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*AN EVENING OF GREEK THEATER:*  
AN ACTOR'S CREATIVE PROCESS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
The Department of Drama and Communications

by

Jane C. McNulty

B.A. Hunter College, C.U.N.Y., 1996

May 2004

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"You might live in pain and fear and doubt - never let your fire go out."  
-The Radiators

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an attempt to document my creative process as an actor throughout the production process of *An Evening of Greek Theater* as accurately as possible. In a narrative structure, I will record the development of the production starting with the pre-production process, the rehearsal process, and evaluate my performance. Chapters include character analyses, pre-production, rehearsal and performance, self-evaluation and a scored script. A video is included with excerpts of my work from the production.



## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2003, I performed in *An Evening of Greek Theater* as partial fulfillment of my Masters of Fine Arts candidacy in Acting at the University of New Orleans. It was directed by Phillip Karnell and included Shane Stewart, Heather Surdukan and myself. The project was an experiment. It was an attempt to create a new structure for acting thesis productions. The genre was new territory for both the actors and the director. We constructed the production from beginning to end; we researched the original performance conditions and dramatic conventions of antiquity, structured the material, edited different translations of the plays together into one final text, as well as developed and performed multiple roles.

The intention of the director was not to reproduce an authentic ancient Greek production; rather, we presented our own interpretive version of Greek theater using the ancient style as an influence. We used stylized make-up in place of the traditional masks. Aspects of the Greek acting style were incorporated into the performance, particularly in the tragedy scenes, but the overall style remained contemporary. And, of course, the performances were indoors in the evening for an audience of about one hundred sixty audience members rather than at dawn in an outdoor amphitheater for roughly ten to fifteen thousand.

One of our many challenges was to develop a ritual with the director that framed the production. There is evidence that the Greeks blessed their theater in some way using music and dance before presenting a tragedy. However, it is impossible for us to know exactly what this consisted of. There are no records that survive that describe what they did and, unfortunately,

none of the music survives. We created our own version of this ceremony to represent the blessing symbolically.

Meeting the textual demands of this material was a great acting challenge. All of my stage experience is comprised of performing contemporary, realistic scripts. This text tested my ability to apply clearly defined objectives and actions with dialogue that was originally written in Greek for an audience about twenty-five hundred years ago, long before any concept of an "acting technique" was developed.

Although the human condition has not changed, Greek drama concerns the gods and heroes of ancient myth and was originally enacted outdoors, in masks, in a mixture of spoken verse and sung lyrics - a context that the first audiences for these plays would have been familiar. Our challenge was to tell these stories in such a way so that they were accessible to and resonated with our audience as well as adapting this material to the physical conditions of our theater space.

The following chapters include my character analyses, research, process, and personal evaluation of the different characters I developed. A scored script with action choices is also included.

## CHARACTER ANALYSES

### Kalonike

The scene takes place in Athens, beneath the Acropolis. Lysistrata, an Athenian woman, impatiently awaits a group of women she has asked to meet her. Kalonike is the next-door neighbor of Lysistrata and the first to arrive. They wait on the other women from Athens, Sparta, and Boeotia to arrive before Lysistrata reveals her plot to end the war. While they wait, Lysistrata informs Kalonike that the fate of the Greek world rests in the hands of the women. Kalonike is skeptical. She feels that because of the inferior position of women, the fact that they have no political rights, all they can do is get dolled up and look pretty for their men. Lysistrata tells her that this is part of her plan to save Greece. The rest of the women arrive, including Lampito, the Spartan representative. Lysistrata announces that the women must go on a sex strike in order to end the war. Kalonike and Lampito vigorously object and question this idea. Finally, they reluctantly agree. Lysistrata wants to ratify their agreement with an oath. Kalonike suggests swearing over a bucket of wine. They all swear a solemn oath to abstain from sex until the war has ended.

Kalonike's objective in this scene is to support Lysistrata's plan to end the war - no matter how painful the plan may be! She is an outgoing, outspoken, and sometimes crude woman. She is a foil to the cultured and sophisticated Lysistrata. She has a good sense of humor. She likes to gossip. Kalonike has the "scoop" on any woman Lysistrata mentions. She comments on the appearance of different women as they arrive. When Lampito enters, she and

Lysistrata look her up and down and comment on her "tacky" appearance. Kalonike even grabs her breasts to see if they are real.

Kalonike embraces her feminine side and is delighted that Lysistrata's scheme for peace involves dressing up in negligees. She enjoys looking and feeling attractive and sexy. She is the voice of the young, Athenian housewife and mother. She comments on the overwhelming duties of running a household – taking care of her husband's needs, her children's needs, and supervising the household help, while still trying to stay attractive for her man. Most of the women are longing for their husbands sexually because they have been away at war for many months. Kalonike's sexual frustration manifests itself in sexual innuendo, but it is her sense of humor as well. She is a young woman, assuming early twenties. She is a city girl who is worldly and street smart, although not educated as indicated by her unrefined speech and accent.

I wanted Kalonike to be bawdy, earthy, playful, crude, and of course, funny. She is all of these characteristics while still being feminine. She is loud and forthcoming in her exchanges with Lysistrata and Lampito. Her manner of speaking suggested some kind of unrefined dialect. Her first lines are, "How come your so hot and bothered?" then, "Ain't it the truth!" and then, "Don't worry ya head, honey, they'll show." I chose a New Orleans "Yat"/Brooklyn accent for her which seemed to fit the way her lines were written. In the preface of the translation we used, the translator, X.J. Kennedy writes, "I have opted for a dialect likely to strike most Americans as barbarous, that of the streets of Brooklyn or Jersey City. On the other hand, a more formal and elevated tone for Lysistrata's speech might help her stand high above the crowd".

Physically, I wanted her movement to be bold and loose. She touches when she talks, especially to make a point. In fact, later when Lampito enters, Kalonike questions whether her

breasts are real. There is a character direction that says *She extends a finger to touch Lampito's bosom*. Since our Lampito was Shane dressed in "drag" and wearing gourds for breasts, we took this direction a bit further - I stood behind "her" and grabbed both "breasts". So she is definitely not afraid to touch. Kalonike is also very sexual. At the beginning of the scene, Lysistrata describes her plan as "Something huge." Kalonike's response is, "Thick? Stiff? Sticking straight out?" When she discovers that Lysistrata's plot means no sex, she cries. She says, "I'd sooner walk through fire than give up fucking." Finally, she reluctantly agrees to support this plan for peace.

Aristophanes satirizes the Athenian women throughout the play as responding mainly to sex and wine. Kalonike embodies this stereotype. She is a lush. When it comes time to swear an oath, she suggests that they swear over a bucket of wine. She says, "Give it to me! Let me be the first to swear!" She will say whatever Lysistrata wants her to so that she can get to the drinking part. She dips her fingers in the wine before the oath is finished and gulps it down when she finally gets hold of the bucket.

### Myrrhine

Myrrhine, an Athenian devoted wife and mother, has temporarily abandoned her household to barricade herself in the Acropolis with the other women on the sex strike. Her husband, Kinesias, a man in obvious sexual discomfort, comes to the Acropolis looking for her. She has sworn a solemn oath not to give in sexually to her husband. Lysistrata sees this man approaching. She tells Myrrhine to sexually taunt him, but do not give in under any circumstances. Myrrhine gets close enough to be overheard by Kinesias and declares her desperate love and longing of him. Then she runs away. When he sees her, he persuades her to

stay any way he can, including coercing her with the needs of their baby. She "gives in" to her maternal instincts and comes to her baby and husband. She says that she will not come home until the men make peace. Kinesias wants her to make love on the ground right where they are. She will not break her oath. After further discussion, she agrees to his proposal, but insists that she get a cot. This is the first of many ways she stalls and tantalizes him. She is very manipulative. She misleads Kinesias into thinking that they will have sex; after seducing him, she sneaks off as he prepares to make love.

Myrrhine's objective in this scene is to sexually tease and taunt her husband, to drive him mad with desire without giving in to him. She must keep her oath no matter what. The question is how does she do this? My initial approach to the character was different from how the director envisioned her. At the beginning of this scene, Lysistrata advises Myrrhine to intentionally tempt and torment her husband:

Lysistrata: All right, Myrrhine, you know what to do. Tease him, love him up, turn on the heat, do anything ---just don't give in to him!

Myrrhine: Leave it to me. I know how to handle him.

Since she is tricking Kinesias, do I play a woman who, from the top of the scene, intends to toy with and torment her husband? Does she take pleasure in his suffering by intentionally misleading him? In that case, the audience would be in on the joke. The humor is based partly on the delight in seeing the clever manner in which Myrrhine is able to dupe her eager husband. Or, do I play a woman who desperately wants to make love to her husband and is struggling not to break her oath? This way, the audience doesn't know that she intends to abandon him until the

very end. The humor is then about a couple who desperately want to make love, but Myrrhine keeps creating obstacles.

The two approaches call for very different actions. I performed the scene once before in acting class and portrayed her as the former. She was clever, calculating, and admonishing of her husband's over eager sexual behavior. She intentionally delayed making love. She had the upper hand in the scene. When rehearsals began, I played Myrrhine as I had in class. The director saw the character differently. He did not want the manipulation played on the surface. He wanted a woman who desperately wants to make love, but, in the end, would not break her oath. She feels terrible about denying her husband's needs, and even blows him a kiss behind his back at the end of the scene as she sneaks off, leaving him all hot and bothered. This Myrrhine is more compliant and less sure of herself than I played her originally. She behaves very loving toward her husband. She is easily influenced and struggles not to give in to him. She is goofy and dingy. When she "remembers" that she needs something else, she hits herself in the forehead before she runs off. On the sophistication spectrum, she is in the middle of Kalonike and Lysistrata. She is not refined like Lysistrata, nor is she earthy and raw like Kalonike, and does not speak with a dialect.

Many of Aristophanes' characters are named for the class of people or quality they represent which the Athenian audience would have been aware of. In *The Art of Greek Comedy*, Katherine Lever writes about the meanings of some of his characters names. Myrrhine's name comes from the common Greek term for "vagina". Kinesias suggests the Greek verb meaning "to move" or "to make love". Lysistrata meant something like, "She who disbands armies". I just thought that was funny and worth noting.

### Nymphet & Uglier Old Broad

The scene takes place in a courtyard outside of the houses of two prostitutes. An old prostitute, Ugly Old Broad, and a young, beautiful courtesan, Nymphet, insult each other while waiting for a young man, Epigenes. They get into a physical fight. Ugly Old Broad pushes Nymphet off stage, and down the stairs. Here, we made use of a long "sound gag". Epigenes enters, desirous of the young girl, but is intercepted by Ugly. She informs him of the new law, which requires a young man to lie with an old woman before a young one. He has resigned himself to her when Uglier Old Broad enters and claims him. As Uglier enters, she punches Ugly out. The two old women fight over him and pull him back and forth. Finally, he is dragged off by both of them.

Nymphet and Uglier Old Broad are stereotypes. The cartoon character, Betty Boop with a little Marilyn Monroe was an image I had in mind for Nymphet. She was a bouncy, horny, and aggressive young woman. She poses when she moves. Her voice was girlish and breathy.

Uglier Old Broad needed a crooked, bent over walk, a crackly voice, and a horny old woman laugh. The Wicked Witch of the West from *The Wizard of Oz* was the inspiration for this characterization. She was also physically aggressive. Nymphet and Uglier Old Broad want the same thing - a young, Athenian man. And both of these women have the same problem - Ugly Old Broad. If it weren't for her, Nymphet would have her young man. But Uglier Old Broad needs to physically get him away from Ugly Old Broad. It is the struggle of these two old ladies that is part of the humor.

Stylistically, the scene was very vaudeville. It relied heavily on sight and sound gags. The costumes did most of the work for me for both of these characters. If you walk on stage



with two-foot cones for breasts, or breasts sagging to your knees and straw hair, you will get laughs. The movement was very slapstick, a lot of physical fights, punching and grabbing.

### Medea

"When once she is wronged in the matter of love,  
no other soul can hold so many thoughts of blood." 253

Athenian audiences would have been familiar with the myths of the chief characters of Greek drama. An audience today, twenty-four centuries later, would be handicapped in their understanding of the plays without some knowledge of the story. According to David Grene and Richard Lattimore in their introduction to *The Medea*, this is a version of the legend of Jason and Medea:

Jason was the rightful heir to the throne in Iolcus. It had been usurped years before by his uncle, Pelias. Pelias promised to yield the throne to Jason when he returned with the Golden Fleece, a nearly impossible task. Jason and the Argonauts readily undertook the challenge.

Medea was from the faraway land of Colchis at the eastern extremity of the Black Sea. She was a sorceress related to the gods, daughter of King Aetes, and granddaughter of the sun god Helios. She fell in love with Jason when the Argonauts came to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece. She used her witchcraft to help him gain his treasure by killing the ferocious dragon that guarded it. Her father was furious when he learned of this. To escape the wrath of her father, she fled with Jason who made her his wife. In one version of the myth, she brought her younger brother along and used him to delay the pursuit of her father by cutting him up and throwing his limbs into the sea for Aetes to collect piecemeal for burial.

When they returned to Iolcus, Pelias showed no intention of keeping his promise. Therefore, Medea tricked King Pelias' daughters into killing him to gain the throne for her husband. However, they were driven from the city for this murder and fled to Corinth.

In Corinth, they lived as exiles from Iolcus and had two sons. Jason then callously abandons Medea to marry a younger princess, Glauke, King Creon's daughter to gain power and status for himself. Medea is spurned and shocked by this betrayal of the man she sacrificed so much for, murdered her own brother and Pelias for. She becomes obsessed with hatred for him and plots her savage revenge. This is where Euripides' tragedy begins.

Medea sends her two children with wedding gifts for Glauke. The gifts are smeared with magic ointment that burns Glauke and Creon to death. Medea then kills her own children as a final act of vengeance against Jason and escapes to Athens in a chariot drawn by winged dragons provided by her grandfather Helios.

This is the story of a woman who, because of her intense love for Jason, sacrifices everything on the altar of his success and, at the end, finds herself betrayed and abandoned. For him she has betrayed her parents, murdered her brother, and exiled herself from her home where she could have been a queen. She sacrificed this to be his wife in a foreign land. She has made every effort to come to terms with these Greeks whom she sees as arrogant and she is popular in Corinth. She even bears and loves the children for Jason. Her maternal love is real, but secondary, and she uses them for his destruction. She is horrified that he has broken his promise to her. She believes her downfall has come because she trusted a Greek:

My mistake was to desert my father's house,  
Won over by a Greek man's words. 779

Medea and Jason are psychological opposites. Medea is a powerful, fierce, force of nature. She is ruled by passion, unpredictable and uncontrollable. She is emotional, irrational, savage, stubbornly proud, and headstrong. She is obsessed with revenge. Jason is reason absent of emotion or feeling. He is ambitious, cynical, callous, self-righteous, small minded and selfish. He is the passionless incarnation of self-interest and cold logic.

