry that weight in our play.

It was great that this article used the metaphor to “scream the dead,” to define the lamentation that was expected of women exhibiting their loyalty to family and freedom of speech (Foley 153). Lamentation awakens shared pain, and blurs the boundaries between past, present, the living, and the dead. For the purposes of our play, it was decided that Elektra must mourn alone and not violate the contemporary Athenian laws that prevent lamenting with non-kin (Foley 151).

The article even calmed my fears about the plane wing when I read this:

...the Holocaust has taught us that it was not enough to end the Second World War with a clean and just victory over the patently guilty. If we do not remember those who resisted or collaborated, and the pain of those whose lives were destroyed, we will not avoid repeating those crimes (Foley 171)

This has become hauntingly true after the terrorist attack on the eleventh of September.

Now, on a more personal note, I experienced such a wash of emotion during the urn scenes, probably due to a generality within the work right now, but it was scary and I felt like I couldn’t control myself. I need to find ways to be specific and find the inconsistencies within a woman who is constantly a broken record. Hmmm? “Hey Aegisthus, can you be intimidating for two seconds please, otherwise Elektra’s just gonna kick your butt right there, and forget about the rest of the play?” We need to flesh that out a bit I’d say.

October 5, 2001: All right! Now we’re talking. The Chorus has just taken a much more active role in this play, and I am thankful. During some table work tonight
assigned some active verbs to what the chorus is doing throughout the play, and pointed out some important differences in structure (which I have loads of trouble with). We used the lamentation article to better understand the job of one who laments, and to get a better handle on our relationships to each other. The chorus persistently questioned Elektra’s life and unending sorrow. Elektra acknowledged their love, but could not see any other way to be until Agamemnon’s death was avenged. The chorus was interrupted and ignored by Elektra many times until their words finally affect her in the final scene (Scott 152). It was a nice rehearsal, when the beginning effects of this already started to happen.

October 7, 2001: Tonight was exhausting. We ran the first twenty pages again and again. It’s different to get notes then have to run the scenes again right away so early on in the rehearsal process. Primal! Strong! I addressed my concerns about the vocal strain I’m already experiencing and was reassured that when the work is supported that is when I am most specific, and vice versa. I must work harder towards this or I am going to die! I also need to stop rushing. I know I’m deemed the complainer, but I don’t think anything I have done in graduate school has prepared me for the emotional, physical, and mental strain Elektra is putting on me. I can’t concentrate. What tools do I have for this? Help?

October 8, 2001: I am having trouble with the urn scenes. I liked Sue’s notes the other night about inflicting pain on oneself and wanted to try and incorporate that. I slammed it into my belly before the lines where I ask him to take me in with him, and I
think there may be something there to explore. The shortened breath rhythm is still confusing to me, and I forgot the points I had in my notes to hit. I must lament properly, compare my brother to my father, regret my wasted nurturing, and relinquish the hope I had for Orestes. Elektra is abandoned at this point, and her words no longer stir people to act.

In terms of the text, I need to work towards a more evocative understanding that paints pictures, and evokes meaning, and I need to slow down and separate the thoughts. All the stuff I tell my own students!

October 9, 2001: Wow, I’m stressed and tired! I’m nervous about my throat, there is a blister already on my gland that feels sore. I need to take the time to paraphrase the scenes with Chrysothemis. When, however, I have no idea considering the sixty pages I still have to memorize. Elektra is a fury that drives Klytemnestra wild. Remember that! The relationship with the puppet towards mother must be fleshed out, by literally having it speak for me.

October 10, 2001: The designer run-through tonight wasn’t as horrifying as I thought it would be. We did not have mask class and I got to be alone for about three hours before we started. I ate dinner under a tree in the sun, and then did a forty-five minute warm-up, which was desperately needed. In the future, I have to take whatever worked in that warm-up and fit it in my regular routine because I’ll never have that luxury again. I am made to feel like I can’t ever have any stress or concerns, but in the real world, I wouldn’t be responsible for a twelve hour day, before I even got to
rehearsal, and there would be pay, hopefully! Whatever, if I lose my voice in years to come, I'll become a director!

The show was fast and we must slow down. My knees are over-stretched from squatting so much. Jeanine said if I don't find another way I'm going to damage my ACL's and be in big trouble. I have a feeling it's most from sitting on the angled wing.

Sue touched upon her thoughts in terms of form and gesture again with a statement Anne Bogart made. She said that scientists explain and artists describe. That helped in determining the "condition" of our world. In this way, the gestures become more specific, because they take on shape and form that describe conditions. Nothing has meaning, but nothing is accidental? Cool, but am I at this point yet? I can't even stay awake to memorize my lines much less work on my character much less think in metaphor. I just want to sit down with my script and be left alone.

I was so happy Mo came tonight to look at some of the vocal problems in the play. Already I feel her notes are way different then the notes I have been getting in terms of really getting the sound out there. I think even my opening metaphor of digging out of the night is getting me into trouble. She pointed out all the voiceless consonants in that opening monologue which suggests something completely different than I had been doing. I must work on building into that exhaustion and desperation in the beginning. Mo reminded all of us to constantly look for variety, define the quality of moment vocally through the inherent action, and to find length. All these notes are well taken.

October 11, 2001: In a quick meeting with Mo today about vocal issues, we talked about what is working and what isn't. Although she thinks this will be a great role
for me, she does recognize that I need to work a lot outside of rehearsal. She really understood my concerns about not just the vocal issues, but how my own emotional capacity can withstand three weeks of this. I got some concrete answers about things we can do so I feel safe, and must work on the lines before we meet again to work on some sections. This is even more to fit into my schedule but it must be done, or I’ll never survive this show. I don’t want to disappoint her either.

October 14, 2001: I feel as if in reworking these same beginning moments with chorus and Chrysothemis it’s only the blocking that is changing and not much else, no matter what exercises we do. Sometimes I feel as if I’m fabricating all this stuff that isn’t really happening because no one will follow their instincts, be brave, and DO something!

It was interesting to reword our thoughts on scene four. We found that “to delight” was not nearly as useful as “to conspire,” which helped us to find the delight in it later. I don’t think it’s about Elektra getting more lines to make this moment more powerful. If Sophocles wanted her to be speaking, she would be. I need to investigate further why I’m not talking then. I love that the chorus is more present on the floor, and then when Elektra is alone later in the play, they’ll move up onto the platforms, which makes more sense. I love when Sue included moments that are reminiscent of other moments. That’s when it feels like it’s really coming together as a whole.

This show opens in two weeks. Aghhh! I feel like we only work the beginning then run the end. I want to work more on the end of the play.
October 15, 2001: We ran through the first six scenes again! I thought we were going into scene seven and I was so connected tonight and really wanted to move forward. We stopped abruptly and it took me a bit to gather myself. The Tutor made the sound of the axle breaking on the chariot when telling the story of Orestes’ death, and I lost it. I felt like a waterfall, but it’s getting more specific, and if I don’t try to hold back and just see what happens, then I don’t risk damaging my voice by constricting and tightening. I had a lot less strain and tension in the throat. It was great to be reminded tonight that breath is tied to emotion, and it’s OK to BREATHE!! Even Elektra’s lines say she is overfull with pain and sorrow, so it makes sense when you arrive at a place where you can’t even take in anymore, and can release through breath.