Medea is torn between the conflicting emotions of maternal love and her intense desire for revenge against Jason. Her hatred intensifies until all other emotions and reason itself are totally submerged. In her wild, single-minded fury, she commits the most heinous crimes despite her recognition that they are evil. To make Jason suffer, she ensures her own torment as well - they both lose the children whom they love.

Medea has some qualities that were considered to be very masculine for her time. She is familiar with a man's world. The opening monologues of Jason and Medea the beginning of the scene are like a debate or, agon taken from Greek law. She is confident and skillful in the way she presents her arguments in the scene. She speaks like a prosecutor. She makes references to wrestling, "one point will floor you" and to military life. Medea is concerned for her honor and reputation in a world where women do not have a reputation. In his *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, John Ferguson notes that this is the Athens in which the popular Athenian statesman, Pericles, proclaimed to the Athenian war widows that the greatest glory of woman is not to be spoken of by men for good or bad. She is a foreigner and she has all the traits that the Greeks associated with Eastern foreigners - unrestrained emotionalism, passionate love and magical power.

My objective in this scene is to annihilate Jason. She says in the very beginning, "Abusing you will do me good, and you will smart to hear it." All she ever wanted was to be

with him. But it is too late now. Her passionate love has turned to passionate hate. Her honor has been destroyed. It will not go unpunished. She is convinced that she is right. Jason swore an oath to her before the gods. She asks him, "Can you really think the gods by whom we swore no longer rule?" She believes the gods will help her in her plan of revenge.

### Ismene

Oedipus and Jocasta had four children - Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles and Polyneices who were twin boys. Eteocles, fighting for Thebes, and Polyneices, fighting for Argos, stab each other to death in battle. Creon, now ruler of Thebes, decrees that anyone who fought against Thebes cannot be buried. Burial was extremely important to the Greeks. Antigone is determined to bury her brother but she will be killed for disobeying the law if she does. Ismene does not want to and tries desperately to talk her sister out of doing it.

The scene we performed was taken from Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, which has some significant differences from Sophocles', original. One of those differences is that before this scene between these two sisters takes place, Antigone has already buried her brother for the first time. Ismene does not know this. Since she believes she has already accomplished her goal, Antigone is light and free during the scene. Therefore, Ismene carries the weight of the circumstance. She must convince her sister, Antigone, that burying their brother, Polyneices, is not worth the suffering it will bring upon them. If they bury him, they will be tortured and put to death. Ismene is fatigued, anxious and terrified. She was awake all night going over and over what her sister has proposed. She does not want either one of them to die for this cause. She tries to reason with Antigone. She pleads, she cautions, she implores, she begs her to "be sensible". She reminds Antigone that she has her whole life to look forward to including her

upcoming marriage to Haemon. All that will be taken away if they do this. Ismene believes that life, with all its imperfections, is still worth living.

Most of the information we get about Ismene comes from what Antigone says. They are teenagers and Ismene is the older of the two sisters. She is described as more "reasonable" and level headed than her sister by Antigone herself. She is very beautiful, the archetypal ingénue. Antigone has always been difficult; she remembers terrorizing Ismene as a child, always insisting on the gratification of her desires, refusing to "understand" the limits placed on her. Her envy of Ismene is clear. Ismene is entirely of this world, the object of all men's desires. She belongs to the world of law and order. She understands Creon's reason for issuing the edict that no one should bury Polyneices, the traitor brother. She is a conformist. She believes men are stronger, she respects authority, that you can't beat City Hall, and that a girl should keep a low profile. She has learned to compromise. Unlike Medea, Ismene would fulfill Pericles' blueprint for the ideal Athenian woman.

## CREATIVE PROCESS - PRE-PRODUCTION AND REHEARSAL

The idea of performing Greek theater for our thesis production was first presented to us by our director, Phillip Karnell, in the early part of the Spring, 2003 semester. The idea intrigued me because I had become fascinated with the culture and theater of the ancient Greeks, particularly the Classical period, in my undergraduate studies at Hunter College in New York. I took courses in Greek mythology, ancient Greek civilization, Greek tragedy, and even Greek and Latin roots of words. In an Art History course I took, I was most interested in the ancient Greek marble statues. Greece is one of the places that I most want to visit. So I was interested.

However, the plan was to include excerpts from different plays, not just one play. I was not so crazy about this. I had looked forward to being assigned a particular role for my thesis, which is how it has been done in the past. I hoped for something from Ibsen or Tennessee Williams or Neil LaBute, something I could really sink my acting teeth into. If I were playing many different roles, I would not be able to get into any one character in too much depth. There would be no character arch to work for. My feelings were mixed.

By the end of the Spring semester, the final decision was made. Shane Stewart, Heather Surdukan and I would perform *An Evening of Greek Theater* for our thesis production. It would be presented in the last slot of the Fall, 2003 semester, and directed by Phil Karnell.

Our process began during the summer of 2003. Our director wanted each of us to review Greek scripts in search of four scenes, five to ten minutes each, and two monologues, three to four minutes each, that we were interested in performing. Our goal was to come up with roughly ninety minutes of material, including a fifteen-minute intermission. We wanted to include

comedic and tragic scenes and monologues. Over the summer, I read and reviewed some Greek plays, most of which were tragedies. The plays I found most interesting were Euripides' *Medea*, *Electra*, and *Hippolytus*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. I also found a website that had every monologue from every Greek play, although the translations were terrible. Of all the Greek monologues listed for women, only three were considered comedies and two were from plays I had never heard of. One of those plays was Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, otherwise known as *The Congresswomen* or *The Sexual Congress*. This is when I first realized that it was going to be difficult to come up with enough good, comedic material.

Our first meeting was on September 5, 2003. The three cast members, the director, and the stage manager, Tobias Mullen, met once or twice a week until our first read through of the finalized script, which was on October 28, 2003. Each cast member collected and read different translations of Greek comedies and tragedies. We looked for as many translations as we could find. We brought the scripts to the meetings as we found them. We discussed and read over different scenes and monologues, their length, and who might perform them.

The director wanted the content of the show to be a balance between comedy and tragedy. We had a lot of material to choose from for the tragedy portion. In fact, it was tough to narrow it down because so much of it is good. The problem was finding enough comedic material. First of all, very little ancient Greek comedy has survived. The two playwrights that we have the most from are Aristophanes and Menander, and none of Menander's plays have survived in their entirety. The plays of numerous other comic writers survive only in fragments. The subject matter of Aristophanes' plays is primarily political or social satire, and in particular, the Peloponnesian War. The characters often included prominent figures of the time. The philosopher, Socrates, is a main character in the play *The Clouds*. Euripides, Aeschylus, and

Dionysus are characters in *The Frogs* and Euripides shows up again in *Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria*. These and many of his other plays were concerned with immediate political issues or what he believed were the moral dangers inherent in contemporary thought (i.e. the Sophists). His subject matter was very timely. In order to include some of this material, we would have needed to do tremendous rewrites to make it current and relevant. We did not have the time to do this, so we steered away from those. We were left with social satire, which was often expressed in a bawdy and sexually outrageous fashion.

Another challenge was finding strong, performable translations. The most accessible translations were geared more toward scholarly or literary study. The translation of the language was often quite literal and awkward and not written with performance in mind. We needed writing that flowed in English with language that would best tell the story on the stage. We found that there was quite a range of interpretations, especially for the comedies. The word choices and sometimes even the action of the scene vary greatly from translator to translator. I will give an example from *Sexual Congress*. Here is an excerpt from *The Congresswomen*, a translation by Douglass Parker in 1967:

Hag: I wish you some very unnatural shocks  
 when you lie fallow and itch to be plowed:  
 I wish you a suddenly vanishing box,  
 A suddenly crumbling bed to match,  
 And the clammy touch, all curled and cowed,  
 Of a snake who never comes up to scratch.

Here is the same passage from *The Sexual Congress*, the translation that we used by R.H.W. Dillard in 1999:

Ugly Old Woman: I hope your hole seals up,



And when you're ready to fuck,  
No one can find the seam!  
I hope when you're kissing  
With your hand on his jake. . .  
You'll discover that it's a snake!

I think this demonstrates how the same passage can leave two very different impressions depending on who translates it.

Our final script was a mishmash of edited and cut translations as well as rewritten scenes. The *Lysistrata*(3) (this means 3 person scene) scene consisted of two different translations edited and constructed to form one text, the director rewrote the scene from Oedipus, and the rest of the scenes were edited and cut for our purposes.

We also discussed the idea of some kind of ritual that would open and close the production. We know that the Greeks blessed the theater somehow. The director described his vision of the ritual as some kind of odd, eerie, and abstract rhythmic procession. Maybe someone would play an instrument, possibly a recorder, a harp, or drums. None of us are musicians, so that idea got rejected pretty quickly. Maybe it would be created with our voices, stomping, and/or clapping. This we could do! We would create our own version of this ceremony.

We researched ritual, music and production in Greek tragedy. According to *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, drama's origins are forms of worship or celebration of the gods, particularly Dionysus. Among the many theories, one is that tragedy evolved out of dithyrambic improvisations. Dithyramps were a form of dance drama, a tragedy without any dialogue, merely lyrics sung and danced. The dithyrambic chorus had fifty members. In its earliest form, the members probably played drums, flutes, and lyres, and chanted as they danced around an

effigy of Dionysus. Dionysus was the Greek god of wine and fertility. The men were dressed as satyrs, mythological half-human, half-goat servants of Dionysus. The term tragedy, literally meaning "goat song", is thought to come from a time when the chorus danced either for a goat as a prize, or around a goat that was then sacrificed to the gods. Over time, the dithyrambic chorus became more formalized and began competing in festivals. In 534 B.C., the festival of the City Dionysia was founded. Its main purpose was to present plays and dithyrambs as a sacred competition. An Athenian poet-choreographer named Thespis, who won the first contest in 534, introduced spoken prologues and interludes between dances that became very popular. This is why Thespis is credited as adding the first actor to the chorus, taking a major step toward drama.

The director's concept for this production was to present an interpretive version of Greek theater using the ancient style as an influence. We would use stylized make-up in place of the traditional masks. Hints of the Greek acting style would be incorporated into the performance although the overall style would remain contemporary. There would only be three actors. Shane, Heather, and I would do anything seen on stage. For instance, if we wanted to indicate a Greek chorus during the monologues, a group generally thought to have had twelve to fifteen members, that chorus would consist only of the other two actors. If we needed a musical instrument, one of us would play it. The three of us, with the director's guidance, would create and perform the entire show from beginning to end.

On October 22, 2003, we had a read through of all possible material and timed each piece. By the end of the evening, Phil decided that there would be no monologues; it would be an evening of scenes. I was upset about this because I was most looking forward to playing Medea and the piece we had from that play was a monologue. The show was now divided into comedy (Act I) and tragedy (Act II). Each act runs about 40 minutes. In terms of make-up, the

director determined that there would be one look for the comedy scenes and another look for the tragedy.

By Tuesday, October 28, we had a reading of our "final" script with the designers. It was final in that the selected scenes were final, but the translations were not. We had about another week to adjust those. Phil did choose a scene from *Medea* for Shane and I, which I was excited about. There would be no Electra/Orestes scene. No more monologues, at least, not on their own. There are internal monologues in the scenes. The comedic material did not feel very funny to me during the read through, but I hoped it would when we got it on its feet. Kevin Griffith and Stephanie Organ discussed their initial ideas for the set. They described a fountain/urn that could have both flame and water flowing. There would be a bench designed to look like a piece of broken column. They talked about having sheer drapes. Phil wanted clean lines; he did not want a rough "ruins" look. Tony French showed us some rough drawings for costumes that were basically flowing garments neutral in color with sandals. There are robes for tragedy and no robes for comedy. Phil gave us a general description of the different acting approaches for comedy and tragedy. The comedy will be very physical and more challenging than the tragedy, or challenging in a different way. The comedy would have, as Phil put it, "sight gags", meaning things like large, "perky" or sagging breasts and a large phallus, as the case may be for *Sexual Congress*. The tragedy will be done using mostly strong vocal quality and intensity of emotion; no modern phrasing and probably not a lot of movement.

The following evening, October 29, we worked on the opening ritual for the show and *Lysistrata*(3). The ritual was very frustrating. Take three, extremely Caucasian, non-musical actors with no rhythm or co-ordination and ask them to come up with a creative, rhythmic, ritualized dance phrase and you will get a hilariously bad opening for a show! It was rough. But

I had hope that we would come up with something cool, it just might take some time! The director wrote an opening, a closing, and the transitions between scenes. These needed to be translated into Greek. We wanted our opening phrases translated by the following Monday so that we could learn them and coordinate the sounds with the movement.

We then edited the script a bit for *Lysistrata(3)* and began to block that scene. I made my first choice for the character of Kalonike, which was an obnoxious, Fran Drecher type dialect. Shane is a country, mountain woman from Sparta and Heather's *Lysistrata* is like a conceited, diva actress. I began to think it could be really funny - I hoped it would be funny.

On Thursday, October 30, Phil told us that Dollie Barkum, our movement teacher, would help us choreograph the ritual - yeah! We had to get the introduction, the transitions, and the end translated into Greek, and learn the Greek by the time she came to watch us. We also discussed borrowing a drum from Jessie Tyson to add to the ritual. Phil cut the scene from Aristophanes' *The Clouds*. We then worked on the Myrrhine/Kinesias scene, or *Lysistrata(2)*. It was very frustrating. Working out the blocking and timing is slow and tedious. Afterwards, we continued blocking *Lysistrata (3)* with Heather. We had more fun working on that one, but it was still pretty difficult.

On Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, we began work on the scene from *Sexual Congress*. It has always struck me as too raunchy, and it did again at this rehearsal. Some of it was not really funny to me. The language, as in the passage above, is so vulgar in some places that I think it is jarring and takes away from the humor. However, when we were in the process of selecting scenes and translations, Heather and Shane really liked it and thought it could be very funny. I thought maybe I was just being too uptight, so I didn't strongly object. Now I wish I had. Almost every audience member that I spoke to made the comment that they did not like the translations

we used for the comedy scenes, that the vulgarity pulled them out of the action and was not funny. Anyway, we blocked two-thirds of the scene, until I come in as Uglier Old Broad. In the first part, I am a Nymphet, a Marilyn Monroe/Betty Boop type. Heather is Ugly Old Broad and Shane is Epigenes, the lucky fella we are fighting over. The comedy scenes were tedious and time consuming to block. Heather and I have a physical fight. The timing was hard to get, especially on book. It was at this rehearsal that I began to feel sick - fever and sore throat. We also met the ASM, Rachel Levine.

Thursday, November 06 - Yes, I got very ill with a bad flu and fever that caused me to feel terrible for about eight days. I had to miss Tues., Wed., and Thurs. rehearsals. This was the first day I felt well enough to try to do anything. We had had trouble finding someone to translate our transitions into Greek. A close friend of mine, Peter Vouras, speaks Greek but lives in Los Angeles. Before I got sick, he translated everything for me on tape and I paid him the thirty dollars to overnight it to me. I had given a copy of the tape to Heather. I spent this Thursday at home listening to the tape and writing out the transitions phonetically. However, when I got back to school on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, Tobias, our stage manager, had gotten a friend of his to translate the Greek on tape and, of course, the phrasing was very different from what was on my recording. Instead of using the tape I gave them, Heather and Shane had begun memorizing this new tape. I was very irritated by this because I had asked a friend to do me a big favor, I paid a lot to get it here quickly and had started learning it, and they were not using it. Also, I felt very behind and not part of the rehearsal process because I had missed three days from the flu. It was a rough first night back. We finished blocking the *Lysistrata(3)* scene. It is so difficult to block physical comedy while on book and I was still feeling pretty lousy.

On Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, Dollie met us for the first time to choreograph the opening ritual. Wow. I think I can speak for all three of us and say that the movement sequences were a great challenge for all of us. When Dollie moved, it looked beautiful. When I did it, it looked like an epileptic seizure. It took a lot of repeating for me to get them right. I felt terribly uncoordinated. I know why I am not a dancer. Then there was the physical challenge of having to repeat the ritual over and over again. It took a lot of energy. We were all out of breath after performing it just once. She would then ask us to repeat it many times in a row. By the time we finally took a break, my face was as red as a tomato! Ultimately, it was very beneficial to have such a physical opening ritual because we had a built-in warm up. It was certain that we would be physically ready to go for the entire performance.

Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, we worked on *Medea* and *Antigone*. We got half way through the blocking for both of them. For *Medea*, we talked about how I need to find and keep the lower register of my voice. Ismene's job is to carry the weight of the circumstance. *Antigone* is light and free because she has already buried her brother. Ismene doesn't know this. Her payoff is her monologue regarding what will happen to them if they disobey Creon. I did not trust my instincts and choices during this rehearsal. I need to let go. Getting rid of the script would surely help to do that.

Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, we worked on the transition from *Medea* into *Hecuba*. Then we worked *Medea*. Direction for *Medea*: "No expression during Jason's first monologue or reactions to what he is saying. It is a one upmanship. The walk is powerful & forceful, not languid. The way we are moving is convention. There is power in isolation in this case."

Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, we worked transitions for *Medea* & *Hecuba*. It was physically and emotionally draining to work these until I really had them. This is not at all a natural ability

and I was very self-conscious about them at first. By this time, we were running either the first or second act. With a few exceptions, my rehearsal journal now consisted mostly of notes from the director:

- Medea - powerful and slow walk.

- Cannot touch face, makeup is alabaster white. Light & shadow, like a mask; one look for each act.

Friday, November 21, 20003

- Next Wed. or Fri. will try makeup

- Lys 3 - invested in ending war - "Honey, count me in!"

- Lysistrata (2) - "Tony & Maria" - Downstage, even with Shane

- There is a light change between Lys 3 & 2

- First ritual - "comodia" all the way off stage

- Sexual Congress - "I don't want ransom - just you!" - grab penis, Shane react

- Line change - " . . . uglier and older woman comes along and that's me!"

- End Sexual Congress - rhythm and Clap, clap, clap - bookend intermission

- Transition from Medea to Hecuba much better tonight.

Saturday, November 22 did not start off very well. Dollie was choreographing the transition for Heather and Shane between Hecuba and Antigone. I was ten minutes late for rehearsal. When I walked in, Phil demanded that I apologize to everyone individually and then we went outside on the dock so he could scream at me. The door was not completely closed, so everyone in rehearsal could hear us. One point that stands out was that my poor work ethic would not ruin this show and that if it happened again, he would recast me and I would not

graduate. I acknowledge that my tardiness has been a problem and I understand his wanting to address it. However, it is the *manner* in which it was done that upset me. I know that the lateness is irritating and can give the impression that I don't care about what I am doing. (That is so *not* what it is about; it is not selective, it occurs across the board, however that discussion could be it's own paper.) I just wish it could have been addressed in a less destructive, more respectful way; for instance, in his office in private without screaming. The way it happened was abusive, demeaning, and hurtful. It felt like a character assassination. No matter what I had done, the reaction was inappropriate. When is it appropriate to speak to someone that way?

I also want to mention that despite my reputation for running late, it occurred only one time before this, the day I returned from being sick, and it was literally two minutes. I do not have a poor work ethic. To me, this implies laziness. I have plenty of flaws, but laziness is not one. (Perfectionism or obsessive/compulsive disorder, perhaps, as I have edited two paragraphs for about two hours now! - but not laziness.) I pushed myself as hard as I could during this rehearsal process, and since I have been enrolled here at UNO. We talked about it again later on a break and it deescalated. But it did have a negative impact; it shuts me down creatively because the environment does not feel safe. I am less likely to take risks. And that is why I am writing about it.

When Dollie was finished with Heather and Shane, we worked Act II. I got through Medea without calling line and only called line once in Antigone. Yeah! This was the most present I had been emotionally for these two scenes. I let go and was not thinking as much. I couldn't think very much - I had been exhausted, stressed out, and very emotional for days. I thought this was because I was not sleeping much and was premenstrual. As it turns out, I was pregnant, a pregnancy I had lost by opening night. This explained why I felt so nauseous, dizzy,



extra uncoordinated, and had more than my usual difficulty concentrating. Raging hormones were kicking my butt.

Phil's notes afterward:

-For Medea - rhythm with walking and words not right; no high register; when I want to punch something, I get high. Don't lean forward - too modern. Gentle from sitting - "You have got another woman. . ." to "knees you touched in supplication" - shame on you, you hurt me; a softness about it. Needs more beats, plowing through.

-Antigone - Ismene is tired from this argument; watch high register.

-"Don't you want to go on living?" - LOW, do not go up in intonation at the end

-transitions sloppy, but we just got some of them during this rehearsal.

-reblock Oedipus, work Medea, rituals, and Antigone, then off until Mon.

In this rehearsal, I abandoned thinking about the technical aspects before I was really ready to, meaning lines, blocking and voice, to allow myself to be more connected emotionally. I still needed to find more beats, but it felt good to let go for these scenes instead of intellectualizing them.

Monday, November 24, was our first run through of the entire show, transitions and all.

It was pretty rough.

-#1 ritual - lift leg up

-Lys 3 - drinking noises with wine, cut last line

-Lys 2 - get down to "Maria" point right away; can be on ramp when S. is talking

-Sexual Congress - Nymphet - "stand-off" before "I'm going inside"; Old Lady - horny, witch laugh; passengers boat - crack up, then abrupt "Enough joking. . ." manage-a tois - we will work it

-Medea - work scene after run - more venom in "foreign wife and hurtful prosperity"

-Antigone - "of course he will" - look at Antigone; weight of circumstance, exhausted, anxious; don't rise in inflection at end of sentences; monologue overwhelms me, float downstage for it

Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, Heather and Shane's backs were really sore from repeating the rituals and transitions over and over again and I am sick to my stomach, nauseous, weak, and clammy. We were pitiful. This was a performance of the geriatric Greek show.

-Lys.3 - realization - "I'd rather walk through fire . . ."; pick up cues in divorce, hair, . . .

-Lys 2 - stay in blue; Tony & Maria not working

-Sex. Congress - look out, then to Heather.

-Medea - messed up walk terribly; slap needs to be clean

-Pee cee - drop down

-Antigone - better; I have the right idea now; don't you want to go on living? - that's how Phil wants it; she is exhausted and crying.

## SELF-ANALYSIS

When we began our performances, I let go in a way that I don't think I had in rehearsal. I turned the self-sensor off. There was a sense of play. Whatever choices I had made up to this point were either there or they weren't. Now it was time to just do it.

Self-analysis and evaluation of my own performance is hardly an exact science. How does an actor gauge if what she intended translated to the audience? What do we have to rely on? How we feel during or after a performance? This I can write about, but I don't know that it is a valid assessment of what I did. Feedback that we receive? Audience response during a performance? Comedy is a little easier to judge in this regard because either they laugh in the right places or they don't. I can watch a recording of a performance and evaluate it that way. I usually avoid doing that at all costs. It just results in more self-consciousness that I do not need. I am highly critical of myself and I don't think that what I see is what others see. Regardless, I did watch two different tapes of this show, one before we had an audience and one of the last performance. I will comment on any and all of these to try to come up with an assessment of each character I portrayed.

I truly had no idea if the comedy scenes were funny or not until opening night. The audience did laugh when they were supposed to laugh, thank goodness. As always, some audiences were better than others. As I stated earlier, I did get some feedback that some of the "humor" and vulgarity was jarring and not funny. I did not ever come off stage after the first act feeling like my timing was terribly off or that moments we had rehearsed didn't work. So that is a

good thing. I may have pushed in some performances if we did not have big laughs. But for the most part, I think the comedy scenes worked.

Over the top physicality and timing of the verbal humor were the important elements in the first act. In *Lysistrata(3)*, my job was to portray a campy, over-sexed, outspoken, crude and gossipy broad who liked to shop and dress up. I need to convey how painful it will be to keep the oath we were taking to go on a sex strike for peace. I think my timing was pretty on. I got laughs when I was supposed to. I do think I could have done more to add to the physical humor. Sometimes my fear of being "too over-the top" holds me back physically. The way Shane's character was dressed combined with the burlesque style, I think it would have been almost impossible for me to go too far. As the run went on, my physicality got stronger, but I think I could have gone further.

In *Lysistrata(2)*, I need to sexually torment my husband without letting on that that is what I'm doing. He wants to possess me and he is constantly frustrated in his attempts to do so because I keep running away. Most of the humor in this scene comes from the farcical, physical behavior and the verbal puns and word plays that Aristophanes was known for. Myrrhine keeps running on and off stage to get what they "need" to make love - a cot, a mattress, a pillow, a blanket, perfume. Shane and I needed to find the right timing of each of her exits and entrances combined with the build up of Kinesias's frustration.

I honestly always believed that this scene would have been funnier if Myrrhine's manipulation was obvious to the audience and Kinesias is so worked up sexually that he is unaware of what is happening to him. The fun of the scene to me is in watching her cleverness in toying with him. I did not fully grasp the director's vision of Myrrhine. I know how he wanted her portrayed but I did not understand why. I think my investment may have suffered

because of this, particularly in rehearsal. My motivation was not always clear to me. But we did find the rhythm of the piece and found funny moments. The audience seemed to enjoy it and it was fun to do. I had fun adlibbing when I drove the bed off of the stage ramp. I think we got the nuts and bolts of the scene but my investment could have been stronger.

As I stated earlier, I think most of the work for the *Sexual Congress* scene was done for me with the costumes. This scene was also fun to perform. The "stand off " between Nymphet and Ugly Old Broad before Nymphet exists was probably the most amusing to me. It got longer every night because Heather and I discovered something new in almost every performance. It became a battle of having the last "word" or physical insult.

The text was not my favorite. There were moments in the scene that I, the actor, was embarrassed. For instance, Shane's character says to me as Uglier Old Broad, "If you don't let me, I will strike mud right here" as he strains to relieve himself. And my objective was still supposed to be to get him into bed with me. That was tough. It seemed like the humor of a five-year-old and was just not funny. I would get pulled out for just a second but I don't think it read to the audience.

I determine how well the comic moments are working by how well it flows. You just know when the timing is right and when it isn't. If it feels like pulling teeth, then it is probably not working. When it is working there is a sense of play. It feels like playing catch with your partners. It takes a lot of rehearsal to find the rhythms and timing and get the beats to flow smoothly. Once we are performing, I don't think it should be difficult anymore. All the work is done and we are just up there playing together. If the actors are having a good time, then the audience probably will too. For the most part, there was a freedom and playfulness for me in the comedy scenes. Overall, I think I did what I was trying to do.

An actor in fifth-century Greece was highly skilled and rigorously trained. They were expected to be at the peak of physical fitness. Gestures would have been broad and sweeping, simplistic and exaggerated. The voice was most important. The actor trained his voice much like a modern day opera singer. He had to sing and dance. He had to be a master of oratory. And he had to do all of this while wearing a heavy mask. When playing in an outdoor theater to an audience of fifteen thousand or more, the actor could not hope to convey much with visual subtlety. The burden of the drama was carried by the words; many passages were sung. Aristotle defines acting as being, "concerned with the voice and how it should be adapted to the expression of different emotions".

In the *Antigone* scene, one of my challenges for Ismene was to consistently enter with and carry the weight of the circumstance throughout the scene. This called for a powerful "As if", a concept developed by Constantin Stanislavski. Phil Karnell describes an "As if" in our *Graduate Acting Supplement*, as a way of using my imagination to come up with a situation that I could readily accept and believe to help me strengthen my motivation. I needed to enter with the weight of the world on my shoulders, with the fear and anxiety of someone trying to save my sister and myself from a torturous death. I struggled with this in rehearsal. Phil said that he could tell how the scene was going to go from the way I said my first line, "Aren't you well?" I either had the circumstance or I didn't. My payoff is my monologue where I see the horrible way we will die if we disobey Creon. I had to break down and fall to my knees by the end of it.

Another issue was the way I expressed my begging or pleading. Toward the end of the scene, Ismene asks Antigone in desperation, "But Antigone! Don't you want to go on living?" My action was "to implore". My instinct was to rise in intonation at the end of the sentence to accomplish this. The more desperate I was, the higher my voice would get. The director did not

want this. It was not reading the way I intended it to. He thought it would be much stronger to go lower vocally. She is exhausted from this argument. I was playing the same action, but I needed to adjust it vocally. This made a considerable difference in the quality of pleading. It read much more clearly to the director.