I’m finding more variety, which is making me feel more confident. Stratos helped us with the Greek tonight and only a couple of changes needed to be made. I like the idea that we are using a mixture of Classical and Modern Greek in our translations. It seems to fit this play for me, which is exactly that, a mix of these two worlds colliding. Maybe I can find moments where something is said in Classical Greek, during my keening possibly?

I’m finding that I don’t like when my peers want to console me after an emotional scene. If only they knew how removed I feel. Sue gives me a little break always right when I need it, thank goodness.

October 16, 2001: I loved working on scene four tonight and really fleshing out the role of the mute chorus member as she takes on the struggles of my character. Ironically, I have little to do with this scene, but tonight I felt useful.
The keening is starting to feel more comfortable. It is such a relief to not have to go home in mental, physical, and emotional strain. Just tired, but nothing more!

October 17, 2001: I mentioned to Sue how alone I've been feeling, and she assured me that I am beginning to understand the isolation Elektra experiences in her world.

It was so DRY in there from the wood and the platforms going up. There were moments I thought I couldn't even talk any more! I have to drink more water during the day and see if that helps? I was pushing so hard tonight through the second half, and just thought how bad it would be if by the twelfth show, that was how everything felt. I don't ever want to feel like I'm conjuring up something that doesn't exist.

I was curious what to do if a fellow actor is just doing something for the sake of blocking, instead of responding genuinely in the moment. Sue reminded me of a chapter in Uta Hagen's book that talked about this very idea. Hagen roughly stated that if you are in a scene where someone is supposed to stop you from leaving a room, well, the first time you actually leave, will be the last time they don't actually stop you. Not to say, I am not also making these mistakes, but I must remember this approach I have to take. If not, the moment feels fake and false.

Irony? Irony? This is the hardest part of the play for me. Other than a sly comment here or there, I'm the play's straight man. This gets so difficult in the end for me, and it's starting to bother me that no one has been able to take the end seriously at all. Why does Pound make it so hard? It feels like he gave up and didn't want to write
anymore. Then I wind up feeling like everything I just went through was pointless, and I’ve exhausted myself for no reason!

October 18, 2001: What a night! I had little to do, got to sit and listen, and even watch! That was nice. It feels good to WORK sections.

I realized something about myself as an actor tonight. I used to see myself like a robot, who could recreate something exactly how it was the first time. I even used to take pride in that. As I learned more about how to go about the work, I obviously realized that being able to do that isn’t always useful and can get you into trouble even. Tonight I felt myself not being afraid to try new things, to really listen, and to respond with whatever is given to me. What a great feeling!

Because of this discovery, I feel frustrated and angry by moments in the play that seem fabricated and false. I was told to use this to my advantage instead of trying to stuff it down, which makes a lot of sense. Maybe all this stuff is that is happening to me in rehearsal, that I am barely beginning to understand, is catching other people off guard too, which is very possible. I just wish they wouldn’t try to rise to some occasion that they’re not at or something on account of Elektra because that’s when I think it feels hokey to me. and it’s upsetting. This must sound conceded as hell, but I don’t mean it that way. When it happens, then we all cheat ourselves out of something that may really want to be trying to come alive and be present in the moment. Gross! I sound like an actor. I was suspicious of the fact that maybe these types of thoughts could be the reasons why we don’t rehearse some of those more complex scenes as regularly as the others. To keep them fresh, awake? I don’t know.
I must reinvestigate the relationships with the doll and with metaphor. The doll relationship and the use of metaphors are strong in the beginning, then we kind of forgot about them. How can I tie them back in, so the end of play resonates on a deeper level? The doll is a tool of protest, not a security device. I need to use it more, so the voiceless can have a voice.

October 19, 2001: Another run through without vocal, emotional, and mental strain! I find that a good warm-up and some alone time are essential! I got the note to not cry during the lines when I'm keening, but after them. A strange note considering that right now I feel I have no control over tears. I do need to get more specific and make sure people understand me so I don't push and force it, while not losing the emotional intensity.

I can't wait until the end of the play is fleshed out. I'm sick of spending ninety minutes doing what it is called for me to do, only so everyone can have a good laugh at the end. It's a sucky feeling.

October 21, 2001: My birthday! I found out tonight that my wait time under the wing after house opens would be about twenty minutes. I know it will be even longer because we always wind up holding the house open for one reason or another. At least I can use that time to gather myself even though I have to be perfectly still. This is my first time working in Mount Hall. How the department can have used this space for years and there be no changing areas, warm-up room, a place to collect your thoughts or put your belongings, I have no idea. Even in high school there was a dressing room. I want to ask
about this in a post-production meeting. There are plenty of empty classrooms in that
building. With the crew and cast that little back room is so ridiculous and loud, I’m
almost glad I’ll be under the wing.

I think the audience is going to laugh at the end of the play. Oh, that irony!
We are going into tech week, so I better stop calling line. I think I know them all; it is
just a fear of commitment thing or something.

October 22, 2001: Crew watch. It felt very fast tonight. I didn’t find out
anything new character wise, but I know now I definitely can make it through without
falling apart and feeling a complete mess afterwards. I wish I had listened more tonight.
We already had someone sleeping in the audience. That’s always pleasant.

October 23, 2001: A run without Sue tonight. I felt useful helping to work out
some problems in scene four. I wanted to take tonight to just explore and do it for myself
and hopefully find new things. Unfortunately that didn’t happen. It was a weird vibe.
Some moments with Orestes and Klytemnestra felt a little clearer, but other than that I
wasn’t as specific as I should have been, which turned into many line mistakes that I
never make. I like to be meticulous with the lines usually. With this role, there are
certain sections, that no matter how much review I do, they still trip me up.

Physically I am very sore and tired, but vocally I am definitely supporting more
than when we first began. Mind over matter too! That was a nightmare. Tech rehearsals
couldn’t come at a more perfect time. I need the rest.
Technical Rehearsals

October 24, 2001: First technical rehearsal tonight. All I did tonight was sweat to death, worry about what set pieces I’m going to fall off of, and die of thirst. The first tech is always a big old mess. We didn’t get very far.

October 25, 2001: We only got to scene nine tonight. I’m getting more comfortable with the set, and want to do the play! What a difference a day makes. When I have free time on Tuesdays and Thursdays and can go into rehearsal not feeling beaten and battered from the day, it is so wonderful. I felt much more energized tonight than I have in a while. I actually laughed with my cast, and it was much needed. I wish opening night wasn’t on a Wednesday! Ever since this surgery, my body hasn’t been itself, and relaxation and time for myself has become imperative. Especially since I can’t heal really until the show ends. Uh oh, I’m thinking about the end and we haven’t even started yet. I always like rehearsals more than performances anyway!