Shane was backstage for the *Antigone* scene every night and offered some positive comments. Beginning in our last week of rehearsal, he heard the scene come alive. He said that the scene was very invested and that he felt my terror in the delivery of the monologue. Phil also gave notes that the scene was working much better and moving in the direction he wanted it to. It is wonderful to hear that a scene is coming together when it has been difficult. I think that Heather and I established our relationship in the scene and that I delivered the monologue effectively. However, I think the investment that I entered the scene with wavered from night to night. I did not create a strong enough motivation for myself, so the emotional life of the given circumstances was not consistent.

I wrote in my prospectus that I would apply Sanford Meisner's method for creating moment-to-moment reality, and the use of the nine elements of a physical action outlined in *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. This is not really the case for the tragic scenes, and *Medea* in particular. In fact, these principles had to be put aside or adapted to accommodate the style of the tragedy. In most of our work in class as well as in productions, my partner and I attempt to create a moment-to-moment reality; he does something to me, I react and do something to him. It is a "pinch-ouch" dynamic. We use eye contact, physicality, tone of voice, and body language to read each other. For a modern actor, eye contact is an indispensable part of communicating with your partner on stage. Eye contact was used sparingly in our tragedy scenes. Also, we

wore black makeup around the eyes, which diluted the power of facial expression for our partner as well as for the audience.

There was much less movement in general in the tragedy scenes. When we did move, it was controlled, focused, and deliberate. *Antigone* was the closest we came to moment-to-moment reality in terms of eye contact, character interaction, and movement because it was a modern version of the play; however, it did stay consistent with the overall style of dramatic scenes.

The *Medea* scene was probably the greatest challenge I had to face in this production. I had to combine my concept of Medea's character with the director's stylistic vision. At the start of the scene, I am downstage left staring straight ahead, motionless as Jason continually provokes me with his explanations and rationalizations for his selfish, despicable behavior. He declares that my exile is my own fault. As an actor, all of my reactions to what he was saying were redirected. I turned them inward and channeled them into a cold rage. I am literally shaking by the end of his speech. However, I am covered in a robe, so that probably didn't read unless you were in the first few rows. When I finally get to respond, I was directed to walk in a powerful, slow, heavy and deliberate figure eight pattern around the fountain and the bench. Shane and I do not have any eye contact or any direct interaction with each other until later in the scene. My physical behavior is not very confrontational. Later in the scene, I attempt to slap him and then I spit at him but even this is very controlled; otherwise, I do not challenge or threaten Jason physically.

Like the ancient Greek actors, I was left with the power of my voice and my physical presence to portray this larger-than-life, murderously vengeful woman. I had to play actions - to annihilate him, to shame him, to destroy him, to rip him to shreds - primarily with my vocal



choices. I want to pulverize him with my words. Those choices had to be strong enough to fill the thrust theater. This was extremely difficult for me. There were moments when I exploded vocally, or expressed the profound pain of being abandoned by shaming him vocally, but did not have the physicality to match it.

One example is during my first monologue. My objective is to annihilate him with the truth of his appalling and shameful behavior. However, I do not have the luxury, as I do in moment-to-moment reality, of having the test of my actions in the other person. In *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, in regards to physical actions, it states that "by looking at your partner, you should be able to tell how close you are to completing your action." I could not do this. First, I never look him in the eye during this speech. I walk around him. Second, I believe he was directed not to react to what I am saying, as I was.

Another example of my struggle with the limited movement is right at the end of the scene. My second to last line is "Go! You're lusting for your new-won bride, go to her bed!" My blocking is to get up from the bench, turn and walk upstage toward Jason as he leaves. During rehearsals, sometimes I would lean forward and attack him with this when I got to this line. I got a note from Phil to stay upright because leaning forward looked too contemporary. I felt like the choices I was making did not have the intensity that they might have if I had been able to express them physically as well.

In most other styles, expression of jealous rage would probably include violent, irrational, uncontrolled and unpredictable physicality. She would attack. She would pounce. She would be a whirlwind of destructive energy. I could push a table over, punch the wall or the ground or the air, and/or physically attack him. There would be more choice and variance in her physical

behavior. Moments of kinetic, explosive behavior could give way to a quiet but seething, blood-curdling resolve for vengeance.

I had the opportunity to portray Sarah in *J.B.*, a play in verse by Archibald MacLeish in the summer of 2002 at U.N.O. The play is a modern adaptation of the Book of Job. Sarah is the wife of J.B. Just like Job, J.B. loses his children one by one, his job, his home, his wife and his health. Sarah's sadness and devastation progress to frustration, rage and disgust. Her rage is aimed at god or the lack of god, and her husband who is devoted to him no matter what. The rage culminates in violent physical behavior. I throw a stool across the stage, I pound my fists on the table; I jump on top of the table and scream to the heavens; I physically attack my husband, shake him and throw him to the ground. I storm off the stage. I had my facial expression, my physicality and my voice to convey my fury. And I could also read my partner's response to this. I believe all of this helped my credibility in portraying the rage that possessed Sarah.

I am confused about the effectiveness of my portrayal of Medea. I wanted Medea's rage to be like a volcano erupting. I wanted Jason to fear for his life. I wanted the audience to both sympathize with her and to believe at the end of the scene that this woman was capable of murdering her own children. I had the image of black bile churning in the pit of my stomach and pouring out all over Jason when I spoke. I received some feedback that validated choices I was making. I was told that I was sometimes cold and resolved and sometimes boiling and seething, ready to burst. Most of the comments that I got were that of a murderously vengeful woman. However, when I spoke to my director, he commented that overall, thought my instincts were better for comedy. He thought that I had not met the goals of the character and that he never felt that I had control of the blocking. I do not agree with the latter at all. I know I did not get the

blocking as fast as he, or I, wanted me to. But I did get it and felt confident about it in the run throughs previous to opening and in every performance. I wonder if his assessment is based more on rehearsals when I was struggling rather than performances.

I do believe that if I had been freer to move, react, and interact with my partner, that the scene would have been more powerful. In that sense, I do not think that I was successful in meeting the demands of the style. I did not have the vocal skill to pull it off. To really do what I wanted to do vocally, I think I would have needed a few months of daily vocal coaching.

One last thought on Medea. This is the first of three confrontations between Medea and Jason. In this scene, she is listing all she has done for him and his gross abandonment and betrayal of her. Perhaps the scene would have been more effective had I added more moments of the suffering and sorrow that her rage covers rather than focusing so much on her rage. It would have given her more depth. I was so preoccupied with conveying her volcanic anger that I overlooked places where she may express real pain. There was the section where she sits next to Jason on the fountain, "You have got another woman when I have borne you sons", but there could have been more. Of course, hindsight is always crystal clear.

My creative process became much clearer to me rehearsing for this show, and on the Medea scene in particular. The scene presented me with so many challenges and I was very aware of when and how a certain aspect of it would "click" for me. My development of a role usually happens in layers. The technical aspects usually need to be pretty solid for me before the character really comes to life. First, I need to memorize the lines. Unfortunately, I can already see a decline in that ability. When I was in my twenties, memorizing lines was not an issue. I could read it or hear it a few times and I would have it. Now it is more of an effort and takes

more time. And from what I hear, it only gets worse! Also, I found it more difficult to hold onto this language than contemporary writing.

Next, we began the blocking. I am usually sitting when I memorize. For Medea, my first speech is a long monologue. I had to figure out the pace the walk needed to be to be in certain places on stage on particular lines. I needed to be at the fountain on this line, sit next to him for this line, be center stage by the end of the speech, etc. When I first started this pattern, it felt like I had to relearn the words in relation to where I was on the stage. I knew the lines standing still, but when I added the blocking, I would get stuck. The process is still very technical and intellectual at this point. I am *thinking* about lines, about blocking, about the timing of my walk. This is why her walk was not heavy and powerful early in rehearsal; I was focused on pacing and being in the right place at the right time which made it more tentative.

The next obstacle for me to tackle was my voice. I tend to use the higher register of my voice on stage. My natural inclination is to go up in intonation when I want to really punch something vocally. That was not going to work for the Greek tragedy scenes and certainly not for Medea. I wanted my voice to be as low and as centered as it could be. This was my weapon in this scene and I wanted it to come straight from my gut. I had to bring it down for emphasis rather than up. This was a conscious effort. Conscious effort puts me in my head and I am less present. The technical elements - the text, the blocking, and the voice - need to get out of my head and into my body before the character can become fully alive. If I am thinking, I am not acting; I am not in the moment. However, I have to rehearse and repeat these technical aspects for them to become an unconscious part of the performance, and this takes time. How much time depends on the nature of the character and the scene or play. For the Medea scene, it took longer than it would for a contemporary character. Once the intellectual elements become less of

a concern, I can play. I can then open up and experiment with actions. Once I am out of my head, I can tell the truth.

This process caused a lot of anxiety. I want to get to the “end result”, or to the full realization of the character faster than I did. I also felt like the director wanted me to be where he wanted me to be faster. It is very frustrating to not be in the moment, to be thinking my way through. My inability to trust the process produced a sense of the unknown leading to tremendous self-doubt and/or comparing myself the way other actors work. I would start to wonder what was wrong with me. Will I get to where I need to be? Maybe I'm not capable. Maybe I shouldn't even be acting. I get angry that I am not where I need to be sooner. All this anxiety and self-doubt takes energy away from connecting with my partner, the very thing that I want, and slows the creative process even more. On the other hand, if I accept that this is how I work and trust that the results will come through commitment and rehearsal, it will flow much more smoothly and quickly. I know that there is always that period in a rehearsal process when it seems like things are not moving forward. It is frustrating and not fun. I leave really drained. Then, suddenly, all the pieces fall into place and I start playing and exploring. My partner and I discover more and more moments. And I wonder why I put myself through all of that in the first place. An acting teacher once said to me, "Don't question whether or not you can act. That is the wrong question. Ask yourself, 'What do I need to do to get what I want in this scene? How can I make this work?'" I need to remember that more often.

A general observation about my creative process is that too often I let outside influences, things that I cannot control, effect me much more than I would like. More specifically, what I believe others think about what I am doing can effect my work. I will tend to fulfill what I believe other people's expectations are, for better or worse. If I believe someone I am working

with expects me to "fail" or doubts my ability, then I will. If I believe that they trust my ability, then I will trust myself and do what I know I can do. I want to reiterate that it is based on *my perception* of other's expectations, and not necessarily reality. I don't like it, but there it is. It is not consistently a problem, but often enough. There are times when it seems to be more of an issue than others. For example, my acting professor for the last three years was my director for my thesis production. I was excited about this and I knew I would learn much from it. However, I found that too often in rehearsal, I was trying to be "right"; my concern was trying to figure out or do what I thought he wanted me to do rather than just making my own choice. I would get caught in looking for approval rather than playing or exploring. Trying to be right certainly inhibits being free to trust my own instincts on stage.

In performance, this manifests itself in allowing audience response, or lack there of, to effect my performance. If it is a comedy and you can hear a pin drop out there, one of two things will happen. I either start to push, which usually means I stop listening and overplay moments, or I get self-conscious and judgmental and therefore less present. The opposite is also true. If there are people in the audience that I trust, people that I know think I am funny, or even if it is just a good audience, then I am more open, relaxed, focused and present. I will trust what is happening on stage and roll with it. I understand that the audience is half of what makes theater what it is; so to a certain extent, it is inevitable that an audience will affect a performance. However, I would like to get to where their energy cannot dramatically sway what I am doing on stage. My goal is to get to where it will not distract me from the task at hand.

I know what the answer is. It has been one of my greatest challenges in graduate school as well as in life. It is learning to trust myself. Trust my gut, make choices, commit to them fully, and fail gloriously. Easy to say, difficult to do. When I am able trust myself, there is a

glorious freedom, lightness, and ease in my work. I take two steps forward and one step back in that direction every day. I look forward to a time when I am able to live and work consistently from that centered, trusting place.

Lysistrata (3)

**ACT I**

*(Athens, a public square. In the background the Propylaea, main gate to the Acropolis. Lysistrata, a young matron, is alone, walking up and down impatiently.)*

**LYSISTRATA**

Announce an orgy in honor of Dionysus, Pan-pipes and drinks, and traffic stops. The streets would be clogged with crazy women banging on tambourines ready for a wild party. But now, not a woman in creation shows her face.<sup>A</sup>  
*(Kalonike enters.)*

Correction, one, my neighbor Kalonike. Good morning Kally.

**KALONIKE**

<sup>1</sup>Morning Lys. <sup>2</sup>How come you're so hot and bothered? <sup>3</sup>Quit knitting your brows - <sup>4</sup>you'll get wrinkles.

**LYSISTRATA**

Oh, Kally darling, this just burns me up. What a disgrace! That women won't turn out to save their reputations! Menfolk say we're just a pack of conniving schemers.

**KALONIKE**

<sup>5</sup> <sup>B</sup> Ain't it the truth!

**LYSISTRATA**

And now, when I invite all the girls here for an important conference, the dumb clucks stay home dozing

**Scene Objective:**

To support Lysistrata in her plan for peace no matter what.

**Actions:**

1. to console
2. to engage
3. to order
4. to warn
5. to confirm

**Blocking:**

- A. Enter from USL, X DS to greet Lysistrata, take hands, kiss, kiss
- B. Cross to bench, sit



KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Don't worry your head, honey, <sup>2</sup>they'll show. <sup>3</sup>You know how hard it is for housewives to get out in the morning. <sup>4</sup>Aren't we always bending over backwards to serve our husbands needs? <sup>5</sup>Giving some lazy slave a kick in the ass, <sup>6</sup>giving the baby a bath, <sup>7</sup>feeding it?

LYSISTRATA

I know, I know, but some things count more.

KALONIKE

<sup>8</sup>So why did you call this meeting? <sup>9</sup>What's up?

LYSISTRATA

Something huge.

KALONIKE

<sup>10</sup>Hmmmm, the plot thickens.

LYSISTRATA

It's thick, all right.

KALONIKE

<sup>11</sup>Thick? <sup>12</sup>Stiff? <sup>13</sup>Sticking straight out?

LYSISTRATA

Nothing of the kind. If it were, all the girls would have been here in a jiffy. No, this thing is worrisome. It's cost me many a night of tossing and turning.

KALONIKE (to herself)

<sup>14</sup>Obstinate thing, to need whole nights of diddling!

**Actions:**

1. to reassure
2. to convince
3. to remind
4. to confide
5. to involve
6. to include
7. to commiserate
8. to inquire
9. to press
10. to entice
11. to flirt
12. to trifle
13. to tantalize
14. to tease

LYSISTRATA

Listen to me, Kalonike. The fate of the Greek world rests on us women.

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Oh no! <sup>2</sup>Then the Greek world is a goner!

LYSISTRATA

It's up to us women to govern, pass laws, make treaties. Either we take matters into our own hands, or Sparta will be destroyed

KALONIKE

<sup>3</sup>Now you're talking! <sup>4</sup>Trash the bastards!

LYSISTRATA

And the Boetians, every one ----

KALONIKE

<sup>5</sup>Only, let's save those yummy Boetian eels. <sup>6</sup>They're great on crackers.

LYSISTRATA

And, unthinkable though it is, Athens itself will perish. But if the women of our cities unite--- Boetians, Spartans, and ourselves--- we can still save Greece from catastrophe.

KALONIKE

<sup>7</sup>Us? <sup>8</sup>Be practical. <sup>9</sup>There's nothing cosmic about cosmetics and <sup>10</sup>glamour is our only talent. <sup>11</sup>All we can do is sit primped and painted, <sup>12</sup>made up and dressed up in exquisite negligees and those <sup>13</sup>chic, expensive little slippers that come from the East.

Actions:

**Actions:**

1. to fluster
2. to alarm
3. to empower
4. to inflame
5. to halt
6. to delight
7. to challenge
8. to discredit
9. to educate
10. to amuse
11. to convey
12. to inspire
13. to arouse

LYSISTRATA

Yes, by the gods, and that's exactly what we'll save Greece with--silks, slippers, rouge, peek-a-boo bras, perfumes, and see-through shimmies.

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>But how---?

LYSISTRATA

No man in Greece will lift a warlike lance---

KALONIKE

<sup>2</sup>I'll help! <sup>3</sup>I'll get me a new low cut gown---

LYSISTRATA

Nor buckle his shield---

KALONIKE

<sup>4</sup>And a lacy negligee---

LYSISTRATA

Nor draw his sword---

KALONIKE

<sup>5</sup>Persian sandals maybe, <sup>6</sup>paint my toenails gold.

LYSISTRATA

So you see, the women really should be here.

KALONIKE

<sup>7</sup>They should, <sup>8</sup>if they only knew what's good for 'em.

**Actions:**

1. to inquire
2. to bolster
3. to enchant
4. to entice
5. to inspire
6. to excite
7. to confirm
8. to validate

LYSISTRATA

Isn't this just like Athenians? Always late. Where are the women from the Coast? And those from Paralus?

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Something tells me they've been mounted and saddled since the crack of dawn.

LYSISTRATA

And where's that true-blue friend that I expected to be the first one here?

KALONIKE

<sup>2</sup>Oh, I think she's flying the red flag this time of the month. <sup>3</sup> I can imagine why she'd stay at home. <sup>A</sup> <sup>4</sup>Hey, look, <sup>5</sup>here comes a flock of people now.

LYSISTRATA

At last.

KALONIKE

<sup>6</sup>P-U! <sup>7</sup>Where are those trollops from?

LYSISTRATA

From the outskirts.

KALONIKE

<sup>8</sup>Of course. <sup>9</sup>I should have guessed. <sup>10</sup>I smelled their cheap perfume a mile away.

LYSISTRATA

Let's wait a minute more. The other girls from Sparta and Boeotia should arrive.

**Actions:**

1. to inform
2. to enlighten
3. to advise
4. to alert
5. to notify
6. to insult
7. to discount
8. to confirm
9. to agree
10. to snub

**Blocking:**

- A. Up, X to SR vam

KALONIKE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>Ah, <sup>2</sup>so they should. <sup>3</sup>Why, here's Lampito now.

LYSISTRATA

Lampito, darling, I'm so glad you came. Why, you're the picture of health! What a tan! What muscles! I suspect you could strangle a bull bare-handed.

LAMPITO

I calklate so. Hit's fitness whut done it, fitness and dancin'. You know the step? (Demonstrating) Foot it out back'ards an' toe yore twichet

KALONIKE

<sup>B</sup> <sup>4</sup>Wow, <sup>5</sup>what a bust. <sup>6</sup>Is all that for real?

LAMPITO

Shukins, whut fer you tweedlin' me up so? I feel like a heifer come fair time. The womenfolk's all assembled. Who-all's notion was this hyer confabulation?

LYSISTRATA

Mine.

LAMPITO

Git on wit the give-out. I'm hankerin' to hear.

KALONIKE

<sup>7</sup>Yes, Lys, what's so urgent?

LYSISTRATA

I'll tell you. But first, one question. All of you have husbands away at the war. Don't you miss them?

**Actions:**

1. to alert
2. to confirm
3. to wink
4. to mock
5. to patronize
6. to humor
7. to press

**Blocking:**

- A. X USC to welcome Lampito
- B. X behind Lampito, grab "breasts" and X back to SR of Lampito

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Damn right we do. <sup>2</sup>My old man has been at the front for the last five months--<sup>3</sup>at the front of General Eukrates' long retreat.

LAMPITO

My man's no sooner rotated out of the line than he's plugged back in. Hain't no discharge in this war!

KALONIKE

<sup>4</sup>And lover-boys? <sup>5</sup>Scarcer than hen's balls. <sup>6</sup>Besides, ever since the Miletians broke with Athens and shut down the sex toy trade, <sup>7</sup>you can't find a decent dildo in the shops for love nor money.

LYSISTRATA

What if I have a plan to end the war? Will you support me?

KALONIKE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>8</sup>Honey, count me in! <sup>9</sup>If it would end this crummy war, <sup>10</sup>I'd sell the shirt off my back. <sup>11</sup> Might have to buy a few drinks out of the proceeds though.

LAMPITO

Me too! I'd climb Taygetos Mountain plumb to the top to git the leastes' peek at Peace!

LYSISTRATA

Now, here's the plan. Ladies, our husbands will have to end the war if we will just---

KALONIKE

<sup>B</sup> <sup>12</sup>If we will just *what?*

**Actions:**

1. to rouse
2. to impress
3. to impart
4. to cue
5. to inform
6. to educate
7. to punctuate
8. to electrify
9. to inquire
10. to vow
11. to amuse
12. to demand

**Blocking:**

- A. X SR to Lysistrata
- B. follow Lysistrata around fountain, X DSL side of her

LYSISTRATA

You'll do whatever I say?

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Darned right we will! <sup>2</sup>We'd even die for peace.

LYSISTRATA

All right then. What we must do is stop letting our husbands lay us. <sup>A</sup> (Stunned silence. Murmured protests. Some of the women turn away.)

Wait - what's the matter? Aren't you with me still? Why this head shaking, sad looks, tears? Won't you do it?<sup>B</sup>

KALONIKE

<sup>3</sup>I--I don't know. <sup>4</sup>Maybe the war just ought to keep on going. <sup>5</sup>That's too high a price to pay. <sup>6</sup>Even for peace.

LYSISTRATA

But Kalonike, weren't you ready to sell the shirt off your back?

KALONIKE

<sup>7</sup>Sure, I would. <sup>8</sup>For peace, <sup>9</sup>I'd do anything. <sup>10</sup> But--give up sex? <sup>11</sup>There's just no substitute. <sup>12</sup>I'd sooner walk through fire than give up fucking.<sup>C</sup>

LYSISTRATA

Weak as water, weak as water, that's what women are! The tragic playwrights painted us quite right. Our lives are nothing but pathetic tales of love and babies. And you, Lampito, my dearest Spartan, would you fail me too? Stand fast with me--the two of us can triumph!

**Actions:**

1. to rally
2. to glorify
3. to stall
4. to redirect
5. to denounce
6. to declaim
7. to assure
8. to maintain
9. to swear
10. to plead
11. to protest
12. to proclaim

**Blocking:**

- A. X to DSL corner vam
- B. shake head left to right 5 times
- C. Sink to bench

LAMPITO

Hit's right unsettlin' fer gals to sleep all lonely like, withouten no humpin'. But I'm on your side. We shore need Peace, too.

LYSISTRATA

Oh, Lampito, God bless you, you're the one true woman of the lot!

KALONIKE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>Now, look here, Lys, <sup>2</sup>supposing we did just give up-- <sup>3</sup>just shut it off-- <sup>4</sup>quit putting out? <sup>5</sup>How would that end the war?

LYSISTRATA

It's simple. Here's exactly what we do: we go home, get made up, and slather on sweet smellin' oil, put on see-through gowns, and, pussies plucked, we sit without out panties. Our men get horny as hat-racks. We refuse. Mark what I say, they'll make peace in a jiffy.

LAMPITO

(Nodding.) Menelaos he tuck one squint at Helen's bubbies all nekkid, and plumb throwed up. (Pause for thought) Threwed up his sword.

KALONIKE

<sup>B</sup> <sup>6</sup>Yeah, <sup>7</sup>but what if our men divorce us?

LYSISTRATA

How could they be such fools, to throw away something that they've already been denied? As Aristophenes puts it in his play, "It makes no sense to skin the same dog twice."

**Actions:**

1. to interrupt
2. to negotiate
3. to press
4. to punctuate
5. to question
6. to object
7. to challenge

**Blocking:**

- A. Get up from bench, X SR to Lysistrata
- B. X back & forth between Lysistrata on bench and Lampito



KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>What if they haul us off to bed by the hair?

LYSISTRATA

We'll hang on to the door-handle.

KALONIKE

<sup>2</sup>And what if they start beating up on us?

LYSISTRATA

We'll give in, but just lie inert as stones. They'll quickly see the error of their ways. No fun for men if women don't take part.

KALONIKE

<sup>3</sup>Well, Lys, if you insist--<sup>4</sup>Okay, I'll do it.

Skip to . . . . .

KALONIKE

<sup>5</sup>Get a bucket and <sup>6</sup>fill it full of wine. <sup>7</sup>We can all swear on it.

LAMPITO

<sup>A</sup>Let me congratulate you--that were the beatenes' Oath I ever heard on!

LYSISTRATA

<sup>B</sup>A bucket! Some wine!

KALONIKE

<sup>8</sup>Now, <sup>9</sup>there's a decent drink. <sup>10</sup>I'm getting crocked just from a whiff of it.

**Actions:**

1. to debate
2. to refute
3. to weigh
4. to capitulate
5. to discover
6. to excite
7. to exhilarate
8. to conclude
9. to verify
10. to enliven

**Blocking:**

- A. Lampito brings me DS in front of bench
- B. X USR to Lysistrata

LYSISTRATA

Sisters, let's kill the sacrifice.

(she takes the bucket, holds it aloft and prays) <sup>A</sup> Persuasion, heavenly goddess, hear our plea, and you, O wine who numb if you fail to cheer, receive our solemn sacrifice and grant glorious success to the women of Greece. <sup>B</sup>

LAMPITO

Hit shore do smell mighty purty!

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>Give it to me! <sup>2</sup>Let me be the first to swear!

LYSISTRATA

Hold on. Let every woman of us here touch right hand to the bucket. <sup>C</sup> Repeat after me.

LYSISTRATA

<sup>3</sup>From this moment forth, I shall let no man, whether husband or lover ---

KALONIKE

From this moment forth, I shall let no man, whether husband or lover ---

LYSISTRATA

<sup>4</sup>Come at me with prong protruding in front of him---

KALONIKE

Come at me with prong protruding in front of him--- <sup>5</sup> ye gods, Lys, <sup>6</sup>this is a terrible thing to swear. <sup>7</sup>I'm getting the shakes.

**Actions:**

1. to insist
2. to urge
3. to recite
4. to feign
5. to panic
6. to denounce
7. to alarm

**Blocking:**

- A. Kneel down SR of Lysistrata to pray
- B. Stand, try to get bucket
- C. Right hand on bucket for oath

LYSISTRATA

I'll lock my loins and stay home looking pretty---

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>I'll lock my loins and stay home looking pretty---

LYSISTRATA

Made up like Venus in my sexiest gown---

KALONIKE

<sup>2</sup>Made up like Venus in my sexiest gown---

LYSISTRATA

To drive my man out of his mind for me.

KALONIKE

<sup>3</sup>To drive my man out of his mind for me. (Think it's done)

LYSISTRATA

I shall not yield to him, unless I am forced---

KALONIKE

<sup>4</sup>I shall not yield to him, unless I am forced---

LYSISTRATA

And if I am, I'll lie cold as a fish and passive a cheese beneath a grater.

KALONIKE

<sup>5</sup>And if I am, I'll lie cold as a fish and passive a cheese beneath a grater.

**Actions:**

1. to relinquish
2. to excite
3. to conclude
4. to tolerate
5. to bluff

LYSISTRATA

I shall not point my slippers at the ceiling--- (me)

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup>I shall not point my slippers at the ceiling---

LYSISTRATA

I shall not crouch above his lioness. (Lampito)

LAMPITO

I shall not crouch above his lioness.

LYSISTRATA

To seal this oath, I set lips to this bowl.

KALONIKE

<sup>2</sup>To seal this oath, I set lips to this bowl.

LYSISTRATA

If I should break this vow, may all my drinks henceforth be only water.

KALONIKE

<sup>3</sup>If I should break this vow, may all my drinks henceforth be only water.

LYSISTRATA

Do all of you swear?

KALONIKE &LAMPITO

<sup>4</sup>We swear!

**Actions:**

1. to humor
2. to hurry
3. to rush
4. to shut up

LAMPITO

What-all's that bodacious ruckus?

LYSISTRATA

What did I tell you? The old ladies have done it! The Parthenon is ours! And now be off with you, Lampito, go work on your Spartan men. The rest of us will climb to the Acropolis. To begin, let's bar the gates.

KALONIKE

<sup>1</sup> A But won't the men soon organize a charge and try to throw us out?

LYSISTRATA

Who cares? Their empty threats will prove of no account. They'll fight with fire, but we shall never yield. We'll dictate terms, and triumph in the field!

**Action:**

1. to question

**Blocking:**

- A. X DS to Lysistrata

## LYSISTRATA (2)

KINESIAS

<sup>A</sup>(musing aloud) What a drag it's been sine Myrrhine ran out on me. It hurts to go home to an empty house. I eat my dinner alone, go to bed alone. All the time, I'm alone except for this extra limb.

MYRRHINE

(to herself) <sup>1</sup>Oh, Goddess Venus, <sup>2</sup>how I love him, <sup>3</sup>love him!  
<sup>4</sup>But I'm not supposed to love him. (look at him) <sup>5</sup>Oh no, I'd best not see him!<sup>B</sup>

KINESIAS

Myrrhine, honey! <sup>C</sup> What are you doing to me? Get your sweet ass here on the double!

MYRRHINE

<sup>6</sup>No. <sup>7</sup>I won't.