Dress Rehearsals

October 28, 2001: Although I wanted to use this first dress rehearsal to my advantage, I should have known better. The first one is always filled with problems, so of course I couldn’t concentrate on anything. My costume is cumbersome at this point but I know I can’t complain because I will hear that it has only been one day. I am very hot though, and don’t know how that will get better. I felt dizzy twice when climbing up the ladder and swinging onto the platform. Where is the set?
People who watched tonight did mention how the action in the second half of the play had less momentum than the first. Although Sophocles liked the ending better left unsaid and Pound makes it nearly impossible, we must try to do the end of this play justice. I feel like we never rehearsed the second half as much as the first and the first choices that were made were kept. We never tried anything new. The ending is comical to me. The play does end with the ideas of word versus deed and a feeling that no one knows what will happen next. However, we still need to be active, specific, and make it interesting. Why won’t anyone try anything new?

This whole process went by so quick. I feel like there is so much more I should have explored character wise, but there was no time. All thesis roles should get to rehearse extra hours in the afternoon. This was a monster part for me and it would have been nice to have some time set aside for that kind of exploration.

October 29, 2001: This was our second and last dress rehearsal before our preview tomorrow. I never receive many notes to think about which is scary. At this point I am extremely jealous towards the people who get to rehearse their thesis roles three times a week in class next quarter. I would have loved that. I am doubting my work, and wondering how much more specific it should or could be at this point, and I’m not getting much feedback. I am nervous about sustaining this role through a number of shows and don’t want the audience to make me feel like I need to work any harder. I just want to do it!

Some of the thoughts about character are really coming into perspective lately, and I want to touch on a couple of things briefly. I am enjoying the comfort Elektra has,
slipping in and out of the Greek as it suits her. The Greek is well placed in the play, and is much more powerful than if it had been totally translated. I have also been able to find a greater understanding of the use of sound in our world. I love it when Elektra expresses herself through sound. I am no longer overly concerned with this strange use of these aboriginal type instruments mixed with the music of the 1950s. All the Benny Goodman was cut, but the 1950s pre-show music and Orestes saxophone are great additions to our world.

Like Pound, Elektra is made to survive in a hostile environment. The set design reflects the harshness with its metal, burlap, and saved articles of ancient Greece. Elektra is troubled as she watches the life she knew fading away. She cannot escape the change, but is constantly reflecting on the past; that is apparent in her well-placed artifacts she has collected. This is the best use of this black box space that I have seen since I’ve been here.

October 30, 2001: We had an audience tonight. I felt a bit pushed tonight, although Sue thought there were moments when I seemed too collected towards the beginning. We both decided it was probably me making sure I was grounded and trying to make something happen. I will have to find a way to access Elektra’s angst through ease. It cannot be relaxed, but should be easy to attain vocally, physically, and mentally.

It is extremely hot in there. My throat is tired tonight. There was talk of ventilation so I hope it gets better. The energy at the end was much better tonight. It was nice to have an audience, but this show is exhausting for me. I had trouble accessing some of the heightened emotional intensity tonight and need to find that sense of privacy.
in such an intimate space with the audience so close. I have triggers that do help me along the way like mother’s laughter, the spray-painted sign, holding the urn, and breathing!!

I don’t think there was much talking and listening going on tonight and am glad we had a preview night to get all that yucky stuff out of the way so tomorrow we can just do it!

After the show Sue reminded us that the score of this play is an agreement we have made with each other. We must play each note that is set without skipping or changing any. At the same time, we need to remember to let it be new and fresh every time by finding the genuine life of each moment through listening, breath, and experience. It will only get richer, deeper, and more connected if we agree to do this. The mythical tragedy, Sophocles’ comical world, and the irony of Pound have to come together in unison, without us commenting on it. It was good to be reminded of this. Oh, and this is Ezra Pound’s birthday . . . weird.

**Performance Run**

October 31, 2001: I felt much better about tonight. This was probably the first opening that I ever really enjoyed because of being able to have a preview first. I felt much more centered, focused, and grounded in the world of Elektra. There was a better internal tempo inside that was helpful. To be able to do this a number of times I need to remember how quickly it goes by and to just enjoy it. This is what happens to Elektra in real time one day. What a day it is! The beauty of Greek tragedy!
The scenes with Chrysothemis were much more specific tonight, and although I missed a note in the realization of Orestes, we played the moment more closely to how it should go. An audience is helpful in making Pound’s irony come to life!

November 1, 2001: Tonight had the typical second night lull vibe. I feel more tired than anything else. The first week is always the worst because we’ve been running the show through technical and dress rehearsals, and it has been a while since we had a break. I think in some parts we ran into the problem of people playing for the jokes. If you comment on the line, the audience will never get to enjoy it for themselves; you rob them of that privilege. I also don’t like when actors don’t try to follow the notes they were given. I think it is important to be able to take direction.

November 2, 2001: Pretty strong show tonight. We did some voice exercises today in class that made me realize playing Elektra has actually increased my breathing capacity, which was a pleasant discovery. I have to reach down deeper because all that stuff has to come from somewhere. I am curious how it will be to do this show twice tomorrow.

November 3, 2001: I can’t believed I enjoyed the matinee today, which makes me even more nervous about doing the show in front of my peers tonight. I hope it doesn’t suck. We had a teacher seminar today that went better than most. They weren’t sleeping and actually had interesting questions. Before and after the show, I was asked about the emotional intensity and how I was able to keep it at such high stakes. I tried to
explain that because the writing is essentially devoid of any emotion it actually gives you
more to work with. It becomes fuller and more interesting when a couple of words have
the power to move you rather than a whole paragraph. I should have also explained that
the more I give the other people on stage my attention and the more I listen the easier it is
to live in that heightened place.

The heightened intensity that Elektra is capable of had also made me reflect on
the ideas of sanity versus madness in terms of character. It could be easy to see
relentlessness as madness. Sometimes as Elektra when I am building an argument,
making a point, playing vocally with a section of language, or searching for the right
words, that sense of irrationality makes me very aware of what may appear mad, but it
seems that if that were the case it would be such a cop out. She is aware that there is too
much at stake for her to be mad. The backbone of the play is the idea of “word versus
deed” and “testifying versus doing.” Elektra cannot do, so she must testify.

I shouldn’t have been so afraid to do the show tonight. Our peers were a great
audience. Dare I say I felt extremely grounded and “in the moment”? I felt connected to
the story and not rushed. I surprised myself and it felt wonderful tonight.

Have I mentioned how much I love this cast? Usually I hate warming up together
because it is a nightmare. With this cast, I couldn’t be luckier. We are respectful of each
other, take care of each other, and are genuinely having a good time doing this together.
The warm-ups are actually focused and everybody comes to participate. It really has a
good effect on our work. There has not been one show I have been in here where
everything runs so smoothly. I got through this week; I can get through the rest!
November 5, 2001: Did I listen to anyone tonight? It was hard to come back to this tonight. Whoever thought that a well-needed day off would make such a difference. The rest of the cast and I agreed it was a difficult one to get through. I wasn’t very specific and tripped over some lines, which I never do. I guess a break can be a bad thing.