KINESIAS

Don't you know me, cookie? This is your husband asking you!  
I need you bad!

MYRRHINE

<sup>8</sup>You don't really need me.

KINESIAS

Don't I? Just look at me honey---- I'm a nut case!

MYRRHINE

(blow kisses) <sup>9</sup>Bye bye. <sup>10</sup>I'm going.<sup>D</sup>

**Objective:** To drive Kinesias mad with desire without giving into him.

### **Actions:**

1. to pray
2. to proclaim
3. to burst
4. to correct
5. to convince
6. to deny
7. to resolve
8. to contest
9. to reluctantly deny
10. to flee

### **Blocking:**

- A. Sitting on SR side of fountain
- B. Run USC to stairs
- C. Stop; full turn to face him
- D. Turn to leave, but he stops me

KINESIAS

Hold on---stop! Listen to your baby! Come on, kid, holler.  
(gives baby a pinch) Mama! Mama! Mama!  
There you are. Myrrhine, dearest, has your heart gone hard?  
The poor little kid hasn't had a change or a square meal in  
practically a week.

MYRRHINE

<sup>1</sup>I'm hard-hearted? <sup>2</sup>Me? <sup>3</sup>You big oaf, <sup>4</sup>you're the one who's  
neglected the child.

KINESIAS

Well then, come and take care of him.

MYRRHINE

(to herself) <sup>5</sup>I'm weak. <sup>6</sup>Gods help me, <sup>7</sup>mother-love forces me  
to give in every time.<sup>A</sup>

KINESIAS

Oh, wow, she's younger---lovelier---sexier than ever! She's  
the girl I married. Her little frown--- oh, gods, it just fires me  
up all the more!<sup>B</sup>

MYRRHINE

<sup>8</sup>Poor little sweetums, <sup>9</sup>is bad old Daddy mean to oo?  
<sup>10</sup>Ummmmmm! <sup>11</sup>Mommy's gonna kiss you, lambie-pie!

KINESIAS

Honey, will you kindly tell me why you're treating me this  
way? Why lock yourself in the Acropolis, holed up with all  
those dames? You're only hurting both of us. (he tries to  
fondle her.)

**Actions:**

1. to challenge
2. to taunt
3. to chide
4. to reprimand
5. to concede
6. to pray
7. to confess
8. to rescue
9. to coddle
10. to nuzzle
11. to cuddle

**Blocking:**

- A. X DSR around fountain, even with Kinesias for "Tony & Maria"
- B. slowly X to Kinesias, take baby, turn and walk SR, back to him

MYRRHINE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>Get your big meathooks off of me!

KINESIAS

And this house is going to Hell in a handbasket. It's all your fault.

MYRRHINE

<sup>2</sup>I should care.

KINESIAS

Doesn't it even matter that the chickens are popping all over your best bedspread?

MYRRHINE

<sup>3</sup>Let 'em poop!

KINESIAS

And what about you and me? We haven't had any Venus-worship together in a dog's age. Please, honey, come home!

MYRRHINE

<sup>4</sup>Not till you men stop fighting and make peace.

KINESIAS

Oh. Is that all you want? We'll do it!

MYRRHINE

<sup>5</sup>Then do it. <sup>6</sup>But I'm not coming home until you do. <sup>7</sup>I've sworn a sacred oath.<sup>B</sup> (give baby, stay w/ him)

KINESIAS

Well, can't you give me a little loving? It's been forever.

**Actions:**

1. to bluff
2. to cajole
3. to taunt
4. to cover
5. to insist
6. to apologize

**Blocking:**

A. X DSL in front of bench

B. turn to face Kinesias, give him baby and walk him back to CS



MYRRHINE

<sup>1</sup>Sorry. <sup>2</sup>No way. <sup>3</sup>Kin, dearest, <sup>4</sup>it's not that I don't love you, you understand? (kiss)

KINESIAS

Then how about doing it? Now!

MYRRHINE

<sup>5</sup>What, you big jerk? (whisper) <sup>6</sup>In front of the child?

KINESIAS

Oh, yeah. Hey I didn't mean--- (toss baby) Ok, sweetpuss, now Baby's bound for home. Let's you and me hop to it!

MYRRHINE

<sup>A 7</sup>Are you nuts? <sup>8</sup>There isn't any place to do it here.

KINESIAS

How about Pan's grotto? There's a back room---

MYRRHINE

<sup>9</sup>And if we did it there, <sup>10</sup>how could I reenter the shrine? <sup>11</sup>I'd need to get re-purified.

KINESIAS

Just douche off in that spring. The Klepsyora.

MYRRHINE

<sup>B 12</sup>Surely you wouldn't make me break my oath?

**Actions:**

1. to deny
2. to flirt
3. to caress
4. to apologize
5. to shame
6. to chide
7. to tickle
8. to bluff
9. to consider
10. to inquire
11. to hold off
12. to plead

**Blocking:**

- A. back away from Kinesias, SR, around fountain
- B. turn, X to CS, Kin. stops me

KINESIAS

Break the damned oath! You can blame me. Don't fret about it.<sup>A</sup> (non-verbal yes, laugh, kiss)<sup>A</sup>

MYRRHINE

<sup>1</sup>Wait here. <sup>2</sup>I'll get a cot.<sup>B</sup>

KINESIAS

Don't even bother, honey. Let's just flop right here in the dirt.

MYRRHINE

<sup>3</sup>In the dirt? <sup>C</sup> <sup>4</sup>Darling, you know I love you like my life, but--ugh!---(kiss) <sup>5</sup>not in the dirt!<sup>D</sup>

KINESIAS

Hot damn! At least she loves me!

MYRRHINE

<sup>6</sup>All right now, dearest, you stretch out on this. (Kinesias lies down on the cot, on his back.) <sup>7</sup>I'll just slide my slip off---<sup>8</sup>just you wait. <sup>9</sup>Oh, darn. <sup>10</sup>Where's the mattress?

KINESIAS

Mattress? Who needs a mattress!

MYRRHINE

<sup>11</sup>Well, we can't do it on a bare cot.

KINESIAS

The hell we can't! Give us a little kiss.

MYRRHINE

<sup>12</sup>Don't go away. <sup>13</sup>I'll only be a second.

**Actions:**

1. to allure
2. to tempt
3. to refute
4. to seduce
5. to decline
6. to butterup
7. to tantilize
8. to bait
9. to halt
10. to question
11. to refute
12. to insist
13. to reassure

**Blocking:**

- A. jump up, wrap legs around Kinesias, kiss
- B. start to run off SR vam to get cot
- C. run back to him, kiss him
- D. run off SR vam

KINESIAS

Yum! Hurry back! Honey, I'm dying for you!

MYRRHINE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>There, that's better. <sup>2</sup>Now lie down, darling, <sup>3</sup>get all comfy. (He stretches out on the cot again, holds out his arms to her. Hit head) <sup>4</sup>Oh-oh. <sup>5</sup>No pillow.

KINESIAS

Gods blast the pillow! Who needs a pillow anyway?

MYRRHINE

<sup>B</sup> <sup>6</sup>Well, I need a pillow. <sup>7</sup> Hold on, be right back. (sing it exits again)

KINESIAS

My poor dick's starting to feel like Heracles robbed of his dinner.

MYRRHINE

(reentering, with pillow) <sup>C</sup> <sup>8</sup>Now. <sup>9</sup>Let's just slide this pillow under your head. <sup>10</sup>Anything else you need?

KINESIAS

Nothing but you, dammit! C'mere!

MYRRHINE

<sup>D1</sup> <sup>11</sup>I'm getting ready! <sup>12</sup>I'll slip my undies off! <sup>13</sup>Now, dear, <sup>14</sup>don't forget about that peace treaty.

KINESIAS

May the gods blast me blind if I do!

**Actions:**

1. to comfort
2. to direct
3. to excite
4. to stop
5. to confess
6. to insist
7. to reassure
8. to settle
9. to entice
10. to stall
11. to tease
12. to ignite
13. to hold off
14. to remind

**Blocking:**

- A. Enter SR vam with mattress, throw down on cot, slap dust out of it
- B. Exit SR vam to get pillow
- C. Enter SR vam with pillow, put under Kinesias' head
- D. pretend to take undies off

MYRRHINE

<sup>A 1</sup>Hold on --- <sup>2</sup>we don't have a blanket.

KINESIAS

Screw the blanket!

MYRRHINE

<sup>3</sup>Poor darling, <sup>4</sup>I must take good care of you. <sup>B 5</sup>Back in a flash!  
(exits.)

KINESIAS

Cot. Mattress. Pillow. Now it's blankets. The woman's driving me bonkers!

MYRRHINE

(returning with blanket)<sup>C 6</sup>Here we are. <sup>7</sup>Now let me just arrange it nice. <sup>8</sup>Get up a second, dear, will you?

KINESIAS

Get up? I've been up for days. (Kinesias groans, reluctantly getting to his feet while Myrrhine spreads the blanket on the cot. He lies down again.)

MYRRHINE

<sup>9</sup>How about a nice long rub-down with some oil?<sup>E</sup>

KINESIAS

Oil? Oil? OIL, you say?

MYRRHINE

(off stage) <sup>10</sup>Well I'm going to give you a nice rub-down, <sup>11</sup>a little teensy-weensy one.

**Actions:**

1. to alarm
2. to urge
3. to coddle
4. to nurture
5. to assure
6. to console
7. to instruct
8. to urge
9. to tantalize
10. to insist
11. to baby

**Blocking:**

- A. pretend to pull undies back on
- B. Exit SR vam for blanket
- C. Enter SR vam with blanket
- D. Make Kinesias get up, lay blanket on cot
- E. Exit SR vam to get oil

KINESIAS

Father of the Gods, make her spill the damn-blasted oil!

MYRRHINE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>Now hold out your hand and I'll give you some. <sup>2</sup>You smear it on good.

KINESIAS

Yuk! This oil Stinks!

MYRRHINE

<sup>3</sup>Oh dear. <sup>4</sup>I brought the fish oil by mistake.<sup>B</sup>

KINESIAS

I don't give a damn, it smells great!

MYRRHINE

<sup>5</sup>No, no, darling, <sup>6</sup>this won't do. <sup>7</sup>I'll just go get some lovely aloe lotion.

KINESIAS

Great Zeus and all the gods! Won't you please send to everlasting Hell whatever silly bastard invented rub-downs!

MYRRHINE

(returning with a new bottle) <sup>C</sup> <sup>8</sup>Here we go, dearest. <sup>9</sup>A nice fresh bottle of lotion all for you. (kiss)

KINESIAS

I've already got a lotion bottle, dammit, and it's ready to pop its cork. Woman! Will you kindly stop running around and plant your butt down here on this cot?

**Actions:**

1. to instruct
2. to indulge
3. to yield
4. to disclose
5. to refuse
6. to insist
7. to entice
8. to pamper
9. to spoil

**Blocking:**

- A. Enter SR vam with oil
- B. Exit SR vam for aloe lotion
- C. Enter with aloe lotion, give to Kinesias, X behind cot

MYRRHINE

<sup>1</sup>I'm coming, darling. <sup>2</sup>I'm getting ready. <sup>A</sup> <sup>3</sup>You will support the Peace movement, <sup>4</sup>won't you?

KINESIAS

Don't worry--- I need a peace, all right! Hey, where you going? Come back! (Myrrhine dashes back into the Acropolis. The gates shut behind her.) Good gods, I've just been pussy-whipped! After all that fuss, she runs out on me!

KINESIAS

Now what'll I do? I haven't a clue. My heart---and my privates---are sore. I'm down in the dumps with an ache in my lumps--- doesn't anyone know a good whore?

**Actions:**

1. to assert
2. to bluff
3. to verify
4. to apologize

**Blocking:**

- A. Back off to USSR, blow kiss goodbye.

## SEXUAL CONGRESS

### **Ugly Old Broad**

What's keeping all those men? The dinner's got to be over by now. And here I stand, ready and waiting, ready to pounce on the first to pass by. O Muses! Touch my lips with a lewd Ionian air.

### **Nymphet**

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>You think, <sup>2</sup>you rotten old thing, that <sup>3</sup>you've gotten the jump on me. <sup>4</sup>You thought to strip the vines when everyone's back was turned and <sup>5</sup>hook a man.

### **Ugly Old Broad**

(flipping bird) Take this, little sweetie, and go play with yourself! I hope your hole seals up and when you're ready to fuck, no one can find the seam! I hope when you're kissing with your hand on his jake. . . you'll discover that it's a snake!

### **Nymphet**

<sup>6</sup>Oh, what's to become of me?

<sup>7</sup>There's not a boy in sight.

<sup>8</sup>And I'm here all alone.

<sup>B</sup> <sup>9</sup>And where's my dear Nanny

<sup>10</sup>With her toy, "Big Dick,"

<sup>C</sup> <sup>11</sup>That makes her so wet and so slick?

### **Ugly Old Broad**

Poor little baby's so hot that she's begging for a dildo, or maybe a lady from Lesbos where with women there is sucking! But you'll never take my fun away or lure a man from me, no, from me you'll never steal. . . for I'm quite as young as I feel. No man will ever get to you before me.

**Nymphet:** <sup>12</sup>At least not for my funeral. <sup>D</sup> <sup>13</sup>That's one on you!

**Objective:** To Epigenes into bed. (For Nymphet & Uglier Old Broad)

### **Actions:**

1. to rouse
2. to trash
3. to taunt
4. to mock
5. to scoff at
6. to whine
7. to protest
8. to pout
9. to appeal
10. to enliven
11. to revel
12. to jab
13. to outdo

### **Blocking:**

- A. Enter from USR, X SL in front of Ugly Old Broad (UOB), look out of SL vam, X back SR.
- B. X SL to bench
- C. Straddle bench facing US
- D. Push UOB off bench

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** Oh, sure. As if I haven't heard it. It's not my age that's your problem.

**NYMPHET:** <sup>1</sup>What then? <sup>2</sup>Your wonderful makeup job, <sup>3</sup>Pink cheeks?

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** Are you talking to me?

**NYMPHET:** <sup>4</sup>That you, <sup>5</sup>skulking there?

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** Me? I'm waiting for my boyfriend, Epigenes.

**NYMPHET:** <sup>A</sup> <sup>6</sup>You have a boyfriend? <sup>7</sup>Apart from that geezer, <sup>8</sup>Geres?

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** I'll prove it, even to you. He's on his way. And look, he's coming now.

**NYMPHET:** <sup>B</sup> <sup>9</sup>But not for you.

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** Oh, yes he is, you snotty little brat!

**NYMPHET:** <sup>C</sup> <sup>10</sup>We'll see who's right <sup>11</sup>you withered old fig. <sup>12</sup>I'm going back inside.

**UGLY OLD BROAD:** I'll step inside myself. I'm sure we'll soon find out who's right and who's wrong.

**Skip to . . .**

**UGLIER:** <sup>E</sup> <sup>13</sup>Hey, little missy! <sup>14</sup>Just where do you think you're going? <sup>15</sup>That's against the law. <sup>16</sup>It says specifically he's got to fuck me first!<sup>F</sup>

### Actions:

1. to challenge
2. to belittle
3. to insult
4. to smirk
5. to laugh at
6. to mock
7. to ridicule
8. to taunt
9. to overrun
10. to impugn
11. to criticize
12. to provoke
13. to alarm
14. to disrupt
15. to overrun
16. to overpower

### Blocking:

- A. Stand SR of bench
- B. Push UOB out of way, wave to Epigenes in SL vam
- C. Pick UOB up and carry away from vam toward CS
- D. Exit USR, UOB kicks me off stage
- E. Enter USR, X to UOB
- F. Punch UOB



**EPIGENES:** Oh, no. What hole did you pop out of? She's uglier than the first. This dog has got to be the Hound of Hell!

**UGLIER:** <sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>You! <sup>2</sup>Come here! <sup>3</sup>Move it, chicken! <sup>4</sup>Step it up. <sup>5</sup>That's more than enough clucking!

**EPIGENES:** Hold it! I need to go to the crapper first. I've got to get myself together. If you don't let me, something's going to happen. I'm so scared, I'll strike mud right here!

**UGLIER:** <sup>6</sup>Just you hold it. <sup>7</sup>You can let it go indoors.

**EPIGENES:** I'll have to let go in more ways than I want to, I'm sure. Look, I'll put up twice whatever you want in the way of ransom.

**UGLIER:** <sup>8</sup>I don't want ransom, <sup>B</sup> <sup>9</sup>just you!

**UGLY:** You come with me.

**UGLIER:** <sup>10</sup>Not so! <sup>C</sup> <sup>11</sup>This way.

**UGLY:** I'll never let you go!

**UGLIER:** <sup>12</sup>And I won't either!

**EPIGENES:** You're going to tear me in two you crazy bitches!

**UGLY:** According to the law, you've got to come with me.

### Actions:

1. to stop
2. to command
3. to harass
4. to take charge of
5. to dominate
6. to order
7. to entice
8. to retort
9. to devour
10. to slam
11. to order
12. to overpower

### Blocking:

- A. Chase Epigenes around bench, back US to SL side of fountain
- B. grab penis
- C. Pull Epigenes away from UOB by his left arm

**UGLIER:** <sup>1</sup>Not if an even uglier and older woman comes along, <sup>2</sup>and that's me!

**EPIGENES:** Now, listen. If you two kill me, how'll I ever get to get to my hot vixen?

**UGLIER:** <sup>3</sup>That's your problem, <sup>A</sup> <sup>4</sup>but this is your <sup>5</sup>legal duty.

**EPIGENES:** If she'll let go of my arm.

**UGLY:** Step right this way.

**EPIGENES:** But first, she's got to let go!

**UGLIER:** <sup>6</sup>I won't, by God!<sup>B</sup>

**UGLY:** Me neither!

**EPIGENES:** You two are rougher than ferrymen!

**UGLIER:** <sup>7</sup>How so?

**EPIGENES:** You tear your passengers apart before you ever get them in the boat.

**UGLIER:** <sup>8</sup>Enough joking! <sup>9</sup>Come with me.

**UGLY:** This way!

**EPIGENES:** This is just like Cannonus' law: I'm shackled before the court, but I've got to fuck my chains! And how am I going to row two boats at once?

**Actions:**

1. to remind
2. to force
3. to dismiss
4. to demand
5. to entice
6. to refuse
7. to inquire
8. to shut up
9. to order

**Blocking:**

- A. point to crotch
- B. swing around to SR

**UGLIER:** <sup>1</sup>You can do it. <sup>2</sup>Just have some oysters

**UGLY:**  
and ginseng.<sup>A</sup>

**EPIGENES:** Woe is me! They've dragged me right to the door.

**UGLY:** There's no saving you now! There's room for three.

**EPIGENES:** God, no! Not the toothless twosome together!

**UGLIER:** <sup>3</sup>By Hecate, <sup>4</sup>your fate is sealed. <sup>5</sup>We've got you now!

**EPIGENES:** <sup>B</sup>As a fly to a wonton boy am I to gods: I must fuck one crumpled bag all night and then all day, but once she's done, another one is waiting to begin, a toad with lips as slick and slimy as an urn of embalming fluid. I'm truly unlucky. No, worse than that, I'm cursed by Zeus himself!

**Actions:**

1. to fondle
2. to seduce
3. to proclaim
4. to decree
5. to trap

**Blocking:**

- A. together, we drag him US to the stairs
- B. together, we drag Epigenes off SR

## MEDEA

JASON

<sup>A</sup> This is not the first time I have realized  
 what a train of trouble a churlish temper brings!  
 You could have stayed here, kept your home,  
 If you'd accept without fuss the decision of our rulers.  
 But because of your stupid talk, you are banished.  
 But it doesn't bother me. Go on calling me  
 the vilest names you like.  
 But after what you said about the royal family,  
 consider yourself lucky that your punishment  
 is merely exile. They are furious.  
 I've tried to calm their royal temper. I wanted to you to stay.  
 But you go on being foolish, endlessly  
 abusing your masters, and so you're banished.  
 Despite all this, I don't let down my friends.  
 I've come, thinking of your needs, my dear: I wouldn't want  
 you sent away with the children penniless  
 or lacking anything. Exile brings with it  
 many problems. Even if you hate me,  
 I could never wish you harm.

MEDEA

<sup>1</sup>You vile coward!<sup>B C 2</sup>Yes, I can call you that,  
 the worst name that I know for your unmanliness!  
<sup>3</sup>You've come to me, <sup>4</sup>you, my worst enemy, come here?  
<sup>5</sup>But that's not bravery or courage, to betray your loved ones,  
 then look them in the eye.  
<sup>D 6</sup>It's utter shamelessness,  
<sup>7</sup>The worst disease that mankind suffers.<sup>E</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>However--- you've done well to come.  
<sup>F</sup>Abusing you will do me good  
<sup>9</sup>and you will smart to hear it.

**Scene Objective:** To annihilate Jason with the truth of his appalling and shameful behavior.

### Actions:

1. to emasculate
2. to damn
3. to mock
4. to curse
5. to rebuff
6. to rebuke
7. to condemn
8. to patronize
9. to strike

### Blocking:

- A. DSL, stand & look straight ahead
- B. look at Jason
- C. turn SR, walk US to urn, circle urn counterclockwise
- D. stop SR of urn, hands on urn
- E. head down
- F. head up

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>I saved your life—as those <sup>2</sup>Greeks know,  
 Who sailed with you in the Argo,  
<sup>3</sup>when you were sent to yoke the fire-breathing bulls  
 and sow the field of death. <sup>4</sup>It was I who killed  
 the sleepless serpent, which within its tangled coils  
 Guarded the Golden Fleece. <sup>5</sup>I lit the way  
 for your escape. <sup>6</sup>I betrayed my father and my home.  
<sup>7</sup>I killed King Pelias—<sup>8</sup>an agonizing death  
 at his own daughters hands – and destroyed his whole house.  
<sup>B</sup> <sup>9</sup>All this I did for you. <sup>10</sup>And you, <sup>11</sup>foulest of men,  
 have betrayed me. <sup>C</sup> <sup>12</sup>You have got another woman,  
 when I have borne you sons. <sup>13</sup>If you had no children,  
 this lusting for her might have been forgiven.  
<sup>14</sup>Gone is all faith in oaths. <sup>15</sup>I don't understand –  
<sup>16</sup>Can you really think the gods by whom we swore  
 No longer rule? <sup>17</sup>Or that now there is a new ordinance for men,  
 when you know you have betrayed your promises to me?  
<sup>18</sup>My poor hand, which you so often clasped,  
 and knees you touched in supplication:  
<sup>19</sup>All false! <sup>20</sup>My hopes dashed by a traitor!  
<sup>D</sup> <sup>21</sup>Where can I now turn? <sup>22</sup>To my father's home, my country,  
 which I betrayed when I came here?  
<sup>23</sup>Or to Pelias' wretched daughters? <sup>24</sup>A fine welcome  
 they would give me, who killed their father.  
<sup>25</sup>The fact is, to my loved ones at home I am now an enemy:  
<sup>26</sup>Those to whom I should have done no harm  
 are --- because I supported you --- my sworn enemies.  
<sup>27</sup>As my reward, you made me seem fortunate indeed  
 in many Greek women's eyes! <sup>28</sup>But what a marvelous husband  
 I have! <sup>29</sup>So loyal and true! <sup>30</sup>I shall be cast out,  
<sup>31</sup>an exile bereft of friends, <sup>32</sup>alone and lonely  
 with your sons.

### Actions:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. to condemn    | 16. to unnerve   |
| 2. to ridicule   | 17. to challenge |
| 3. to remind     | 18. to shame     |
| 4. to prod       | 19. to alarm     |
| 5. to castigate  | 20. to stab      |
| 6. to shame      | 21. to press     |
| 7. to attack     | 22. to mock      |
| 8. to torment    | 23. to patronize |
| 9. to blame      | 24. to admonish  |
| 10. to accuse    | 25. to educate   |
| 11. to expunge   | 26. to slam      |
| 12. to shame     | 27. to demean    |
| 13. to excuse    | 28. to insult    |
| 14. to devastate | 29. to belittle  |
| 15. to appeal to | 30. to prosecute |
|                  | 31. to humiliate |
|                  | 32. to disgrace  |

### Blocking:

- A. X CS to US of bench, circle, X CS to SL of urn
- B. SL urn, hands on urn, head down, lean toward Jason's ear
- C. Sit on ledge of urn, SL of Jason
- D. Stand, X US of bench and circle, X US of urn, circle counterclockwise - 2 times to SL of urn

<sup>1</sup>That's a fine reproach you take into your new marriage,  
<sup>2</sup>that your sons and I,  
 who saved your life, are <sup>3</sup>beggars on the road!  
<sup>A</sup> <sup>4</sup>Zeus, <sup>5</sup>you granted men sure signs to tell  
 when gold is counterfeit. <sup>6</sup>But when we need to tell  
 which men are false, why do our bodies bear no stamp  
 to show our worth?

JASON

<sup>B</sup>I will ride out the tempest of your stinging tongue, my dear.  
 You build up your services to me; but I consider  
 that my only guardian on my travels, god or man,  
 was Aphrodite, she alone. You have a subtle mind,  
 but the unpalatable truth is it was Eros  
 with his inescapable darts who drive you  
 to save my life.<sup>C</sup>  
 But I'll not make too fine a point of that.  
 What help you gave me I am grateful for.  
 But in return for saving me, you gained  
 more than you gave, as I will demonstrate.  
 First: the country that you left is primitive, but now  
 you live in Greece. You now know what Justice means,  
 enjoy the benefits of Law, not the rule of force.  
 All Greece has come to know your talents: you are famous.  
 If you still lived at the end of the world,  
 No one would mention you. As far as I'm concerned,  
 I wouldn't pray for gold or skill  
 to sing better than Orpheus, if these did not  
 bring me celebrity.  
 So much about my exploits, in answer to your challenge.  
 As for your spiteful words about my marriage to the princess,  
 I'll show that what I've done is wise and prudent;  
 And I've acted out of love for you<sup>D</sup> and for my sons.<sup>E</sup>  
 Keep quiet!

**Actions:**

1. to demean
2. to goad
3. to obliterate
4. to beseech
5. to rouse
6. to implore

**Blocking:**

- A. X CS, arms up slowly over head
- B. Arms down slowly
- C. Turn head SR to Jason
- D. Turn head SL
- E. Try to speak

When I moved here from Iolcus  
 with trail of problems and misfortune,  
 as an exile, than to marry the king's daughter?  
 It's not – as you are galled to think – that I am tired  
 of your bed or smitten with desire for my new bride –  
 nor keen to be a champion at fathering many sons.  
 The children that we have are enough. I have no complaint.  
 My chief wish was that we should live well  
 and not be poor<sup>A</sup> --- friends vanish when one's poor--  
 and that I could bring up the boys in a manner  
 worthy of my family; and, if I did have other sons,  
 I could join them as brothers with my sons by you,  
 and, uniting the family together, I could prosper.  
 What need have you of more children? But it makes sense  
 for me to gain advantages for those we already have  
 by means of those to come. Is that such a bad idea?<sup>B</sup>  
 You wouldn't say to, if you weren't sexually jealous.<sup>C</sup>  
 Man should have found some other way  
 to procreate. The female sex should not exist:  
 then we'd be free of all our troubles.

#### MEDEA

<sup>D</sup> <sup>1</sup>An unjust man who is also clever with words  
 deserves the greatest penalty.

<sup>E</sup> <sup>2</sup>Confident that he can dress up his wrongdoing  
 with specious words, <sup>3</sup>he is brazen in his wickedness.

<sup>4</sup>And yet he is not so clever after all.

<sup>5</sup>So don't you try your plausible and clever arguments on me!

<sup>F</sup> <sup>6</sup>One point will floor you: if you'd been honorable,

<sup>7</sup>you should have won me over before you married,

<sup>8</sup>not kept it from your loved ones!

#### Actions:

1. to scorn
2. to belittle
3. to slam
4. to taunt
5. to disarm
6. to debate
7. to roll over
8. to stab

#### Blocking:

- A. Turn head SL to Jason
- B. Turn head away, SR
- C. Attempt to slap him, right arm
- D. Full turn SL
- E. X US of bench and circle 1½ times
- F. Stop SL, even with bench

JASON

I'm sure that if I had announced my wedding plans,  
you would have been most helpful!  
Even now you can't bring yourself to give up  
the great bitterness you feel

MEDEA

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>That is not what stopped you. <sup>2</sup>You thought,  
as you grew older, <sup>3</sup>it didn't look quite right  
to have a <sup>4</sup>foreign wife.

JASON

<sup>B</sup>Get this straight: it is not for any woman  
that I made this royal marriage. I've already said  
I did it to safeguard you, to father royal sons,  
brothers to my children, a security for my house.

MEDEA

<sup>5</sup>I want none of your hurtful 'prosperity'<sup>C</sup>

JASON

You'd better change your attitude. You'll be wiser  
to accept what's best for you is not 'hurtful'.  
You're fortunate.