November 6, 2001: This show was difficult to get through as well. I am very aware of my ailments as a result of this show. My legs and arms are bruised everywhere, my knees throb from all the hyper-extending, and my ribs are sore from falling on the wing.

Besides being in physical pain, it is so disconcerting to do a show in that intimate of a space only to look out into the audience and catch all these young students writing in their notebooks, stopping their phones from ringing, sleeping, or talking to their friends. I know they have to write a paper, but this isn’t a lecture hall. Why can’t they just try to watch and soak up what they can? Sometimes it makes me feel like I just went through this emotional roller coaster for no earthly reason whatsoever. What a waste of time. Ahh. to do a show in front of an audience that appreciates it and doesn’t have an assignment to fulfill; that will be heavenly... someday. My knees are really killing me.

November 7, 2001: The last three shows have been puzzling me. I’ve just come to the realization that besides these ailments that are running my life, I think I found out what the other problems are. I’m not listening; I’m wasting time trying to listen instead. It does always come down to listening. Right now I’m doing a lot of monitoring of
myself, and I also think I’m rushing. I’ll push too hard, then wind up right smack in a moment that I’m not ready for, and then have to push even harder to get through it. I need to stop being so aware of myself and just put my attention on the other person.

It used to come easier, but if I slow down, breathe, and take my time I’ll be able to arrive at where I need to be in the moment. The audience probably can’t tell, but I can. My voice was weak in moments, and I know that comes from not being specific. I felt so much stronger last week, but I need to remember that each show is new and fresh every time. I don’t want to continue to put on an act instead of just acting.

November 8, 2001: I am reconnecting with the fun I have in playing with this language, keeping it activated, and trying some more physical specifics to fire me up and keep me going. Some of the triggers that aided me in the past with the emotional intensity aren’t aiding me like they used too, and that worries me. After talking to Sue about it, she suggested that maybe I am trying to imagine too much and recreate something that doesn’t exist (like the horse race) as opposed to just reconnecting with the physical elements that are there on stage with me. She suggested touching the wing, my clothing, my face, etc. in hopes that the tactile objects will have more of an immediate effect. That is why the urn scene is a bit easier to get through. It is tangible, it’s in my hands, and I don’t have to fabricate something that doesn’t exist. She also said I need to spray paint different and that it looked too neat. Anytime I do something a little bit different it will shake me up enough to have a new experience.

In doing so, tonight was much better. I was inspired by the first scene tonight, which sounded great. It made me want to come out from under that wing and do new
things. I've been falling into my old robotic habits, and definitely needed to give myself a wake up call. This process is too interesting to let it slip by. The end of the play was the most it has ever hit home.

In the Afterwards discussion tonight, almost all the important points that Sue had in her concept as well as topics that were discussed during table work, all came up again. We talked of the language of course, and what is public and private about it. We talked of Pound’s sparseness, and I said once again how sparing words actually gives you more to work with as an actor. It was interesting to reconsider the layers that are present in our production. The elements of voice, voicelessness, sound, metaphoric gesture and the doll as an avenging tool were all discussed in detail.

November 9, 2001: Well that was interesting! I always had a theory that if you have an ailment, once you get on stage and work, it magically goes away. Not tonight! The anti-inflammatory medication I’m taking for my knees mixed with the Chai Tea I drank before curtain tonight did not agree with me. I never had to do a show where I was literally holding back the vomit! The stomach cramps were so bad, I didn’t even know if I could get all those lines out. Everyone said they didn’t notice, and that the show was really great tonight. I definitely did new things and felt like I was in uncharted territory, because I didn’t even know if I could make it through the show. Klytemnestra and I did throw a new gesture back and forth, which was good stuff. I got sick immediately after I came off stage and thanked the heavens above for getting me through it. That was a nightmare, and quite an experience. I was so scared I’d have to run off the stage in the

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middle of it! Good thing Elektra always has this sickened look on her face. I'm just glad it is over.

November 13, 2001: Tonight went surprisingly well after having some nights off. We got notes from Sue about the beginning going a little too fast. I think we need to still find that happy medium because I came out of the wing a sense of connection right from the start. I want to keep that without rushing. I found a lot of little mannerisms and gestures tonight. Of course I worry again about getting through the week, but it was great to be back. We had a great audience that was really listening. I was able to find the irony in a lot of what I was saying tonight without being flip or sarcastic. The end of the play was the best it has ever been.

November 14, 2001: A mediocre night compared to the high energy of last night. I felt like I gradually warmed into it, and then was overcome by it. I feel frustrated at times when I try to do some new things with the other actors on stage and get absolutely no reaction from them. It makes me crazy.

November 15, 2001: A friend and peer came tonight whose opinion I really respect, and he gave me the best compliment ever. He liked the vocal variety I had and couldn't believe that I still had a voice at the end of the night. I explained to him that the new Linklater warm-ups that Maureen Ryan taught us in voice class was how the whole cast began warm-ups every night. To overcome my vocal tensions was what I have been
striving for, and it is happening. The language in this play almost begs for that kind of freedom.

There were actually moments tonight where I was able to realize I needed to get my attention off of myself and put it onto the other person. The moments of reconnection felt nice. Adding bits of gesture have been helping to access some of the emotional intensity in some scenes.

November 16, 2001: My parents came tonight and saw a pretty decent show. I didn’t feel forced, and things were just coming to me. There were a few mistakes in tonight’s show and I had an interesting talk with my father about how an actor should acknowledge accidents when it’s appropriate instead of ignoring them. For instance, if a prop falls, or you say the wrong name, why would you act like it didn’t happen? I think that draws more attention to the problem. In real life, you wouldn’t “pretend” it never happened, so why do that on stage when people are watching? Sometimes it is the happy accidents that keep you on your toes and make a performance come to life.

November 18, 2001: The matinee went well. I can’t believe I forgot my gloves today. Forgetting a piece of costuming is something I have never done. It’s strange how a little thing like that can throw you a bit. I didn’t feel quite like Elektra without them.

This evening’s performance, however, was not the best way we could have ended this long and grueling run. We had to see another performance in between, and then there was a time mix up. We were supposed to go on at seven, and then wound up starting the show at eight. I think if we had gone at seven when we hyped our energy
back up, it would have been a more successful show. I felt like we were all pushing, the audience wasn’t listening, and it wasn’t the most satisfying of performances for me. It didn’t help that someone on the outside of the theatre was banging on the door for the better part of the performance.

I wish I could have been there for these last moments, but things kept disconnecting me. However, I am proud to have made it through this entire run without ever having a night where I felt I had to hold back and save up for the next one. Despite the ailments, from which I have yet to heal, I truly can say I gave it my all every night. The role of Elektra demanded nothing less than all of my attention each time. Now I know that I do have the stamina to make it through, considering that was my major concern in the beginning of this process.

The warmth and love of cast that were young, fresh, and wanted to go in there and get the job done certainly helped me do shows for the last three weeks. The Linklater warm-up is a keeper for me, and I plan on using it before shows from now on. The ending is bittersweet . . . as always.