MEDEA

<sup>6</sup>That's right, insult me! <sup>7</sup>You have a way out.  
<sup>D</sup> <sup>8</sup>I am alone, condemned to exile.

JASON

It was your own choice. Blame no one else.

**Actions:**

1. to rebut
2. to indict
3. to prod
4. to incriminate
5. to dare
6. to scoff at
7. to remind
8. to shame

**Blocking:**

- A. Walk DS around bench to SR of bench, facing US
- B. Jason grabs me & turns me to face him SL, we are toe to toe
- C. Spit on Jason
- D. Turn CS, face audience



MEDEA

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>What have I done? <sup>2</sup>Did I make you my wife  
and then betray you?

JASON

You called down unholy curses on the royal family.

MEDEA

<sup>B</sup> <sup>3</sup>I am that curse, to your house too.

JASON

I won't debate this further.<sup>C</sup> If you need  
money for the children or yourself,  
to support you in exile, let me know.  
I am happy to give, generously ---  
You will be foolish, my dear, to refuse.  
It will pay you to give up your anger.

MEDEA

<sup>4</sup>I would not accept a thing.

<sup>5</sup>There can be no profit in a traitor's gift.

JASON

Then I call the Gods to witness that I am willing  
to do any service for you and for the boys.  
But you do not want kindness:  
In your stubborn pride you reject your dear ones  
and make your suffering worse.

MEDEA

<sup>D</sup> <sup>6</sup>Go! <sup>E</sup> <sup>7</sup>You're lusting for your new-won bride,

<sup>8</sup>Go to her bed! <sup>F</sup> <sup>9</sup>Perhaps with a god's help, This marriage will be  
celebrated with a <sup>10</sup>funeral dirge!

**Actions:**

1. to entreat
2. to disgrace
3. to terrify
4. to rebuff
5. to spurn
6. to overpower
7. to accuse
8. to crucify
9. to summon
10. to curse

**Blocking:**

- A. turn SR to Jason
- B. full turn SR toe to toe
- C. full turn to SL to bench, sit
- D. stand
- E. X USL to Jason
- F. X DSC

ANTIGONE

ISMENE

<sup>A 1</sup> Aren't you well?

ANTIGONE

Of course I am. Just a little tired. I got up too early.

ISMENE

<sup>2</sup> I couldn't sleep either.

ANTIGONE

Ismene, you ought not to go without your beauty sleep.

ISMENE

<sup>3</sup> Don't make fun of me.

ANTIGONE

I'm not, Ismene, truly. This particular morning, seeing how beautiful you are makes everything easier for me. Wasn't I a miserable little beat when we were small? I used to fling mud at you, and put worms down your neck. I remember tying you to a tree and cutting off your hair. Your beautiful hair! How easy it must be never to be unreasonable with all that smooth silken hair so beautifully set round your head.

ISMENE

[abruptly] <sup>4</sup> Why do you insist upon talking about other things?

ANTIGONE

[gently] I am not talking about other things.

ISMENE

<sup>B 5</sup> Antigone, <sup>6</sup> I've thought about it a lot.

**Objective:** To beg Antigone not to bury our brother, Polyneices.

**Actions:**

1. to beseech
2. to confide
3. to direct
4. to impel
5. to implore
6. to solemnize

**Blocking:**

- A. Enter from USL, yawning and stretching, X to fountain
- B. X to DSL in front of bench

ANTIGONE

Have you?

ISMENE

<sup>1</sup>I thought about it all night long. <sup>2</sup>Antigone, <sup>3</sup>you're mad.

ANTIGONE

Am I?

ISMENE

<sup>4</sup>We cannot do it.

ANTIGONE

Why not?

ISMENE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>5</sup>Creon will have us put to death.

ANTIGONE

Of course he will.<sup>B</sup> That's what he's here for. He will do what he has to do, and we will do what we have to do. He is bound to put us to death. We are bound to go out and bury our brother. That's the way it is. What do you think we can do to change it?

ISMENE

<sup>C</sup> <sup>6</sup>I don't want to die.

ANTIGONE

I'd prefer not to die, myself.

**Actions:**

1. to persist
2. to urge
3. to distress
4. to compel
5. to frighten
6. to overwhelm

**Blocking:**

- A. sit on bench
- B. look at Antigone
- C. out to audience

ISMENE

<sup>1</sup>Listen to me, Antigone. <sup>2</sup>I thought about it all night. <sup>3</sup>I'm older than you are. <sup>4</sup>I always think things over, <sup>5</sup>and you don't. <sup>6</sup>You are impulsive. <sup>7</sup>You get a notion in your head and <sup>8</sup>you jump up and do the thing straight off. <sup>9</sup>And if it's silly, well, so much the worst for you. <sup>10</sup>Whereas, I think things out.

ANTIGONE

Sometimes it is better not to think too much

ISMENE

<sup>11</sup>I don't agree with you!<sup>A</sup> <sup>12</sup>Oh, I know it's horrible. <sup>13</sup>And I pity Polynices just as much as you do. <sup>14</sup>But all the same, <sup>15</sup>I sort of see what Uncle Creon means.

ANTIGONE

I don't want to "sort of see" anything.

ISMENE

<sup>16</sup>Uncle Creon is the king. <sup>17</sup>He has to set an example!

ANTIGONE

But I am not the king; and I don't have to set people examples. Little Antigone gets a notion in her head --- the nasty brat, the willful, wicked girl; and they put her in a corner all day, or they lock her up in the cellar. And she deserves it. She shouldn't have disobeyed!

ISMENE

<sup>18</sup>Then there you go, <sup>19</sup>frowning, <sup>20</sup>glowering, <sup>21</sup>wanting your own stubborn way in everything. <sup>22</sup>Listen to me. <sup>23</sup>I'm right oftener than you are.

**Actions:**

1. to entreat
2. to sway
3. to warn
4. to urge
5. to frighten
6. to accuse
7. to criticize
8. to fluster
9. to conclude
10. to assure
11. to protest
12. to concede
13. to validate
14. to rationalize
15. to recede
16. to pronounce
17. to reprimand
18. to reproach
19. to accuse
20. to discredit
21. to blame
22. to pressure
23. to punctuate

**Blocking:**

- A. Up, X SR to Antigone, sit next to her on ledge of urn

ANTIGONE

I don't want to be right!

ISMENE

<sup>1</sup>At least you can try to understand.

ANTIGONE

Understand! The first word I ever heard out of any of you was that word "understand." Why didn't I "understand" that I must not play with water --- cold, black, beautiful flowing water --- because I'd spill it on the palace tiles. Or earth, because earth dirties a little girl's frock. Why didn't I "understand" that nice children don't eat out of every dish at once; or give everything in their pockets to beggars; or run in the wind so fast that they fall down; or ask for a drink when they're perspiring; or want to go swimming when it's either too early or too late, merely because they happen to feel like swimming. Understand! I don't want to understand. There'll be time enough to understand when I'm old... if I ever am old. But not now.

ISMENE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>2</sup>He is stronger than we are Antigone. <sup>3</sup>He is the king. <sup>4</sup>And the whole city is with him. <sup>5</sup>Thousands and thousands of them, swarming through all the streets of Thebes.

ANTIGONE

I am not listening to you.

ISMENE

<sup>B</sup> <sup>6</sup>His mob will come running, <sup>7</sup>howling as it runs. <sup>8</sup>A thousand arms will seize arms. <sup>9</sup>A thousand breaths will breathe into our faces. <sup>10</sup>Like one single pair of eyes, a Thousand eyes will stare at us. <sup>11</sup>We'll be driven in a tumbrel through their hatred, through

**Actions:**

1. to appeal
2. to caution
3. to threaten
4. to press
5. to overcome
6. to stir
7. to unnerve
8. to forsee
9. to overwhelm
10. to paralyze
11. to daze

**Blocking:**

- A. Up from urn
- B. float DS

ISMENE (CONT)

the smell of them and <sup>1</sup>their cruel, roaring laughter. <sup>2</sup>We'll be dragged to the scaffold for torture, surrounded by guards with their <sup>3</sup>idiot faces all bloated, their <sup>4</sup>animal hands clean-washed for the sacrifice, their <sup>5</sup>beefy eyes squinting as they stare at us. <sup>6</sup>And we'll know that no shrieking and no begging will make them understand that <sup>7</sup>we want to live, <sup>8</sup>for they are like slaves who do exactly as they've been told, <sup>9</sup>without caring about right or wrong. <sup>10</sup>And we shall suffer, <sup>11</sup>we shall feel pain rising in us until it becomes <sup>12</sup>so unbearable that we know it must stop. <sup>13</sup>But it won't stop; <sup>14</sup>it will go on rising and rising, <sup>15</sup>like screaming voice. <sup>16</sup>Oh, <sup>17</sup>I can't, <sup>17</sup>I can't, Antigone!

[A pause]

ANTIGONE

How well have you thought it all out.

ISMENE

<sup>18</sup>I thought of it all night long. <sup>19</sup>Didn't you?

ANTIGONE

Oh, Yes.

ISMENE

<sup>20</sup>I'm an awful coward, Antigone.

ANTIGONE

So am I. But what has that to do with it?

ISMENE

<sup>21</sup>But Antigone! <sup>22</sup>Don't you want to go on living?

**Actions:**

1. to distress
2. to terrify
3. to disgust
4. to nauseate
5. to unnerve
6. to inundate
7. to implore
8. to detest
9. to judge
10. to decree
11. to terrify
12. to assure
13. to belabor
14. to steamroll
15. to overrun
16. to devastate
17. to supplicate
18. to soften
19. to appeal
20. to confess
21. to exhaust
22. to implore

**Blocking:**

- A. Fall to knees, cry

ANTIGONE

Go on living! Who was it that was always the first out of bed because she loved the touch of the cold morning air on her bare skin? Who was always the last to bed because nothing less than infinite weariness could wean her from lingering night? Who wept when she was little because there were too many grasses in the meadow too many creatures in the field, for her to know and touch them all?

ISMENE

<sup>A</sup> <sup>1</sup>Darling little sister!

ANTIGONE

No! For heaven's sake! <sup>B</sup>Don't paw me! And don't let us start sniveling! You say you've thought it all out. The howling mob --- the torture --- the fear of death... they've made up your mind for you. Is that it?

ISMENE

<sup>2</sup>Yes.

ANTIGONE

All right. They're as good excuses as any.

ISMENE

<sup>3</sup>Antigone, be sensible. <sup>4</sup>It's all very well for men to believe in ideas and die for them. <sup>5</sup>But you are a girl!

ANTIGONE

Don't I know I'm a girl? Haven't I spent my life cursing the fact I was a girl?

**Actions:**

1. to envelop
2. to appeal
3. to impel
4. to reason w/
5. to demand

**Blocking:**

- A. clutch Antigone's legs
- B. Antigone pulls me up to my feet

ISMENE

<sup>A 1</sup>Antigone! <sup>2</sup>You have everything in the world to make you happy. <sup>3</sup>All you have to do is reach out for it. <sup>4</sup>You are going to be married; <sup>5</sup>you are young; <sup>6</sup>you are beautiful----

ANTIGONE

I am not beautiful.

ISMENE

<sup>7</sup>Yes, You are! <sup>8</sup>Not the way other girls are. <sup>9</sup>But it's always you that the little boys turn to look back at when they pass us in the street. <sup>10</sup>And when you go by, <sup>11</sup>the little girls stop talking. <sup>12</sup>They stare and stare at you, until we've turned a corner.

ANTIGONE

[a faint smile] "little boys --- little girls."

ISMENE

<sup>13</sup>And what about Haemon?

ANTIGONE

I shall see Haemon this morning. I'll take care of Haemon.

<sup>B</sup>You always said I was mad; and it didn't matter how little I was or what I wanted to do. Go back to bed now, Ismene.

<sup>C</sup>The sun is coming up, and, as you see, there is nothing I can do today. <sup>D</sup>Our brother Polynices is as well guarded as if he had won the war and was sitting on his throne. <sup>E</sup>Go along. You are pale with weariness.

ISMENE

<sup>F 14</sup>What are you going to do?

**Actions:**

1. to beg
2. to divert
3. to entice
4. to excite
5. to captivate
6. to appeal
7. to confirm
8. to dismiss
9. to assure
10. to remind
11. to verify
12. to persuade
13. to challenge
14. to level w/

**Blocking:**

- A. X SL to bench, sit next to Antigone
- B. lean head together
- C. look DSR to sun
- D. up, Antigone leads me USR
- E. X back to Antigone
- F. take her hands in mine



ANTIGONE

I don't feel like going to bed. However, if you like, I'll promise not to leave the house till you wake up. Nurse is getting me breakfast. Go and get some sleep. The sun is just up. <sup>A</sup>Look at you: you can't keep your eyes open. Go. <sup>B</sup>

ISMENE

<sup>1</sup>And you will listen to reason won't you? <sup>2</sup>You'll let me talk to you about this again? <sup>3</sup>Promise?

ANTIGONE

I promise. I'll let you talk. I'll let all of you talk. Go to bed, now. <sup>C</sup>[Ismene exits] Poor Ismene!

**Actions:**

1. to entreat
2. to confirm
3. to demand

**Blocking:**

- A. Head down, yawn
- B. X USL to leave, turn back
- C. Exit USL

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## VITA

Jane Catalanello McNulty was born on July 15, 1968 in New Orleans, Louisiana where she was raised. She began acting at sixteen and performed in many community productions. In 1990, she moved to New York, NY where she lived for nine years. She studied acting with Michael Beckett at HB Studios and with Ron Stetson of the Neighborhood Playhouse. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Hunter College of the City University of New York. Jane performed in numerous stage productions including *Cowboy Mouth*, *SubUrbia*, *Sally and Marcia* and *Rosemary with Ginger*. She also waited on thousands of tables, worked in advertising sales and for several temporary agencies, and was a nanny to many a spoiled child on the Upper West Side.

In 1999, Jane returned to New Orleans where she met her husband, Brian. They were married in June of 2001. She began the Master of Fine Arts in Acting program at the University of New Orleans that fall. Acting credits at UNO include *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, *J.B.*, *Going Under*, *Mademoiselle Blackwell*, *An Evening of Greek Theater*, and *The World's Longest Kiss*. Her participation in the American College Theater Festival awarded her an Irene Ryan Scholarship Nomination in which she placed as a regional finalist in 2003.

After graduation, Jane looks forward to performing as much as she can and would also love to explore directing, which she got a taste of at UNO. She hopes to start a family and to eventually teach acting in a university.