Post Production Discussion

November 20, 2001: There was a lot I could have said today, but I found it hard to articulate my thoughts about this role in front of that room full of people. I did say that I think Mount Hall needs to be recognized as a viable space. I think that a room for dressing or warming up would keep cast members out of the way of the staff that work in that building more and maybe there would have been fewer complaints. It would have been nice to get a review from The Columbus Dispatch, considering I will probably be in
this area for a while after finishing school. The exposure would have been great. Sometimes it was heart breaking to do that kind of work to a room full of students that are required to go and don’t really want to be there.

I also mentioned the amazing table work that we did for this show, and Sue spoke again about her ideas of sound, gesture, and the layering that she wanted to incorporate on top of the language. She wanted a world where Pound’s vision was realized through the wedding of ancient Greece and the hardships of post World War II. She mentioned how this process did include devising, and we all brought ideas to the table and made brave contributions. We discussed the importance of ritual, as suggested by the play, and the impact of the space on the audience.

I thanked Mo for the warm-up that saved my life, and thanked my cast for their respectfulness and a true ensemble attitude towards the work. After the six shows I had done here, this play was the first time I really felt like I was a part of something magical. After all is said and done, it is sad to see it end.

This chapter provided complete documentation of the rehearsal and performance process. In the final chapter, I will evaluate my work throughout the entire thesis process and draw conclusions based on the entire thesis experience as a whole.
CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I will evaluate the entire thesis process of Elektra from research to production. I have compiled my opinions on what I thought was successful, what was fully explored, and what I would do differently if I had the opportunity to do it all again.

My introduction to thesis writing began with research. I had not realized how much information I was going to need until I started to investigate the play and my central thesis question. I found that being assigned a thesis role that began in the fall was beneficial for me. I was able to use the summer months to gather research pertinent to the role of Elektra, the world in which she lived, and the play itself. I began writing immediately and was ready with my research chapter the first week of rehearsals. This marked the first time I had ever been so knowledgeable about the character I was going to portray. Usually, there is not much time to do in-depth research, and I was grateful for those three months of delving into the world of the play.

I was especially fascinated by the complex life of Ezra Pound and found the parallels in his personal life to be extremely helpful when contemplating the character of Elektra. Although my research chapter was later rearranged for clarity, it was important
for me to first understand Pound and his writing to then be able to successfully tackle his use of language throughout the play.

After arriving at a place with Ezra Pound where I felt I had an understanding of who he was in terms of writing, politics, economics, and personally. I then turned my attention to even more uncomfortable subjects. My grasp of Greek mythology and Sophocles was also not very strong. In the beginning, simple characteristics of mythology such as family trees and so forth were confusing to me. The research I chose simplified many of those mysteries, and the intertwining tales became an intriguing part of my research.

My thesis question was heavily focused around the language of the play, particularly on how to make it active for an audience. Therefore, much of my research, in some way or another, revolved around that principle. However, I would have liked to have concentrated on some other aspects of research if time had allotted. Due to where I had put my focus during the researching process, the information specifically about the character of Elektra came from sources that I was using for other aspects of my research. Although I was also frightened of letting the research have too much influence over my interpretation of the role, I would have liked to have read more about the character of Elektra in regards to her relationship with others and her larger role as a powerful woman in Greek mythology. Those interests began to steer me down an entirely different path, and I did not have the ability to investigate further.

With as clear as an understanding of the research as possible, I entered into rehearsals only to be faced with additional challenges. Sue Ott Rowlands, our director, made it clear in an early working rehearsal that she was interested in trying something
new this time around. Powerful images and interesting moments achieved through forms and gestures that were less about prescribing meaning and more about leaving questions unanswered, was the new way in which Sue was interested in approaching the play.

While embracing the masculinity of the text, Sue encouraged the cast to think and talk in the language of images and metaphors, hoping that this kind of work would translate into the production. Although gesture equivalents were found for some of the lines, helping to wed this specific form with the language, much of this work could have been more fully explored. Therefore, due to the lack of time and the complexity of the text, the play became peppered with those ideas of metaphoric gesture rather than overcome by it.

My central investigation for this thesis described my interest in using Pound’s language in an active and versatile nature. During rehearsal, it quickly became obvious that my initial responses to my thesis question were apparently taking care of themselves. After studying this language that had me so perplexed in the beginning, it was not long before the words were doing everything for me. The language was already activated within its distilled nature. I found that when I also simplified my responses to the words, moments were created almost as if by accident. Coming to terms with the language early on and approaching the work with delicacy and simplicity are strategies that I can apply to any acting projects that I take on in the future.

A few physical challenges had me questioning my stamina during the first weeks of rehearsal. My first concern was the solid vocal energy needed for the ninety-minute whirlwind production. I was not certain that I would be capable of enduring the role of Elektra night after night. Although I had stopped smoking cigarettes before rehearsals
began, the vocal strain I experienced early on had me questioning my abilities. I quickly
locked into a vocal and physical warm-up that enabled me to make it through the
rehearsals and performances without suffering from strain in my voice or discomfort in
my throat. Although the warm-up was simple, it became routine and allowed me to make
the right choices in performance, especially on days when we had two shows. That
particular warm-up is now something I will do before every show. It provided me with a
sense of center, relaxation and confidence in my instrument that I had never been able to
achieve before.

A small surgical procedure that I had been through just prior to the beginning of
the process also added to the challenges I faced throughout rehearsal and production.
The healing process was slow due to the physical activity needed to play Elektra and
some rehearsals were completely exhausting. I did not fully recover until a few weeks
after the show closed when my body got the rest it needed. Thankfully, my condition
required me to find ways of moving that were safe and did not interfere with my work.

Towards the end of the rehearsal process recovering from my surgical procedure
became secondary to the knee pain that I encountered, which then persisted throughout
the run. From repeating the same blocking night after night, the hyperextension in my
knees became very painful. Elektra moved like an attack dog; crouching on the low steps
or raked wing, then suddenly jumping up to climb a ladder and flop down on some sand
bags. Although I tried to adjust some of the blocking, Elektra's quick, strong and
deliberate movements were an integral part of the story. Besides sticking to warming up
physically before the show and keeping my legs straight as much as possible throughout
the day, there was not much else I could do to ease the hyperextension in my knees. I
was never conscious of the pain during performances, but definitely suffered a bit afterwards. In the end, it was nothing that some ice and a lot of rest couldn’t cure.

Throughout my work in rehearsal I made many breakthroughs while trying to understand how I worked as an actor and the things to which I responded. It was gratifying to recognize the personal triumphs I was making along the way and to have a clear understanding of what it was that was propelling me through this invigorating time. I had never kept a journal throughout rehearsal and production before and it was fascinating to track my pitfalls and progress along the way.

Rehearsals ran smoothly and went by quickly, and soon the performance run was upon us. The irony and caustic nature of the play did not sink in for me until I was in performance. Throughout the rehearsals it often felt as if Elektra was the straight man in this cruel and condemning world. Although that was true, it took night after night of running the show for me to find the beauty and humor in Elektra’s isolation. Some nights were more difficult than others, but there was never a night where I didn’t learn something about myself as an actor or about the character of Elektra. If I could have done it all again, I would have been even braver and pushed even harder to find the nuances that made it new and alive each night.

Elektra, as a victim of power and a clear representation of Pound’s point of view, was the most difficult character I have ever played. The use of metaphoric gesture, which once scared me to death, became a useful tool in reaching the heightened emotional and physical intensity that was needed for the role. To have the opportunity to play such a strong and relentless character was exhausting and extremely gratifying.
**Elektra** was performed in Mount Hall's studio theatre space. Having the opportunity to do a thesis role in such an intimate space turned out to be an enormous gift. It also gave me the chance to market myself to area professionals who I thought should see my work. In addition to the thesis preparations I was making, it was an excellent way to learn the promotional side of the business for the first time as well.

An evaluation of my thesis process has been presented in this final chapter. After considering the sheer magnitude of a thesis role, I cannot help but to reflect on the good relationships that were formed along the way. The cast was mostly made up of young actors that were respectful of the process and eager to work. I experienced a trust within the ensemble that was new to me, and allowed me to gain the confidence I needed to take responsibility for such an important role. Although I am pleased with my portrayal of Elektra, my search for simplicity, adherence to language, and characters that are grounded in some sense of reality will continue throughout my work. Finally, I cannot disregard how my personal life enabled me to endure the emotional and physical invigoration the role of Elektra asks of the actor. Without the strong support system that surrounded me at the time, I would never have been able to achieve such a demanding endeavor.
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Director’s Concept: *Elektra*, a version by Ezra Pound and Rudd Fleming

In Ezra Pound’s version of Sophokles’ *Elektra*, the emphasis is on the language of the play: earthy, immediate, and irreverent enough to lead towards black comedy at times. Pound’s interest in the power of language and the notion of verbal deception through the manipulation of words permeates the world of the play. Carey Perloff, in her introduction to Pound’s translation, describes her desire for a playable American translation of Greek tragedy, a version that would utilize “an English as tough and vibrant and muscular as the ancient Greek” (*Elektra*, ix). In Pound’s *Elektra*, she found such a translation.

The story from Greek mythology centers around the murder of Elektra’s father, Agamemnon, a great warrior and king and leader of the largest Greek contingent at Troy. When Agamemnon went to war, he left his cousin Aegisthus in charge. Motivated by greed and lust, Aegisthus seduced Agamemnon’s wife Klytemnestra and the illicit lovers murdered the king upon his return from the Trojan War. It is now years later and Elektra continues to mourn her father’s death and swear vengeance on his murderers. Essentially a prisoner in Aegisthus’ palace, she is able to fight for vengeance with words only while she awaits the return of her brother, Orestes. In *Elektra*, Sophokles tells the story of the return of Orestes and his ultimate revenge on Aegisthus and Klytemnestra.

In choosing to adapt *Elektra*, Pound found a way to speak of his own situation as a prisoner/patient in St. Elizabeth’s Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Washington, DC. Confined there for three years (1945-1958) on charges of treason resulting from his regular radio broadcasts on short wave from Rome to America and to American troops, Pound saw correlations with Elektra’s situation. His broadcasts, which he claimed to be
in support of the US Constitution, were highly critical of Roosevelt and the war effort, as well as anti-Semitic. Elektra, like Pound, is compelled to speak out against what she believes to be a treasonous and tyrannous government, and in doing so is labeled as mad. Again as Perloff states:

_Elektra_ is the story of a woman obsessed with her own past. The play explores the madness of incessant “remembering,” the terror of being unable to forget the past in a culture or household in which history is being deliberately erased. . . Words against words, true *logoi* versus false _logoi_, sanity versus madness—Pound revealed in these linguistic manipulations. But he also had a clearly emotional reaction to Elektra’s plight, to the tragedy of being deemed “mad” for refusing to forget. (xiv)

In order to embrace Pound’s version of the play, it is essential that we recognize the intent to bridge two worlds: the ancient Greece of Sophokles and the contemporary America of Pound. To that end, we can look again to the language of the play for inspiration and direction. Pound weaves together language that is distinctly American (the slang of Elektra, the cowboy lingo that Pound uses as a disguise, and the compilation of dialects and slang used by the chorus ladies) with language that is distinctly, and specifically, Greek. By leaving some of Elektra’s lines and many of the Choral section of the play in the original Greek, he gives them a private language and establishes a startling device that makes Elektra’s grief deeply moving. The result is powerful: a pulsing, palpable language that juxtaposes slangy English with ancient Greek.

Several other linguistic characters should guide our production choices. Pound emphasizes Sophokles’ clear distinction between public and private language as seen in the interaction between Elektra and the Chorus, and her use of the public forum for protest and debates with Klytemnestra vs. her private debated with Chrysothemis. As well, the use of disguises by both the tutor and Orestes in order to seek revenge for

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Agamemnon's murder emphasizes Sophokles' theme of concealing and revealing through verbal "masks." The true identities of Orestes and the tutor are kept hidden until the appropriate time: the Tutor in his role as a messenger disguised as an "archetypal Irish horse trader/hustler/bookie/quick-talking con man" and Orestes as a "smooth-talking Cockney" (xi). Pound also utilizes repeated images in the language of the play: darkness and light, fragments of memory, repeated sounds, and most of all the jagged stresses of someone crying, gasping for breath" (xix). Finally, Pound employs economy of expression by condensing language into its most essential form.

These elements then are at the heart of Pound's version and my artistic vision for the production: the weaving together of contemporary America and ancient Greece, the juxtaposition of the public and the private, the use of disguises, repeated images of darkness and light, images of fragmentation, the repetition of sounds, and the economy of expression. I would like to utilize images of 20th c. war as the representation of the "contemporary America." Although this country has been spared, for the most part, wars on its own soil, we should look to images of bombings, post World War II destruction in Europe, and even the ruins of ancient Greece. The world of the play is post-Apocalyptic, but not in a futuristic sense. Rather, I would like to create an imagined world of crumbling statues, a palace in ruins, individuals forced to live outside. Within this world certain pre-destruction elements must remain, most notably an altar of some kind. This would be an ancient altar that has survived the destruction and continues to be the place for the pouring of libations and praying to the gods. Perloff's description of the altar in the CSC production should be examined, particularly her description of it as a metal grate out of which shone "a murky green light evoking both the dank underground of any
modern city and, more abstractly, the vengeful underworld of the ancient Furies whose imminent presence is constantly felt in the play” (xxii).

My desire is to configure the space in the round with elevated walkways behind the audience along both walls of the room. Three exits are needed: into the Palace, towards the city, and towards the burial grounds. I do not wish to use the hallway door at all. Ideally, the floor of the playing area would be dirt; I understand that that is problematic so would hope for a dirt-like treatment. Elektra needs to be able to “wallow” like a pig in a pen. I would like to see a simple scenic element in the center of the playing space: perhaps a slab of concrete that has fallen and under which Elektra now lives. As well, a metal treatment on the walls could be effective for actor-generated sound and also as a reflective surface. The end of the play must also be considered in the scenic design; there is a need for a “revelation of the body of Clytemnestra.” Although this might be realized through the opening of the giant palace doors in another space, I assume it will have to be solved some other way in this production. The overall feeling of the scenic elements should be fragmented, formerly fabulous but currently in disrepair, a glorious palace interior juxtaposed with desperate street-life outside, and a place where everyone else passes through but where Elektra and, essentially, the Chorus ladies live.

Lighting should emphasize the contrast between the public and private, light and shadow, truth and disguise. Sharp contrasts, harsh edges, and non-realistic effects should be considered. Elektra’s journey from rage at the injustice of Agamemnon’s murder to despair at the fading hope for Orestes’ return to her elation at the murder of Clytemnestra (and the implied murder of Aegisthus) should be supported by lighting design choices. Sound, likewise, should evoke images of isolation and despair. Effects such as dripping
water, echoing footsteps, and non-realistic rumbles of war could be explored. Music could be employed at the beginning; selections should be chosen for their evocative qualities rather than conforming to a specific period or style. I would also like to explore actor-generated sounds, particularly with the Chorus (metal rumbling, or pounding for example).

The costumed should be mixed-period but with elements of the Greek woven in. Since Aegisthus can be seen as a usurper of power, perhaps military garb for him and his bodyguard would be appropriate. Klytemnestra has retained queenly garb of some sort; she should look out of place in Elektra’s “yard.” A servant girl for the queen might reflect her clothing in a simpler way. Chrysothemis, who is attempting to “play by the rules” in order to get along, wears what she considers to be finery although it doesn’t quite work. I would specifically like to see her in a pink, tattered prom dress circa 1950s. Orestes is an American cowboy type in Pound’s version and the tutor, who has some hint of long hair or beard according to the text, should be older and somewhat professorial in look. Both should be more contemporary than ancient in look. Pilades, Orestes’ sidekick, would be reflective of Orestes and must be able to carry a concealed handgun. Elektra is probably the most classical in dress although whatever she wears has been drug through the dirt for ten years or more. She is dirty and distressed and doesn’t care. I would like for her to have a very large, very loosely woven piece of fabric that she uses as a shawl, cape and blanket. The weave could be almost as large as fishing net. The Chorus are women who remain outside the palace seeking answers about lost sons and daughters; they are reminiscent of “la madres de la plaza” in Argentina.
In all design choices, I would like to see a sense of post-World War II America coupled with elements from ancient Greece. I would like to see economy and simplicity in the visual elements to support the harsh, uncompromising precision of the language. The world of the play is, in a sense, situated on a large garbage dump: evidence of decay surrounds us but, more importantly, a fire burns underneath that is threatening to break lose and cannot be extinguished until the house of Atreus had been cleansed. And, we mustn’t forget... it’s a comedy!

Sue Ott Rowlands

June 27, 2001
APPENDIX B: Map
APPENDIX C: Family Tree
The Royal House of Thebes and the Atreidae

Zeus = Io
\quad Epaphus
\quad Poseidon = Lybia
\quad Agenor

\text{CADMUS} = Harmonia
\quad Zeus = Europa
\quad Rhadamanthus
\quad Minos = Pasiphae
\quad Pelops = Hippodamia
\quad Niobe

\text{Autochth} \quad Io \quad Agave \quad Zeus = SEMELE Polydorus
\quad Androgeus Ariadne Phaedra Cadmus
\quad (= THESEUS)

\text{Actaeon} \quad Melicertes Pentheus
\quad Dionysus
\quad Labdacus

\quad Menoeceus
\quad Creon
\quad Jocasta = Laius

\quad Menoeceus II Harmon Jocasta = OEDIPUS
\quad Clytemnestra = AGAMEMNON MENELEUS = Helen

\quad \quad ORESTES IPHIGENIA ELECTRA
\quad (\text{HEROES ICHYSAUL HIS})

\quad \quad \quad \text{HERMES AETHRA = AESCUS}
\quad \quad \quad \text{THESEUS}
\quad \quad \quad \text{HIPPOLYTUS}

\text{Eteocles Polynices} \quad \text{ANTIGONE} \quad \text{Ismena}
APPENDIX D: The Theatre
APPENDIX E: Program
SOPHOKLES

ELEKTRA

A version by Ezra Pound and Rudd Fleming

Mount Hall Studio Theatre
October 31 - November 18, 2001
APPENDIX F: Flyer
A version by Ezra Pound
and Rudd Fleming

Directed by
Sue Ott Rowlands

Following the 8 PM
performance on
Thursday, November 8
in the Mount Hall Studio Theatre.
(1050 Carmack Rd.)
Approximate starting time:
9:30 PM

Featuring Guest Speakers

Dr. Bruce Heiden,
Dept. of Greek and Latin

Dr. Steven Yao,
Dept. of English

Moderated by Peach Pittenger, Dramaturg

call 292-2295 for tickets to the performance

department of theatre
APPENDIX G: Review - The Lantern
In Greek fashion, 'Elektra' full of murderous deceit

By Kurt Baekschneider

Soap operas are not the only form of entertainment whose plots involve deceit, greed, adultery and murder. These themes also provide the backdrop for the play "Elektra," presented by the Ohio State Department of Theatre.

Originally written by the Greek playwright Sophocles, famous for "Oedipus the King," the play was modified in 1951 by Ezra Pound, who was placed in a hospital for the criminally insane the same year. The Department of Theatre presents Pound's version, which tells the same story Sophocles did, but is set in the United States just after World War II.

"We adapted Elektra during a period of our lives when Elektra's story of grief, burdened on madness, resonated with his own situation," said Sue Ott Rockland, director of "Elektra."

The main character, Elektra, grieves over the loss of her father, Agamemnon, who was murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, and his cousin, Orestes, because they were involved in an adulterous affair.

Elektra displays great disdain for her mother and Agamemnon while seeking revenge for the murder of her father. At the same time, she anticipates the return of her brother, Orestes, who has been in exile.

Carrie DeVito plays Elektra and gives a remarkable performance, aptly conveying the anguish Elektra is experiencing, while at the same time exuding anger toward Clytemnestra, played by Natasia Lee.

DeVito's dominating stage presence is impressive,shouldering the majority of the script. The script calls for Elektra and some of the other characters to switch between speaking English and Greek, which takes away from the play because it is confusing unless one speaks Greek.

Orestes, played by Donald Clark, is a somewhat arrogant individual who also wants to avenge his father's death. Clark gives an adequate performance portraying the character in an image that is meant to be given a more serious tone.

The intimate setting in the Studio Theatre, where the play opened, allows the actors to be heard, and the sets are not too large, which helps integrate the characters.

A broken, ragged curtain, the boxes, and the set and costume, which aesthetically tears Elektra apart.

"I enjoyed the play and thought the cast did a great job, especially the woman who played Elektra," said student member Emory Spinks. "The setting in the theater was also pretty neat. I have never been to a play where I could immediately see the play as if I were sitting in the box. Over all, the play was exciting and not as powerful, but the transition between language and Greek dialogue was a bit difficult." She then asked the question of what it would be like to see the production the way both the actors have intended.

"Elektra" runs through Nov. 12 in the Mount Hall Studio Theatre.
APPENDIX H: Review- Columbus Alive
Pound becomes 
Elektra
OSU Theatre masterfully recreates a translated classic
by Jay Wenz

In 20th century American literature there are few figures as diverse as Ezra Pound (1885-1972), the influential poet, critic, editor and translator. His literary work was found guilty when that term truly had meaning and he was a champion of writers as diverse as James Joyce, DH Lawrence, T.S. Eliot and Marianne Moore.

Pound got him into trouble, though. He exiled himself to Europe in 1920 and eventually settled in Italy in 1925. There his enthusiasm for Benito Mussolini grew during a period when the nascent dictator's regime enjoyed considerable sympathy in the U.S. and Britain, but when, after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, even his most ardent admirers overseas abandoned Mussolini, Pound remained loyal.

During World War II, Pound broadcast pro-Axis and anti-Semitic commentaries on Italian radio, prompting the U.S. government to indict him for treason. Later in the war, he was arrested, tried and eventually sentenced to an American reformatory in Pike and was finally brought to Washington, DC, and tells us to imagine that he was incompetent; he was confined to Saint Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminal insane from 1945 to 1958.

Among the numerous works he wrote in an eclectic Pound also translated the play Oresteia (1930) into English, the first of a trilogy. He translated them and adapted them for the stage. But with all his work, he was an accomplished translator. His translation of the Iliad was acknowledged in 1930.

Oresteia, which he translated and adapted, is just one example of how Pound's work is still relevant today. His influence is still felt in the literary world, and his work continues to be studied and appreciated. The OSU Theatre Department's production of his translated work is a testament to his enduring legacy.

The OSU Theatre Department's production of Elektra is a beautiful example of how Pound's work has been brought to life. The production is a masterful recreation of the original work, bringing it to the stage and allowing the audience to experience the power and intensity of Pound's translation. The production is a work of art, and it is a testament to the enduring legacy of Ezra Pound and his influence on American literature.
APPENDIX I: Article - Columbus Alive
Footlights and footnotes

by Jay West

Maybe, just maybe, Columbus theater turned some sort of corner in 2001. The city's premier Equity theater, Contemporary American Theatre Company, has been more consistently excellent than at any time in recent memory. Productions of A Soldier's Play, Three Tall Women, The Big Sleep, and Red Herring were all solid achievements. CATCO also turned its back on two years of deficits and received a sizable grant from the Columbus Arts Stabilization Project. The arrival of Executive Director David Edelman in 2000 clearly set CATCO back on the road to financial health.

Possibly even more impressive has been the artistic comeback of the reconstituted and renamed Red Herring Theatre Ensemble in 2000, in particular its show-stopper, The Short North Playhouse with Reality Theatre and its new leadership team of artistic director Maureen Ryan and managing director Nancy Fox Christians are making for some of its most exciting productions since the early days, when the company was hidden away in the Midtown Center.

So here are some highlights and lowlights of the year 2001 on the planks in Columbus.

**Most Maniacal Laugh:** One wonders if Nirmal himself had half as demented a laugh as Katherine Parkman gave in Women At Play. Her launchee scene with a man from a more two and a half hours was twice as hilarious and roll-in-the-aisles as at the Woody Center was as seldom laughless as it was humorous.

**Too Much of a Good Thing:** Ninety minutes of Ohio State's Dr. London Cabinda's Edward Rettman were a delight, but at twice the length this endless repetitive work was quite inexcusable.

**Most Intriguing Use of the Staff of Life:** What the British company Imperative Theatre did with the stick and the fancy dress and the antics in Space at the Woody Center was as seldom baffling as it was humorous.

**Too Little of a Good Thing:** Considering OMETC's monumental Peer Gynt into a mere two and a half hours was a disservice to a heartening play in the otherwise intriguing collaboration between the OSU theater department and the OMT.

**Too Much of a Little Thing:** Given its promise of sharp satire and feminist rage, Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues turned out to be much more mild for laughter than spicy food for thought.

**Best Actress:** Sue On Rowlands was a reveling, no-nonsense Virginia in OSU's production of Margaret Edson's writing. Her Honorable mention goes to Carole Defros as the title character in Extra Pound's adaptation of Fiddler on the Roof, also at OSU.

**Best Actor:** For his triumphs in CATCO's The Big Sleuth and Red Herring's Touch, Geoffrey Martin wins my vote. Honorable mention goes to Bruce Hermann as Russ Regal in Red Herring's Life Totally Wound, Best Play: Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize-winning Three Tall Women was the artistic pinnacle of 2001 for CATCO, and the Columbus Honorable mention goes to OMT's production of another Pulitzer play, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf.

Central Ohio's center of dance action in 2001 was BalletMet Columbus, although not always on the stage. The departure, at the end of the 2000-2001 season of artistic director and master storyteller David Nixon left the company in deep uncertainty. Executive director Dennis Cornwell remained in his position for only four months before being let back to the University of Southern California during the spring, and replaced quickly by Cheri Mitchell. All the turmoil meant that there was no summer Dance in 2001, yet the only hope that this is temporary.

Right at year's end, BalletMet announced the appointment of Gerard Charles as artistic director and Stanton Welch, a rising Australian choreographer, as artistic associate.

More consistently, positive talk is being heard in the hallways of the OSU Department of Dance. I'm told about more students looking around after graduation. Maybe, just maybe, we will see something of a dance revival in Columbus with a small independent company of two getting together. Bette Miller is here and Susan Van Pelt's back. Things have got to be looking up.

In chronological order, these are some of the more memorable moments of Dance in Columbus during 2001:

- *Darrakudjak* at the Woody Center (February)
- *Emo Greco & PC* at the Woody Center (March)
- *Bill T. Jones/AIke Zane Dance Company* at Woody Center (April)
- *Miaou* at the Woody Center (May)
- *Paul Taylor Dance Company* at OMT (May)
- *Bette Miller and Vincent J. Rizzuto* at the Woody Center (May)
- *Gerard Charles with Robert Post* at OMETC (November)
- *Meredith Monk and Ann Hamilton* at the Woody Center (October)
- *Hanya Holm* at OMT (November)

With Twyla Tharp Dance, Bette Miller Company, Lyon Opera Ballet, and Compagnie Maguy Marin coming up on the Woody's dance card, and works both new (Serpentine Weber's Peer Gynt) and familiar (Martine Muller's Midas, Renault's Romeo and Juliet) coming to BalletMet, there's plenty to anticipate in the new year.

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APPENDIX I: Costume Rendering
APPENDIX J: Production Photos
Scene 2. "The Daily Lamentation"

Scene 7. "I'm Dying Here!"
Scene 9. "Chorus’ Prayer"

Scene 10. "From Keening to Joy!"